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August 23, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Honorable Elizabeth H. Dole
Assistant to the President
for Public Liaison
The White House



I very much enjoyed our discussion on July 20th. The support and advice you offered at that time were sincerely appreciated.

I have been well pleased in recent weeks by the numerous positive reactions to my endeavors and would like to share with you a sampling of these.

Veterans Service Organizations

- The Legion of Valor, during its National Convention, July 14-17, introduced and adopted a Resolution commending "the present Administration under the direction of President Reagan and Administrator Nimmo of the Veterans Administration for their initiatives" (Resolution, Tab A)
- The National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs has provided a draft of a Resolution commending "Robert P. Nimmo, Administrator of Veterans Affairs, for his dedication, his concern and his management capabilities in performing the assigned duties of his office; and ... heartily endorse President Reagan's courage and commitment to maintaining strong and fiscally responsible veterans programs in appointing Robert P. Nimmo" This Resolution will be introduced during the upcoming National Convention, September 10-16. (Draft Resolution, Tab B)
- On two occasions, the American Veterans of WWII Korea & Vietnam (AMVETS) has published supportive articles. (Article from The National Amvet, Tab C)

CONTINUED

CONGRESS

- ° My attendance at the DAV National Convention, July 17-19, coincided with that of Congressman Marvin Leath and provided an opportunity for a valuable discussion of veterans programs. Mr. Leath's comments were highly supportive and were followed by a note of encouragement.
(Note from Congressman Leath, Tab D)
- ° Congressman Henry Hyde has made a personal attempt to set the record straight by inserting in the Congressional Record an article entitled "The Other Side of the Veterans Administration Controversy."
(Congressional Record, July 16, 1982, Tab E)
- ° In addressing the National Convention of AMVETS on August 12, Mr. Mack Fleming, Chief Counsel and Staff Director of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, publicly supported my handling of the VA budget.
(Comments from Mr. Fleming's Prepared Statement, Tab F)

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- ° I have accepted numerous invitations to address the annual conventions of the Veterans Service Organizations and have used these occasions to clarify my position on veterans issues. In addition, I am participating in numerous VA ceremonial events which provide an opportunity for contact and discussion with Members of Congress and VA officials across the Country. I am finding the personal presentation of my position and goals to be a highly effective means of allaying the concerns of the veteran community.
(Schedule of Speaking Engagements; Reaction to Address to American Ex-Prisoners of War, Tab G)

MEDIA COVERAGE

- ° Both here in Washington and during my travel around the Country, I have accepted many requests for interview. While distorted accounts continue to appear sporadically, many articles have covered VA issues fairly and positively.
(Schedule of Interviews; Sampling of Positive Media Coverage, Tab H)

NEW AGENCY INITIATIVES

- Agent Orange: Through the approval in early August of ten new research projects, I have moved to enhance the Agency's scientific inquiry into the emotionally charged issue of health related effects of Agent Orange. This action has received wide and positive coverage.
(Press Release, Tab I)
- Advisory Committee on Readjustment Problems of Vietnam Veterans: Actions are underway to establish an advisory committee on the readjustment problems of Vietnam veterans. I believe the formation of this special committee will help to communicate to the veteran community my personal concern for those Vietnam veterans who continue to experience war related problems.

I intend to continue to take aggressive and positive steps to eliminate the unfortunate misconceptions about my positions on veterans issues.

Any additional suggestions or guidance you might offer will be much appreciated.

Bob

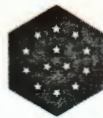
ROBERT P. NIMMO

Attachments

*Discuss w.
Red - at
paper clip*

AUG 25 1982

A



LEGION OF VALOR

OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, INC.

FOUNDED AS MEDAL OF HONOR LEGION-1890
CHARTERED BY ACT OF CONGRESS 1955

RESOLUTION #003

WHEREAS, recently the Veterans Administration is taking great strides in the areas of Agent Orange and Delayed Stress, and

WHEREAS, Vietnam Veterans have been plagued with these problems and have been asking for answers for years, and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Administration has recently taken steps to provide answers and action on the issues of Delayed Stress and Agent Orange, now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legion of Valor of the United States does hereby commend the present administration under the direction of President Reagan and Administrator Nimmo of the Veterans Administration for their initiatives in these critical areas.

National Adjutant

B

Resolution

WHEREAS, a proud history of accomplishments has been the Hallmark of the Veterans Administration for over fifty years; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Administration has kept pace with the demonstrated changing health needs of the nation's veterans by utilizing and contributing to the continual advancement in medical technology; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Administration has maintained a diversified system of veterans services unmatched and unequalled by any other government in the world; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Administration since its inception has remained under the close scrutiny of the President and the Congress of the United States while carrying out its mission; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Administration has persuasively demonstrated the justification of its dollar expenditures to meet the costs of caring for America's veterans and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Administration has recognized that the application of advanced fiscal accountability procedures is a pre-requisite in maintaining the integrity of the agency; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Administration management, under the outstanding leadership of the Administrator of Veterans Affairs is indeed re-enforcing this most important accountability responsibility; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, in convention assembled in St. Croix, Virgin Islands on September 13-15, 1982 that we do highly commend the Honorable Robert P. Nimmo, Administrator of Veterans Affairs for his dedication, his concern and his management capabilities in performing the assigned duties of his office; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we heartily endorse President Reagan's courage and commitment to maintaining strong and fiscally responsible veterans programs in appointing Robert P. Nimmo; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be forwarded to President Ronald Reagan, Counselor to the President, Edwin Meese, III., and the leadership of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans Affairs and Appropriations.

National Association of State Directors of
Veterans Affairs

C

THE NATIONAL AMVET

4647 Forbes Blvd., Lanham, MD 20706

July/August, 1982

VA Chief Under Fire, But Job Appears Secure

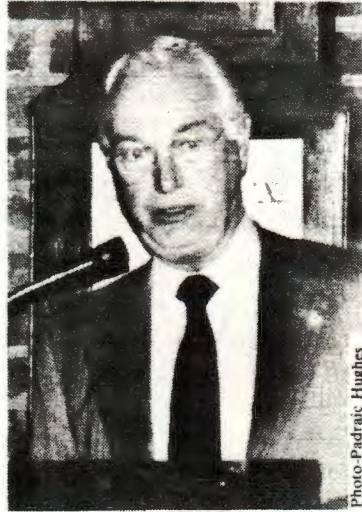
These last few months have not been kind to Administrator of Veterans Affairs Robert P. Nimmo. He has been chastised by Congress vilified by the Washington press and has had his hands slapped by the White House. His deputy resigned and some veterans groups have called for his resignation.

After all the turmoil and controversy, the bottom line appears to be this: Nimmo will weather the storm and continue as VA Administrator.

Nimmo's problems began in earnest last winter when he announced a "freeze" of the VA hospital construction program. AMVETS was among the first veterans organizations to question this decision in the strongest possible manner.

Another major veterans group was so incensed by Nimmo's announcement they told Congress, "Nimmo Must Go," but qualified that statement by adding "...Unless He Changes His Ways."

The problems of the VA chief were further compounded by revelations in a Washington television program, and subsequently in the *Gannett* newspapers that Nimmo had misappropriated the use of his government chauffeur and had remodeled his 10th floor office



Robert P. Nimmo

at the VA in Washington in direct violation of an order by President Reagan.

It turns out the VA inspector general agrees that the VA Administrator had, indeed, but perhaps unwittingly, used his government chauffeur for personal transportation. Nimmo has reimbursed the government the \$6,000 cost.

On the matter of remodeling his office, it seems as if Nimmo was smeared in the news media. It is true that he did spend \$54,000, but it was used to remodel his executive offices and executive staff offices

See Nimmo, Pg. 12

Nimmo

From Pg. 1

which comprise the entire southwestern wing on the 10th floor of the massive VA Central Office Building.

Nimmo, a World War II bomber pilot, has never been popular with Vietnam veterans. He was not the first choice of Vietnam veterans groups for the job of VA Administrator. He further increased his unpopularity with this veterans group by drawing an analogy in his first interview after assuming office between Agent Orange and teenage acne.

Many Vietnam veterans accuse Nimmo of dragging his feet on Agent Orange, and his attempt to cut the budget of the successful Vet Center program for Vietnam veterans won him few supporters among the Nation's youngest group of veterans.

In late June, Charles T. Hagel, Nimmo's decorated Vietnam veteran deputy, resigned for personal reasons, although it has been whispered around Washington that Nimmo and Hagel could not agree on the VA address of Vietnam veterans issues.

The White House stepped in at this point. Presidential Counselor Edwin Meese, III, held an emergency meeting with Nimmo, who is an old friend of Meese from the days when he served as a California legislator.

The decision: Meese announced that Nimmo would stay as Administrator.

AMVETS position on all of this is that we have to agree with some of the Administrator's critics that perhaps he has not moved quick enough on Agent Orange and that the freeze of VA hospital construction was ill-advised.

Yet, overall AMVETS is not dissatisfied with the job being done by the VA Administrator.

Commenting on the situation National Commander Donald R. Russell says, "now that the fever has died down, maybe he can get down to business once again and administrate the affairs of America's 30 million veterans."



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20515

MARVIN LEATH
11TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

July 30, 1982

Dear Bob:

Attendance at the DAV convention in Las Vegas was time very well spent. The members of that organization are well informed, motivated, responsible and responsive. In short, DAV members are the personification of what is good about America.

It was good to see you at the convention, as always, and I look forward to another opportunity in the near future for us to discuss our responsibilities to our nation's veterans. I have always felt fortunate that such a heavy responsibility is also a labor of love.

Sincerely,

Marvin

MARVIN LEATH

The Honorable Robert P. Nimmo
Administrator
Veterans Administration
Washington, DC 20420

*Hang in there -
You're doing a good job!*

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION CONTROVERSY

HON. HENRY J. HYDE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 15, 1982

● Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I am sure we have all read recent news reports regarding the controversy swirling around the head of the Administrator of the Veterans' Administration, Robert P. Nimmo. As with all things, there are always two sides to a story, but it is rare that both sides are presented.

Therefore, in an attempt to present the other side, I want to share with my colleagues an article which appeared in the June 24 issue of *The Stars and Stripes*—*The National Tribune*. The author, Gabriel P. Brinsky, is the national service and legislative director of AMVETS, and his comments are well worth everyone's attention.

THE MUCKRAKERS

(By Gabriel Brinsky)

What brings a man, financially independent, out of retirement to serve his government? A search for power . . . perhaps. A sense of dedication . . . possibly. Or maybe the sense of duty to respond to a call from his President.

Robert P. Nimmo, Administrator of Veterans Affairs, did not seek the position he holds. It sought him. Just as he did several times before as a soldier, he answered his country's call.

Whether Robert Nimmo would answer the call if it came today is questionable. In spite of being a capable and effective Administrator, he has come under severe barrages. Some criticism is warranted, much is not. His biggest problem has been his inexperience in knowing how the game is played in the nation's capital. A person in public life

in Washington, D.C. does not honestly and frankly express himself. He speaks generally to express nothing, for to voice a truism could result in the vultures descending in droves.

And there is no denying that the Administrator has committed several faux pas which have antagonized the various service organizations. For this, his wrists have been slapped and they probably will be again in the future. Undoubtedly by now, the Administrator understands and accepts this.

But muckraking is something else. It has no place in our society. None should be exposed to it. And certainly a public servant of Mr. Nimmo's caliber should not be subjected to its abuse. Criticism of his public utterances is one thing. Reflecting on his integrity by slanting or concealing the facts is another.

Which brings us to the allegations concerning his remodeling of the executive offices and his use of a government vehicle.

During a past month or so, the Administrator was attacked on consecutive days on television for his extravagances in refurbishing his executive offices and his use of a chauffeured car. This was followed by press attention at appropriate, calculated intervals, with articles expounding the theme of his extravagant abuses at the expense of the veterans.

What the original fuss was all about was that Nimmo's offices were remodeled at a cost of \$54 thousand. The figure is correct but the description is lacking. The inference is that it applied only to the Administrator's immediate office. In fact, the cost covered the entire executive area of the southwest wing of the tenth floor involving all of the staff offices. The expenditures for the Administrator's office alone was approximately \$18 thousand.

Even to the most naive, this cost to renovate the Administrator's office, the head of the second largest agency in personnel and the third largest in appropriations, was not only reasonable but extremely modest.

But there is more. The \$18 thousand would not have been spent if certain changes were not required because of the former occupant who was confined to a wheelchair. There were no carpets in certain offices and surrounding areas to facilitate the locomotion of the former Administrator. And because of his handicap, he had a special chair which he took with him.

There is no reason why the Administrator of Veterans Affairs should go without a desk or carpets on his floor. Nor is there any reason why he should be required to live with a VA motif wall covering which was damaged, faded, and dirty. Or to accept wallpaper incompatible with the furniture.

Come on! We're talking about a prominent official in our government charged with running an agency with a budget of more than 24 billions of dollars. Even a middle level functionary is entitled to some perks such as a carpeted floor and a desk. Oh yes, and even a desk chair.

As for the shower that was installed, some funds were expended in providing different accesses to the two half baths in the executive suite. The shower and stall was standard prefabricated, a nonluxurious, unit. Surely, it is not unreasonable for the Administrator, when he needs to leave directly from his office to attend an official function to refresh himself and to avoid smelling like yesterday's clothes. If he is expected to work and to directly repair from his place of work, the least we can do is place a shower at his disposal.

Of course, a big deal was made over the former Administrator's furniture which Nimmo sent to his daughter in the Depart-

ment of Commerce. Nothing was mentioned of the fact that the former Administrator's furniture was transferred to the Department of Commerce in exchange for executive furniture which they in turn would provide to the Veterans Administration. Since the GSA furnishes all furniture, who got what is really immaterial. It all belongs to the government and no costs were involved.

As for the allegations relating to the Administrator's use of a government vehicle for transportation from home to office, the Veterans Administration's Appropriation Acts do prohibit, since 1978, such use of transportation. Why the Administrator of Veterans Affairs should be singled out and denied such transportation is not clear.

We may wonder how an Administrator with an erratic schedule imposed by uncertain demands can be denied the flexibility of repairing to his residence and reacting to the demands of his responsibilities. Admittedly, remedial legislation is needed.

But apart from all this, it is questionable whether the stories released criticizing the Administrator would have achieved the same adverse impact had certain relevant information been disclosed.

Consider, for example, the fact that it was the Administrator who requested the Inspector General to look into any improprieties. It was the Administrator who requested that his office be furnished, not with new furniture available within the Agency.

It was the Administrator who voluntarily gave up an airy, cheerful reception room in order that the space could be utilized for needed office space. The Deputy Administrator and his secretary are now occupying that space.

Consider, too, that the only items of furniture bought for the Administrator were the high back chair and a coffee table. Or consider that the renovation which occurred by the construction of walls was for the purpose of creating two offices where one existed before. This resulted in the addition of five valuable space-saver offices. Maximum utilization of space has never been a valid subject for criticism.

And, of course, the stories made no mention of the cost involved by prior Administrators which would make the \$54 thousand expenditure a new low in the poverty level. Nothing was said that the Inspector General concluded his report with the finding that "the renovated space is compatible with the office appointment which has historically and customarily been provided to Agency officials and other top Federal executives."

I believe that Robert P. Nimmo is an effective Administrator and many are grateful for the services which he is rendering to veterans. Sure, he has made mistakes and he is a natural object for criticism. But if it is necessary to condemn him by reason of his acts, let us be fair. There should be some superficial, shallow standards of ethics even among the muckrakers. ●

FINALLY, OMB ATTEMPTED TO FORCE THE AGENCY TO CONTRACT OUT FOR CERTAIN SERVICES NOW PROVIDED IN-HOUSE AT VA MEDICAL FACILITIES. AGAIN, CONGRESS ENACTED A PROVISION OF LAW REQUIRING THE PRESIDENT TO REQUEST FUNDS TO CONDUCT THE PROPER COST STUDIES BEFORE SUCH CONTRACTING OUT CAN TAKE PLACE. ON JULY 22ND, MR. LEATH OFFERED AN AMENDMENT IN A FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP WHICH WOULD PROHIBIT CONTRACTING OUT ALTOGETHER UNLESS IT CAN BE CLEARLY ESTABLISHED THAT THE SERVICES CANNOT BE PROVIDED IN-HOUSE OR THAT THE QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE TO VETERANS WILL BE ENHANCED. THE FULL COMMITTEE ACCEPTED THE AMENDMENT AND IT HAS ALREADY PASSED THE HOUSE AS PART OF H. R. 6782. WE HOPE THE SENATE COMMITTEE WILL ACCEPT IT, AND WE ASK YOUR SUPPORT TO THAT END.

NOW LET'S TALK ABOUT OUR CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS AND THE BUDGET OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE. I BELIEVE VETERANS FIND THEMSELVES IN A UNIQUE AND FORTUNATE POSITION. OVERALL, THE BUDGET SUBMITTED BY THE PRESIDENT WAS A GOOD ONE. IN COMPARISON WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, THE VA AND THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ARE IN GOOD SHAPE. MUCH OF THE CREDIT FOR THIS YEAR'S BUDGET MUST GO TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ADMINISTRATOR OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS, MR. BOB NIMMO.

SPEECHES BY THE ADMINISTRATOR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OCCASION</u>	<u>PLACE</u>
July 13	American Ex-Prisoners of War Annual National Convention	Colorado Springs, CO
July 18	Disabled American Veterans Annual National Convention	Las Vegas, NV
July 25	Centennial Celebration for the City of Sheridan, Wyoming, Chamber of Commerce (Participated with Senator Alan K. Simpson, Chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee)	Sheridan, WY
August 2	Luncheon Speaker at the Grove Park Country Club. Luncheon attended by local service organization representatives. (Participated with Congressman Bill Hendon of Asheville, NC)	Asheville, NC
August 5	Military Order of the Purple Heart Annual National Convention	Albany, NY
August 7	40th Anniversary of the Invasion of Guadalcanal and Tulagi (Represented the President)	Winter Haven, FL
August 10	AMVETS Annual National Convention	Hollywood, FL
August 11	Blinded Veterans Association Annual National Convention	New Orleans, LA
August 12	Catholic War Veterans Annual National Convention	Bal Harbour, FL
August 16	United Vietnam Veterans Annual National Convention	Philadelphia, PA
August 18	VFW Annual National Convention	Los Angeles, CA
August 22	Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Center Core Building at the VA Medical Center Palo Alto	Palo Alto, CA
August 24	Paralyzed Veterans of America Annual National Convention	Oklahoma City, OK

CONTINUED

August 25	American Legion Annual National Convention	Chicago, IL
August 27	50th Anniversary of the VA Medical Center Albuquerque	Albuquerque, NM
August 29	Rededication Ceremony of the VA Medical Center Indianapolis	Indianapolis, IN
September 2	Dedication Ceremony of the Department of Veterans Benefits Building Addition at the VA Medical Center and Regional Office Cheyenne	Cheyenne, WY
September 9	Jewish War Veterans Annual National Convention	Kiamesha Lake, NY
September 13	National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs Annual National Convention	St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands
September 17	Lebanon Valley Chamber of Commerce	Lebanon, PA
September 19	Dedication of new National Cemetery	Indiantown Gap, PA
September 21	Groundbreaking Ceremony of the Nursing Home Care Unit at the VA Medical Center Washington, D.C.	Washington, D.C.
October 16	Dedication Ceremony for the Clinical Addition at the VA Medical Center Salt Lake City	Salt Lake City, UT
October 22	Dedication Ceremony for the Nursing Home VA Medical Center Hines	Hines, IL

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American Ex-Prisoners of War, Inc.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

4801 GOLDFIELD #163 • P.O. BOX 18957 • SAN ANTONIO, TX 78218

July 28, 1982

The Honorable Robert P. Nimmo
Administrator, Veterans Administration
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Bob,

On behalf of the American Ex-Prisoners of War, Inc., I want to thank you, from all of us, for your outstanding speech that you gave to our Organization and Members in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Your outright honesty and forwardness really made an impression on our Members, and they were delighted with it.

I had hoped that the Press would have given you a better light from it, but they only print what they want to as indicated by Jack Anderson's column in the San Antonio paper to-day. Nevertheless, I know that they felt the smart of your off the cuff remarks and that is why they did not want to retract any former statements. Our members agreed with you whole heartedly.

Again my sincere thanks for you taking some of your very busy time to present your interest in Veteran Affairs as well as your concern for the former POW. I have discussed your talk with Jack Flynn, and he was delighted, too, that it had gone so well.

Will be in touch again, and the best of everything to you and yours for the coming future.

Sincerely,

CHARLES A. MORGAN, JR..
Past National Commander

WE EXIST TO HELP THE MAN WHO CANNOT HELP HIMSELF.

H

INTERVIEWS WITH THE ADMINISTRATOR

July 15 CBS News-Eric Enberg, Washington, D.C.

July 16 Los Angeles Times-Betty Cuniberti, Washington, D.C.

July 16 Knight-Ridder Newspapers-Pat O'Brien, Washington, D.C.

July 18 Disabled American Veterans Annual National Convention
Las Vegas, Nevada

Interview with:

- Las Vegas Sun-Jim Barrows, Managing Editor

July 20 Gannett News Service-Sheila Caudle, Washington, D.C.

July 22 Today (NBC)-Chris Wallace, Washington, D.C.

July 22 Stars and Stripes, National Tribune-Patricia Hughes,
Washington, D.C.

July 22 Copley News Service-George Condon, Washington, D.C.

July 30 U.S. News and World Report-Question and Answer Panel,
Washington, D.C.

July 30 U.S. Medicine-Nancy Tomich, Washington, D.C.

August 3 Gannett News Service-Carolyn Pesce, Washington, D.C.

August 5 Alabama News Network-Carol Bennett, Washington, D.C.

August 5 Military Order of the Purple Heart Annual National
Convention
Albany, New York

Interview with:

- Schenectady Gazette-Jon Sorenson
- WTEN (TV) Albany
- WRGB (TV) Schenectady
- WROW/AM Albany

August 6 40th Anniversary of the Invasion of Guadalcanal and
Tulagi
Winter Haven, Florida

Interview with:

- St. Petersburg Times-Fay Joyce
- WFLA (TV)-Steve Nichols

CONTINUED

August 7

- Tampa Tribune
- Winter Haven-Art Sils, News-Chief
Winter Haven, Florida

Interview with:

- Temple Terrace Beacon

Participation in 40th Anniversary event reported by:

- WFLA (TV)
- WTSP (TV)
- WTVT (TV)
- WSUN (Radio)

August 9

Tour of VA Medical Center Tampa, Florida

Interview with:

- Temple Terrace Beacon
- WSUN (Radio)
- WFLA (TV)
- WTSP (TV)
- WTVT (TV)

August 9

AMVETS Annual National Convention
Hollywood, Florida

Interview with:

- Palm Beach Post
- Ft. Lauderdale News
- Hollywood Sun Tattler

August 10

Hollywood, Florida

Interview with:

- WCKT (TV) Miami
- WTVJ (TV) Miami
- Miami Herald

August 11 Blinded Veterans Association National Convention
New Orleans, Louisiana

 Interview with:

- WTIK (Radio)-Joe Collata
- WBUE (TV) ABC-Mary Lou McCall

August 16 United Vietnam Veterans Organization Annual
National Convention
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

 Interview with:

- Philadelphia Daily News
- Philadelphia Inquirer

August 17 VFW Annual National Convention
Los Angeles, California

 Interview with:

- KHJ (TV) "Mid Morning L.A."
- Herald Examiner-Tom Brown

August 18 Los Angeles, California

 Interview with:

- KABC (Radio)-Michael Jackson Show
- L.A. Times Editorial Board

August 24 Paralyzed Veterans of America Annual National Convention
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

 Interview with:

- Daily Oklahoman
- Oklahoma City Times
- WKYK and COCY (TV)
- KOMA (Radio)

August 25 American Legion Annual National Convention
Chicago, Illinois

- (Available to all media covering convention
following speech.)

August 27 50th Anniversary of the VA Medical Center Albuquerque
Albuquerque, New Mexico

° Local interviews as requested.

August 29 Rededication Ceremony of the VA Medical Center
Indianapolis
Indianapolis, Indiana

° Local interviews as requested.

September 2 Department of Veterans Benefits Dedication Ceremony
of the Building Addition at the VA Medical Center
and Regional Office Cheyenne
Cheyenne, Wyoming

° Local interviews as requested.

The following list represents projected interviews which will be initiated following the completion of the veterans organization convention cycle in September:

MacNeil/Lehrer Report

Good Morning America (ABC)

National Press Club

Godfrey Sperling (Interview Group)

Readers' Digest

Associated Press (Mike Feinsilber)

Scripps-Howard News Service

Donrey Washington News Bureau

Ottaway Newspapers

Scripps League Newspapers

Thompson Newspapers

Ohio/Washington News Service

Hearst Headline Service

McClatchy Newspapers

What Veterans Can Expect From Washington

More counseling centers, more help for Agent Orange victims, geriatric research—these are Veterans Administration plans. Its chief says benefits for ex-servicemen and women could reach 60 billion dollars a year by 1990.

Q Mr. Nimmo, with 12 million veterans turning 65 over the decade of the '80s, is the Veterans Administration prepared to handle this increase in clients and benefits?

A We're not sure, because we just do not know to what extent that group of veterans is going to come to the VA for assistance. Veterans who are reaching the 65-year-old level now tend to be more affluent than they were in previous years. They have private hospital plans or they're using medicare or they're using some option other than the VA. Even with many World War II vets turning 65, our case load in the hospitals is not going up. In fact, we're running at about an 80 percent bed-occupancy rate.

Q What about in other medical facilities?

A Outpatient visits are going up around the country, and nursing-home care is on the increase.

Q Do you anticipate that the Veterans Administration will need more medical facilities?

A I'm sure we will require construction of nursing-home facilities. I'm not sure that we will have a significant requirement, if any, for additional acute care—for hospital facilities. I think we will also need more outpatient clinics.

Q Some of the new medical equipment for such installations is quite expensive—

A Equipment is expensive. And there is the obsolescence factor—we can already see the day when CAT scanners are going to be obsolete and be replaced by a vastly more expensive item. But that's just one aspect of the cost. The medical rate of inflation has been around 17 percent—vastly more than it is in any other area in the economy. So our expenses will go up in the medical area generally. I hope we can make savings in other places.

Q Over all, do you expect much of an increase in the VA budget in the years ahead?

A If the basic rules to qualify for benefits remain what they are today and if the medical-care inflation rate stays about what it is today, then we can expect that our budget—now 25 billion dollars—is probably going to be in the range of 50 to 60 billion by 1990. By the turn of the century, it's going to be somewhere between 150 and 175 billion.

Q In 1978, Congress established a needs test for some veterans' benefits. Do you think that the needs test ought to be expanded to, say, medical benefits for vets over 65?

that given the fact that veterans' benefits today cost \$107 for every man, woman and child in the United States and that if nothing changes by the turn of the century, it could be more than \$500 per man, woman and child, how can we avoid looking at this kind of tough political question?

Q Has the VA been hurt by the federal-budget squeeze?

A Certainly not to the extent the rest of the government has. I think we're very successful in the 1983 budget. We protected the medical-care system. We cut back. We delayed some on construction. But over all, I think—except for the Department of Defense—the Veterans Administration probably came off better than any other agency in government.

Q There have been some complaints that the Vietnam veterans have been shortchanged by the VA. How do you rate the services that you've been providing to them?

A I think the service we provide to the Vietnam veteran is every bit as good as that we provide to other categories of veterans. The complaint, I think, has had to do primarily with the issue of the defoliant Agent Orange. A lot of illnesses and conditions are attributed by veterans to result from Agent Orange exposure. We're moving as rapidly as we can to address that problem.

This is the first time there will have been a budget directly related to the whole Agent Orange issue. I just approved 5 million dollars in the current fiscal year, and will petition the Congress and President for an additional 4 million in fiscal year '83, and 3.6 million more in fiscal year '84, to proceed with and finish studies on the problem.

Q What are you doing now about victims of Agent Orange?

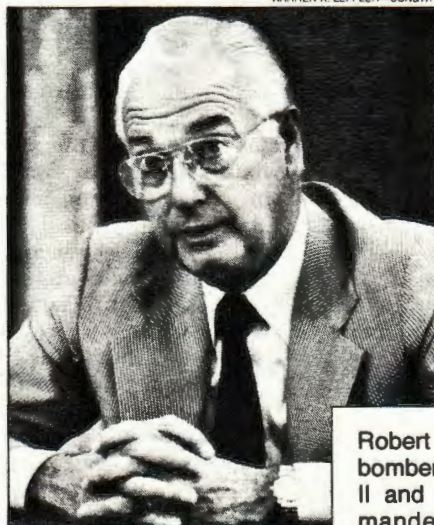
A We are taking into our medical centers every Vietnam veteran we can get there who thinks he was exposed to Agent Orange for the first of a series of physical examinations. And if he has an illness or a condition that he attributes to Agent Orange exposure, we're treating that without question.

Q There would be a considerable drain on your budget if it were decided that these disabilities did result from Agent Orange, wouldn't there?

A If we find somewhere down the road that these health problems are, in fact, related to Agent Orange exposure, I'm certain our government will meet the compensation requirements. We have not spent time figuring what those costs might be. We are busy with our many efforts to find out what adverse health effects, if any, are associated with that exposure.

Q What does the evidence indicate now?

A There is no evidence one way or the other at the present time except for the condition that is referred to as



WARREN K. LEFFLER—USNA/WR

Robert Nimmo, 60, was a bomber pilot in World War II and a company commander in the Korean War. A former member of the California Republican Central Committee, he served eight years in the State Legislature.

chloracne. We know, without question, that Agent Orange causes chloracne, which is an acute acne condition.

Q What has happened to the storefront service centers that were set up primarily to counsel Vietnam veterans?

A It's been a very successful program. A year ago when I came to the VA, it was not popular within the agency. We've tightened up the administration of these Vietnam outreach centers, and we have increased the number of centers from less than 100 to 132. We'll have four more on line very soon.

Q Are the Vietnam veterans opting for more education under the GI Bill than the earlier veterans did?

A Yes. Over all, the Vietnam-veteran generation utilized the educational benefits at a 65 percent rate, which is higher than any other group of veterans ever did.

But we still have the group of veterans in the younger ages that went over there just out of high school or maybe before they were out of high school. They were still young when they came back, and they did not avail themselves of those benefits. As a consequence, they have the highest unemployment rate of any of the Vietnam veterans. So we're pleased that Congress extended the delimiting date on those educational benefits for another two years.

Q Do they require more medical care, too?

A No. The real burden of medical care—that is, the frequency of medical care—now has to do with the aging veteran. And one of the big problems, I would have to say, is alcoholism, and illness that may be related to that—diabetes, for example.

Q How do the VA hospitals compare with other hospitals?

A Over all, the quality of care in VA hospitals is better than in typical private-sector hospitals or Department of Defense hospitals, and the reason for that is our affiliation with the university teaching hospitals. Of our 172 hospitals, 132 are affiliated with medical schools. So we are able to attract physicians who are interested in the advancement of medical science—increasing medical knowledge—and that, of course, benefits us in terms of improved-quality medical care.

Q There was a study several years ago that suggested that there was no reason to have a separate health-care system for veterans. Do you foresee any push toward merging the veterans' system with the civilian system and helping out with civilian patients?

A There are scattered voices around, some of which suggest that the integrated health-care system of the VA should be dismantled, others that suggest that we ought to gradually move the veterans into civilian health-care delivery through a voucher system or something of that nature. I don't think it's going to happen. I hope it doesn't happen.

I think we have an obligation to the service-connected veteran that says he should have absolutely the finest medical care that the country can provide. And I think we can only provide that by our system of VA hospitals affiliated with the teaching hospitals.

Q How are the new geriatric centers working out?

A We have eight geriatric research-and-education centers, and we are going to expand to some degree. There's

30 MILLION VETERANS— Who They Are

War Veterans	25,541,000
Spanish-American War	95
World War I	400,000
World War II	11,959,000
Korean War	5,740,000
Vietnam War	9,120,000
Peacetime Veterans	4,793,000
Between World War I and World War II	137,000
Between World War II and Korean War	238,000
Between Korean and Vietnam wars	3,031,000
Post-Vietnam veterans	1,387,000
Total Veterans	30,334,000

Note: Wartime figures do not add because some veterans served in more than one war. Figures rounded to nearest thousand.

USNAHRF—Basic data: Veterans Administration

some disagreement, I think, even among the medical community, whether the care of the aging veteran is something that you can isolate from all the rest of his medical care or whether you simply treat the illnesses and conditions identified with aging along with all other illnesses and conditions.

We are going to emphasize research into the problems of the aging, and expand the centers. But the real value of those, I think, has yet to be determined.

Q There have been reports that the VA cemeteries are running out of space. Can a war veteran still be assured of a place for himself and his wife provided by the VA in a national cemetery?

A Yes. We are continuing to build new cemeteries. And we're also reopening some of our old cemeteries that have been closed with what we refer to as garden niches. Some of the areas that heretofore could not be utilized for casketed remains are now being used for cremated remains. Also, in

many areas of the country—rural towns particularly, where there are some old cemeteries—there's a very strong civic feeling about those cemeteries for veterans. And, in many cases, local veterans' groups and civic organizations are acquiring land and donating it to us as additions to the cemetery.

Q How about Arlington? Is that filled up as far as veterans are concerned?

A Well, Arlington is the one cemetery that still belongs to the Department of Defense. It is, for all practical purposes, a closed cemetery.

Q You recently ran into a lot of criticism about excessive use of government funds for your personal office and travel. Have you changed your lifestyle?

A From what to what? The VA building has on one side of the 10th floor the offices that traditionally have been occupied by the administrator and the administrator's staff. The \$46,000 that was spent was for all of those offices. And I invite anyone who cares to come, to look at those offices, compare them with any other federal agency in town, and then judge whether or not money was spent that shouldn't have been. I think those offices were atrocious when I got there. I did not think, and I still don't think, that it's proper to expect people to work under the environment that existed.

Q What about the large government car that was used to drive you to work? Has that changed?

A The answer is yes. I don't use it for transportation any more to and from work. My wife brings me to the office in the morning, and she picks me up in the evening. Two reasons for that: First of all, I was told not to use the government car. Second of all, there is what I perceive to be a very real security problem. There have been death threats. There have been bomb threats.

So I live in what I regard as a pretty secure home environment, and for purposes of safety, my wife drives me to and from work. I'm not inclined to drive my own car and have to go late hours to a public garage or ride public conveyances or stand on the street corner waiting for a Metrobus. □

VA chief visits Fort Lyon Medical Center

The head of the Veterans Administration, Robert P. Nimmo, visited Fort Lyon Medical Center Monday and pledged to continue this nation's efforts to maintain excellent integrated health care service for its veterans.

Nimmo called the 1983 budget passed by Congress a practical one and one that protects the administration's commitment to the veterans.

The Veterans Administration oversees 172 hospitals. Nimmo called the veterans hospital system the largest commitment to health care in the world. He noted the system is always in need of improvement and updating. Nimmo said he foresees the need for increased nursing home facilities to care for the demands placed on the system by aging servicemen of World War II and the Korean conflict.

"We will not allow the system to erode," Nimmo said. "We have plans for two new veterans hospitals and a constant updating program for present facilities as demand dictates," he said.

Nimmo toured the local hospital with Administrator Jonathan Fitts and other local hospital officials. While at the center, he presented pins of recognition to two veterans for their service to the nation while prisoners of war. Pins were presented to Millard Kaessner who was a prisoner in both World War II and the Korean conflict and to Ramon Cardenas who was a prisoner of war while serving in Germany.

Nimmo was in Colorado to attend the 35th annual ex-Prisoners of War meeting in Colorado Springs.

The administrator's visit to Fort Lyon Medical Center was his first visit to Southeastern Colorado since he was stationed at the La Junta Air Base after World War II. During WW II, he served as a B-24 pilot with the Eighth Air Force in Europe.

In a speech at the convention in Colorado Springs on Tuesday, Nimmo was critical of the Eastern press. Nimmo

said the Eastern press criticized his expenditure of \$46,000 to renovate the 10th floor offices of the Veterans Administration Building which he described as "a disgrace."

The charges that really concern the administrator are the ones that say he isn't supportive of the veterans. I am not going to dismantle the veterans administration, he commented, and I will not do away with our integrated and quality health care system.

Nimmo denied charges that he has been "foot-dragging" on studies of the impact of Agent Orange on Vietnam veterans.

Agent Orange is a chemical that was used in Vietnam to defoliate the leaves on trees so the enemy on the ground could be observed from the air in Vietnam. The administrator said the Agent Orange project was "adrift" when he came to the VA and he has since ordered a \$12 million three-year study to learn the effects of Agent Orange on veterans.



Veterans Administrator Robert Nimmo receives an aerial photo of the Fort Lyon VA Medical Center from Director Jonathon Fitts during a visit here Monday.



During his Monday visit to Fort Lyon Medical Center Monday, Veterans Administrator Robert Nimmo placed a pin of recognition on the pillow of Ramon Cardenas, in honor of his service while a POW. He was assisted by Lucille Gilliland, R.N., head of the Total Care Unit. The administrator also presented a pin to hospitalized veteran Millard Kaessner, a prisoner of war in World War II and the Korean conflict.

SOURCE

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CITY AND STATE

LAS ANIMAS, COLORADO

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VA chief to keep benefits

By Betsy Lumbye

Colorado Springs Sun

Robert Nimmo, administrator of the Veterans Administration, vowed Tuesday in Colorado Springs to protect veterans' benefits.

Nimmo spoke to former POWs at a convention of American Ex-Prisoners of War at the Four Seasons Motor Inn.

He called the former POWs "unqualified American heroes," to whom the nation owes a special debt.

"I am urging greater awareness of the possible causal role that prisoner of war experiences may have in the development of a particular illness or condition," he said, "and I am urging compassionate and sensitive treatment."

He said President Reagan has just nominated a former Vietnam POW, Everett Alvarez Jr., to be deputy administrator of veterans affairs.

Alvarez, who spent 8½ years in captivity, was the longest held American POW of the Vietnam conflict, Nimmo said. He said Alvarez will be a "daily reminder" to him of his obligation to former POWs.

Nimmo said that recently he has been "under consistent, repetitive attack" in the media and that he has kept silent, believing it futile to argue.

However, he said, he wanted the POWs to know the truth.

He defended his spending \$46,000 to spruce up offices, including his own, in the

VA headquarters in Washington, D.C., saying the offices had been a "disgrace."

The charges that really disturb him, however, Nimmo said, are "those which suggest that I don't support the veterans, that I am going to dismantle the agency ... that I've been footdragging on Agent Orange, that I am anti-Vietnam veteran, that I have referred to Vietnam veterans as a 'coddled group.'"

"Ladies and gentlemen, I have never used that expression any time, any place, in any context about any veteran and I never will."

Nimmo said he has approved a \$12 million budget in the VA over three years to study Agent Orange and in the meantime to care for veterans exposed to the chemical.

"We are not neglecting, and we will not neglect the Vietnam veteran any more than we will neglect any other group of veterans," he said.

He said he has increased the number of veterans outreach centers and contracts with private psychiatrists to provide counseling for veterans.

He said he fought "bitterly" to protect VA funding in the 1983 budget, and that the VA budget presented

to Congress was \$25.6 billion — almost \$1 billion more than the previous year.

"I'm going to protect the Veterans Administration and the Veterans Administration budget and when I can't do that I'll leave," he said.



Veterans Administration chief Robert Nimmo, speaking in the Springs Tuesday, says, "We are not neglecting, and we will not neglect the Vietnam veteran any more than we will neglect any other group of veterans."

Tracking a deadly agent

VETERANS / From 1G

lon, N.Y., keeps his fingers crossed as precious time ticks away, distancing him from the rare form of testicular cancer that struck him four years ago.

So far, he has suffered no recurrence. But the strain of fighting the disease and worrying about whether it was caused by his exposure to Agent Orange took its toll.

"Ron and I took the pressure as long as we could," said his wife, Linda. "But we're separated now. Agent Orange and cancer began to take over our lives."

• Michael Ryan of Stony Brook, Long Island, N.Y., still is paying for braces, a wheelchair and \$150 worth of diapers a month for his daughter, Kerry, born 11 years ago with 15 birth defects. But Michael and his wife, Maureen, have just published a book about their child and they describe themselves as people with a mission.

"We want Americans to wake up to the fact that we're all being chemically poisoned, and nobody's doing anything about it," Ryan said. "We vets were the guinea pigs. If they ever really study what happened to us, they'll come up with the truth about chemicals."

With the exception of the Ryans, all of these men and their families feel frustrated and alone as they continue to struggle with unexplainable illnesses, skin disorders and the tragedy of birth defects in their children. They describe day after day of wondering, always wondering: Do they live under a cloud because of their exposure to the dioxin in Agent Orange? Or are they just the victims of capricious fates?

The answers are slow in coming.

Several health studies are under way, including one 20-year government project monitoring the health of Air Force personnel who flew

'I feel tremendously frustrated that we can't give these vets an answer today.'

Robert Nimmo, VA administrator



sample of babies born with birth defects to normal infants, and monitor their parents for exposure to Agent Orange. None of the studies is expected to produce even preliminary data until late in 1983.

Contributing to the uncertainty is the fact that scientists are not unanimous in their assessment of the toxic effects of dioxin. Although dioxin is 100,000 times more poisonous than cyanide and readily absorbed through the skin or through food and water, the Veterans Administration continues to maintain that "conclusive scientific evidence" is lacking to prove a connection between the ailments of veterans and Agent Orange.

Many Vietnam veterans claim the VA is stalling on a major study of Agent Orange mandated by Congress three years ago.

"Not true," said Robert Nimmo, administrator of the VA. "I feel tremendously frustrated that we can't give these vets an answer today. We can treat them, and we are treating them. I think we have a worthwhile plan for the study now, and we'll be taking bids for the research soon."

Lawyer Steve Schlegel of Chicago, coordinator of one of the major class-action suits pending against the chemical companies that produced Agent Orange, mirrors the cynicism of many vets who no long-

"I don't think they'll ever get that VA study finished," he said. "They're afraid of what compensation payments would cost them."

Veterans groups acknowledge VA hospitals are much more sympathetic now to Agent Orange complaints than they were two years ago.

"A lot of veterans are eligible for health care now, even though that hasn't been widely publicized," said John Terzano, a spokesman for the Vietnam Veterans of America. "We were surprised at how fast the VA responded on this."

Sherryl Morris, who tries to be upbeat but confesses to constant nervousness, is most affected by what has happened to her two children born since Vietnam. Christopher, 11, and Angela, 7, were born with permanently weakened leg and arm muscles that often cause them to stumble and fall when they walk.

"They can take care of themselves a little better now," she said, searching to report something positive. "I no longer have to put helmets on them to protect their heads when they go out to play."

"I still cut out everything I read on Agent Orange," she said. "I keep scrapbooks of things, even poems about veterans. But I no longer think anything will come of it. I

VA chief lashes at press critics

By DICK FOSTER
News Southern Bureau

COLORADO SPRINGS — The head of the Veterans Administration lashed the "liberal press" here Tuesday for criticism of his stewardship of the federal agency and told a national gathering of former Prisoners of War he'll protect the VA or leave office.

Robert Nimmo spoke to some 600 of an estimated 2,000 former prisoners gathered here for the 35th Annual American Ex-Prisoners of War national convention. Nimmo got a warm reception and the audience applauded when he blasted press reports of his conduct in office.

The 60-year-old VA chief took over the agency last July. He has been criticized for spending \$46,000 to remodel his office, and has also been accused of working with Reagan Administration budget officials to reduce spending for veterans' programs.

"The story that I have joined in a conspiracy with David Stockman to reduce the Veterans Administration budget by \$4.5 billion is pure hogwash," he said. "I'm going to protect the Veterans Administration, and when I can't protect the Veterans Administration, I'll leave."

Nimmo said he had been "under consistent, repetitive attack for all manner of concerted shortcomings."

Press accounts, he said, have accused him of plotting to do away with the VA medical and hospital system, "mainstreaming" its patients into conventional hospitals, calling Vietnam veterans a "coddled group," and delaying research on the chemical Agent Orange to determine its connection with reported cases of genetic damage to Vietnam veterans and their offspring.

"When the liberal press starts after you, it does no good to attempt to impress them with the truth. They have their own ideas," he said.

Nimmo admitted spending \$46,000 to improve some VA offices in Washington. He said they still are not up to the standards of other federal agencies.

He said \$12 million is budgeted through 1984 for Agent Orange research, "and in the meantime to care for any veteran who feels he has any problem related to Agent Orange."

Of the future of VA hospitals and medical programs, Nimmo said there would be no mainstreaming of patients while he is at the Veterans Administration.

"We will provide the best we can provide in health care, medical care and benefits," Nimmo said. "The president and I are wedded to that for as long as we are in office."

SOURCE

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\$11 Million VA Center Addition Is Proposed

By MIKE BOYD
Staff Writer

An \$11 million addition to the Oteen VA Medical Center was proposed here today by hospital administrator Arthur Landy during an inspection tour of the hospital by Robert Nimmo, administrator of the Veterans Administration.

Congressman Bill Hendon escorted Nimmo on his tour of the Oteen facility. Nimmo was scheduled to meet later in the day with representatives of the Buncombe County Veterans Coun-

cil before flying back to Washington.

The proposed addition would be a 120-bed nursing care facility constructed as an extension of the existing hospital, according to Landy, who said the system must begin planning now to provide care for the nation's World War II veterans who are approaching retirement age.

Calling Viet Nam a war like none the nation has ever fought, Nimmo said the nation needs to reexamine its feelings about that war and the veterans

who fought it. The Veterans Administration is helping the men and women involved in that conflict to deal with those experiences, he said.

"The people of the nation themselves have to readjust and reexamine their own feelings about that war," Nimmo said at an airport interview here this morning. Nimmo went directly to the hospital from the airport for a tour of the building and to meet with the staff.

The Veterans Administration has

approved a \$5 million renovation of the surgery and surgical intensive care section of the Oteen facility in fiscal 1985. Hendon said Nimmo was invited to Asheville "so he could see the hospital and what our needs are."

Landy said 25 percent of the nation's 7 million vets will be more than 65 years old by the year 1990. The proposal this morning called for planning and engineering the new addition in 1987 with construction to be completed by 1990.

"This is why we are trying to plan ahead," Landy said.

Nimmo is one of the most controversial VA heads in many years. In an interview this morning when he was asked if it was a fair statement that he was very unpopular with veterans organizations.

"I suppose so. A year ago, I announced that we were going to reevaluate all of the programs of the Veterans Administration. And when you start talking about taking a new look at these programs some people become frightened," Nimmo said.

Nimmo said the VA budget this year is \$25 billion. He said that figure could rise to \$50 billion in 8 to 10 years at the current rate. The problem, he said, is that medical costs are increas-

CONTINUED

—Turn To Page Three

VA Center Addition Proposed

ing twice as fast as the overall inflation rate.

"We are committed to the health care system. But we have to do that in the most economical way possible," Nimmo said.

The Oteen VA Medical Facility has an 82 bed nursing care facility on the second and third floors in one of the older buildings on the grounds. A hospital medical unit is located on the first floor of the older building.

Nimmo had lunch today at the Grove Park Inn with Hendon and representatives of the area veterans organizations. Following lunch, the top VA official returned to the hospital to continue his tour. He was to be honored at a reception later today at the VFW Post 891 on the Leicester Highway before returning to Washington.



To Tour VA Hospital

Robert Nimmo, chief administrator of the Veterans Administration, was in Asheville today to tour the Oteen VA Medical Center. Nimmo, second from left, was met at Asheville Regional Airport this morning by (L-R) Gene Edwards, commander of the Buncombe County Veterans Council, U.S. Rep Bill Hendon and Arthur Landy, administrator of the VA hospital here. Nimmo was to be honored at a reception at the VFW Post here late this afternoon before returning to Washington. (Staff Photo by June Glenn.)



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VA LAUNCHES NEW AGENT ORANGE RESEARCH

The Veterans Administration's scientific inquiry into the health related effects of Agent Orange is being enhanced by ten new research projects approved and funded by the agency this week, VA Administrator Robert P. Nimmo announced today.

The administrator said the new projects are supported for up to five years with VA research funds in excess of \$2 million, and were selected from proposals submitted by individual investigators working in VA medical centers across the country. The scientists responded to a request for new research proposals issued by VA Medical Research Service, which specified a biochemical, physiological or toxicological focus on the delayed effects of exposure to Agent Orange and Agent Blue.

The VA chief pointed out that the projects primarily involve animal studies, but human tissue cultures will be analyzed in some of the experiments. Specific approaches range from behavioral observations of laboratory animals exposed to the defoliants used in Vietnam, to biochemical studies of fat metabolism.

-more-

The medical centers where the new studies will take place are: Albuquerque, NM; Baltimore, MD; Lexington, KY; Madison and Wood, WI; San Francisco, Sepulveda, and Wadsworth, CA; Washington, DC; and White River Junction, VT.

Nimmo said perplexing questions about the effects of exposure to herbicides used in Vietnam have led VA into a number of research initiatives. He explained that a key effort now in advanced planning stages is an independently designed, epidemiological study, the pilot portion of which will be conducted by contract and will comprise a feasibility test of the full-scale study mandated by Congress.

In addition to a number of research efforts, the VA has performed health examinations for more than 89,000 Vietnam veterans worried about possible adverse effects from the herbicides. The VA is now authorized to treat any veteran for certain disabilities which may have been caused by exposure to Agent Orange.

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