

VETERANS AFFAIRS

"To honor our veterans...gratitude and ceremonies are not enough. We must protect the benefits you have earned, address fully the dangers imposed by modern warfare, and preserve what you fought for: the American Dream at home and our leadership around the world."

President Bill Clinton
March 6, 1995

President Clinton has fought to protect the benefits that veterans have earned in service to this nation and to address the new needs and challenges created by a changing world. The Clinton Administration has also worked to make the Department of Veterans Affairs more efficient and responsive by proposing and implementing changes at the VA that will improve services and save money, many of these changes have long been advocated by veterans. The Administration has also aggressively responded to veterans of the Persian Gulf War suffering from undiagnosed illnesses, to the challenges created as the military downsized after the Cold War and to the needs of homeless veterans.

A RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT:

- **Improved and Restructured VA Health Care System:** The Clinton Administration implemented significant management restructuring of the VA medical system, creating integrated service networks and consolidating duplicative medical and administrative services to ensure that scarce resources are focused on patient care. The Administration also proposed "gainsharing" to allow the VA medical facilities to retain a portion of the money VA collects from third parties. These changes will allow the VA to improve the quality of care to veterans.

- **Protecting Veterans Benefits:** The Clinton Administration ensured full cost of living adjustment on benefits going to disabled veterans and military retirees; fought to fully fund benefit programs; expanded eligibility for disability compensation for Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange; successfully opposed Congressional proposals to eliminate compensation for certain mentally incompetent veterans; and proposed increased funding for the National Cemetery System to ensure that veterans and their families are buried with dignity.

Persian Gulf War Veterans' Illness: President Clinton established the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illness aimed at finding the causes of these illnesses and improving the care available to Persian Gulf veterans. As part of the Gulf War illness effort, the Administration expanded funding for research and medical care at the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Health and Human Services.

- **Firm Commitment to Veterans in Federal Hiring:** Despite overall hiring declines across the federal government in the last three years, the percentage of jobs going to

See if act to recommend that we compensate for prostate cancer i Agent Orange law says if assoc b/w illness + herbicides, then add \$M to Rollis

Current Law - full COLA -

if budgeted it has partial COLA for survivors benefits (we've done it in past)

Running (think) at cutting GI bill - long we oppose COLA

GI bill, Life Ins, Voc Rehab, Med'l Services

mandatory program

Republ

3 studies show assoc b/w Agent Orange + prostate cancer

E X E C U T I V E O F F I C E O F T H E P R E S I D E N T

20-May-1996 01:52pm

TO: LAWRENCE J. HAAS

FROM: Pauline M. Abernathy
 National Economic Council

CC: Victoria L. Schaefer

SUBJECT: draft veterans talking points

I think Gene would approach the issue more along these lines, going on the offensive:

Let's look at the two records.

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S RECORD: President has fought to protect and honor veterans. all our great things.

LET'S LOOK AT THE REPUBLICAN RECORD.

1. Republicans provided less than the President requested for the VA for this year. [Details, which request?]

2. The Republican budget that the President vetoed would have:

 Raised Medicare premiums on 8.8 million veterans on Medicare -- one-third of all veterans -- by at least \$850 over 7 years, compared to the President's budget that kept premiums at 25% of program costs.

 Turned Medicare into second-class health care with their \$270 billion cut and damaging structural changes (MSAs, balance billing, hard spending cap).

 Could have denied 150,000 veterans Medicaid coverage in 2002, most of who could not afford private insurance.

 Doubled the copayment that veterans must pay for prescription drugs for non-service connected conditions.

The latest Republican budget still contains excessive cuts and damaging structural changes in Medicare and Medicaid, threatening the quality and access to care for the 8.8 million American veterans on Medicare and the over 600,000 veterans on Medicaid.

Latest Republican Medicaid plan give States a road map to deny veterans Medicaid by making their disabilities ineligible for Medicaid. The latest Republican Medicaid proposals would let states define the disabilities eligible for Medicaid, which would allow States to deny coverage for some of the over 600,000 veterans on Medicaid. While Republicans cuts federal Medicaid payments by \$72 billion, but the federal and state combined cuts could still total \$250 billion, forcing States to use their new authority to deny benefits to veterans and others with disabilities.

Question: Are there other examples of proposals to deny benefits to disabled vets, perhaps non-service connected disabled vets, so that it could be described as an overall strategy of denying benefits by disqualifying their disability?

E X E C U T I V E O F F I C E O F T H E P R E S I D E N T

22-May-1996 12:59pm

TO: LAWRENCE J. HAAS

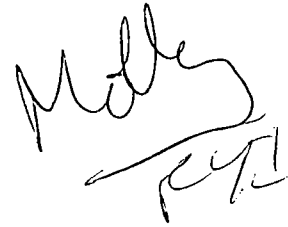
FROM: Molly Brostrom
 Domestic Policy Council

SUBJECT: Veterans talking points

Sorry I didn't make these this morning, but I have suggestions for strengthening the piece of the talking points on the Pres' record. I'd add a new bullet and slightly change two of the others, as follows:

- Ensured full COLAs on benefits going to disabled veterans and military retirees;
- Improving and restructuring VA's health care system;
- Maintained firm commitment to veterans in federal hiring;
- Proposed eligibility reform to ensure that veterans have access to the most appropriate care; and
- Established a Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illness and fought for legislation paying benefits to Persian Gulf veterans with undiagnosed illnesses;

Please call if you have questions.



The President and Veterans' Programs:

Talking Points

May 22, 1996

- Over the last three years, the President has built a strong record on veterans' programs, which includes:
 - improving and restructuring VA's health care system;
 - shortening processing time and cutting pending caseloads at the Veterans Benefit Administration;
 - raising the share of new federal jobs going to veterans; and
 - establishing the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses;
- In its 1997 budget resolution, the Senate Budget Committee claims it has more funding for the VA over the next 6 years than the President.
- But, the President's balanced budget provides much more for discretionary spending over the next 6 years than the Republican budget resolutions.
 - The President proposes to cut discretionary spending by \$234 billion.
 - Republicans propose to cut discretionary spending much more -- \$295 billion in the Senate resolution, \$309 billion in the House resolution.
- Thus, the President's budget has much more money with which to fund domestic priorities than the Republican budget resolutions.
 - And, as he has shown in making the tough year-to-year decisions, the President will continue to view veterans programs as a key priority.

- If you want to know how Republicans will treat these programs, you should look at how they've treated them when it came time to make real, binding decisions.

-- For 1996:

- The President proposed \$19.2 billion for the VA.
- The Republican Congress provided only \$18.3 billion in the 1996 omnibus appropriations bill -- cutting the President's request by \$900 million.

-- These cuts will prevent the VA from building new hospitals in California or Florida or making necessary improvements in VA health care facilities, and they will impede VA's efforts to improve the processing of benefits claims.

-- Only public outrage prevented Republicans from passing some of their more extreme proposals -- e.g., eliminating compensation for certain mentally incompetent service-disabled veterans.

-- The Republican reconciliation bill that the President vetoed last year:

- Would have raised Medicare premiums on 8.8 million veterans on Medicare -- a third of all veterans -- by at least \$850 over 7 years, compared to the President's budget that kept premiums at 25 percent of program costs.
- Would have turned Medicare into second-class health care with \$270 billion in cuts and damaging structural changes (e.g., Medical Savings Accounts and "balanced billing.")
- Would have doubled the copayment that veterans must pay for prescription drugs for non-service connected conditions.
- Could have denied 150,000 veterans Medicaid coverage in 2002, most of whom could not afford private insurance and would be ineligible for VA medical care.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

"To honor our veterans...gratitude and ceremonies are not enough. We must protect the benefits you have earned, address fully the dangers imposed by modern warfare, and preserve what you fought for: the American Dream at home and our leadership around the world."

President Bill Clinton
March 6, 1995

President Clinton has fought to protect the benefits that veterans have earned in service to this nation and to address the new needs and challenges created by a changing world. The Clinton Administration has also worked to make the Department of Veterans Affairs more efficient and responsive by proposing and implementing changes at the VA that will improve services and save money, many of these changes have long been advocated by veterans. The Administration has also aggressively responded to veterans of the Persian Gulf War suffering from undiagnosed illnesses, to the challenges created as the military downsized after the Cold War and to the needs of homeless veterans.

A RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT:

- **Improved and Restructured VA Health Care System:** The Clinton Administration implemented significant management restructuring of the VA medical system, creating integrated service networks and consolidating duplicative medical and administrative services to ensure that scarce resources are focused on patient care. The Administration also proposed "gainsharing" to allow the VA medical facilities to retain a portion of the money VA collects from third parties. These changes will allow the VA to improve the quality of care to veterans.
- **Protecting Veterans Benefits:** The Clinton Administration ensured full cost of living adjustment on benefits going to disabled veterans and military retirees; fought to fully fund benefit programs; expanded eligibility for disability compensation for Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange; successfully opposed Republican proposals to eliminate compensation for certain mentally incompetent veterans; and proposed increased funding for the National Cemetery System to ensure that veterans and their families are buried with dignity.
- **Persian Gulf War Veterans' Illness:** President Clinton established the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illness aimed at finding the causes of these illnesses and improving the care available to Persian Gulf veterans. As part of the Gulf War illness effort, the Administration expanded funding for research and medical care at the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Health and Human Services.
- **Firm Commitment to Veterans in Federal Hiring:** Despite overall hiring declines across the federal government in the last three years, the percentage of jobs going to

veterans has increased. Among new, full-time Federal hires, the proportion of veterans increased from 23.6% in 1992 to 33.3% in 1994. The federal government continues to lead the nation in the percentage of veterans and disabled veterans in its workforce.

- **Training and Assistance:** The Clinton Administration helped over 1.5 million veterans into jobs through the Department of Labor's veterans employment service. Nearly 500,000 separating service members and their spouses received job search training under the Department's Transition Assistance Program. The veterans' unemployment rate has been cut by almost a third during the first three years of the Clinton Administration (7.2% in January 1993 to 4.9% in January 1996).
- **Faster Benefits Delivery:** The Administration improved processing time and reduced pending caseload for compensation and pension claims at the Veterans Benefits Administration. In FY 97, the Veterans Benefits Administration will process original compensation claims 33 days faster than in FY 96 and the pending caseload will be reduced from 348,000 at the end of FY 96 to 277,000 cases at the end of FY 97 -- a 20% reduction. The President's FY 97 budget included funding for 50 positions for the Board of Veterans' Appeals to improve timeliness in processing appeals.
- **Targeted, Supportive Assistance to Homeless Veterans:** President Clinton fought for increased funding to assist communities in developing local, coordinated solutions to break the cycle of homelessness. The Administration more than doubled VA funding of homeless programs in three years to the current level of \$76 million. As part of a new Homeless Providers Grant Program, VA awarded more than \$11.8 million to 59 public and private nonprofit groups to develop new programs to assist homeless veterans. The Administration's Interagency Council on the Homeless established a Homeless Veterans Task Force to improve services and programs for homeless veterans across agencies.

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD:

President Clinton will continue to fight to protect the benefits veterans have earned and to help veterans respond to new needs and challenges:

- Work for passage of reinventing government initiatives that will improve services to veterans, simplify complex eligibility rules and save money through streamlining.
- Continue restructuring of VA's health care system.
- Continue to improve veterans' benefits delivery system to give veterans increased access and more efficient service.
- Continue to work with Presidential Advisory Committee to find causes and care for Persian Gulf Veterans with undiagnosed illnesses.

- Continue unprecedented outreach to veterans and their service organizations.

DRAFT

Talking Points

President has build^d a strong
- ~~from~~ commitment + action → vets have
emphasis perfect
response to current
needs, e.g.
P.W. & Comm

iority, and will continue to.

Senate Budget Committee

- But, as we have said, the President and Congress make decisions on veterans' and other specific discretionary programs on a year-to-year basis.

Administration Accomplishments Which Affect Veterans and All Americans



- Since President Clinton took office, the economy has created nearly 6 million new private sector jobs; more than 60 percent pay 45 percent above the median wage.
- President Clinton is pursuing an increased standard of living for middle class families. His "Middle Class Bill of Rights" includes a child tax credit, an education tax deduction, expanded IRAs and a grant program to enable low-skill or laid-off workers to attain training and skills for reemployment.
- President Clinton's crime law balances punishment with prevention. More than 100,000 additional police officers will be put on the street to do community policing. The plan also aims to reduce gang violence and create more drug treatment programs.
- The deficit reduction plan reduces the deficit by more than \$600 billion over five years — cutting the deficit in half as a percent of the economy. Now he has proposed \$140 billion more in cuts in this year's budget.
- President Clinton has strengthened the economic infrastructure by: creating nine Economic Empowerment Zones and 95 Enterprise Communities; investing in new technologies and industries; and instituting the Defense Reinvestment and Conversion Initiative, which reinvests in workers, communities and companies hit hardest by the defense cuts brought about by the end of the Cold War.
- President Clinton introduced a program to make credit more easily available for small businesses, and made new tax cuts available for more than 90 percent of them.
- President Clinton's commitment to education is reflected in a number of initiatives, including an increase in Head Start funding; The Student Loan Reform Act, which greatly increases access to higher education; National Service, which helps students further their education while also contributing to communities through public service; and the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which sets education standards and helps implement education reforms.
- President Clinton signed The National Voter Registration Act, which will encourage more Americans to exercise their right to vote.
- President Clinton signed the comprehensive Child Immunization Plan, which means that at least 90 percent of the nation's two-year-olds will be immunized by 1996.
- President Clinton's international efforts have advanced America's interests abroad. Among the accomplishments: President Clinton led international support for democracy and market reform in Russia and other former Soviet states; supported South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy; and reinvigorated the Middle East peace process.
- President Clinton introduced a strong campaign finance reform plan that, when enacted, will clean up the way campaigns are financed and limit the role of special interests.

Administration Accomplishments Related Specifically To Veterans



- President Clinton ordered the National Performance Review of the federal government. This intensive study by the Vice President is making the federal government work better and cost less.
- President Clinton has fought for a welfare reform plan that is designed to help people help themselves, transforming the welfare system into an employment system.
- President Clinton announced Priority: Home! Federal Plan to Break the Cycle of Homelessness. This innovative plan moves from merely providing emergency assistance to promoting long-term independence and self-sufficiency.
- President Clinton is confronting the AIDS epidemic in a number of ways, including the creation of the position of National AIDS Policy Coordinator to coordinate federal government efforts and increasing funding for research.
- Because of President Clinton's leadership, health-care reform is at the top of the national agenda.
- President Clinton signed the Family & Medical Leave Act, which gives 44 million workers job protection in the form of unpaid leave during a family crisis.
- At Secretary Brown's urging, the Administration is seeking a \$1.3 billion increase in VA's fiscal 1996 budget, \$1 billion of which is targeted to VA's health-care system, which will enable VA to provide medical treatment to an additional 43,000 veterans, construct two new hospitals and three nursing homes, and make a number of facility improvements.
- The President fought for a law that permits VA to pay compensation benefits to chronically disabled Persian Gulf War veterans with undiagnosed illnesses. The first checks have already been presented to Persian Gulf veterans.
- Three environmental hazards research centers were established at three VA medical centers with an initial focus on the possible health effects of environmental exposures of Persian Gulf veterans. The centers supplement other research VA is conducting on the possible health effects of Gulf service.
- VA established a toll-free number for Persian Gulf veterans and their families who have health concerns: 1-800-PGW-VETS.
- The National Academy of Sciences was awarded a contract for an independent review of possible environmentally related health effects from military service in the Persian Gulf. The contract is jointly funded by VA and the Defense Department.
- A series of VA health-care initiatives for women veterans was implemented, including four comprehensive health centers and four stress-disorder treatment teams, as well as hiring counselors in 69 locations to treat

VA Called for the First National Summit On Homelessness

the aftereffects of sexual harassment and assault.

- A Women Veterans Division was established at VA's National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Boston.
- VA established a new Women Veterans Program Office and appointed a director.
- VA awarded the first-ever grants to public and private nonprofit groups under a program to develop new homeless veterans assistance programs.
- 44 new or expanded programs were approved for homeless veterans at VA facilities nationwide. Some \$70 million was directed to VA's specialized homeless assistance programs in fiscal year 1994.
- VA Secretary Jesse Brown called for the first National Summit on Homelessness Among Veterans, which was held in Washington, D.C., Feb. 24-25, 1994.
- The first Center of Excellence in Substance Abuse Treatment and Education was established at the Seattle VA Medical Center, which will serve as a resource for the VA health-care system, develop treatment programs and provide consultation.
- Secretary Brown issued a decision, supported by the Administration, that Vietnam veterans suffering from respiratory cancers (lung, larynx and trachea) and multiple myeloma (a cancer involving the bone marrow) should be awarded disability payments based on presumed exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides.
- A toll-free number was established for veterans and their dependents to inquire about VA's headstone and grave marker program.
- 34 new or expanded post-traumatic stress disorder treatment programs were initiated at VA medical centers, bringing to 110 the number of such specialized VA programs nationwide.
- VA guaranteed the 14 millionth home loan almost 50 years after the signing of the original GI Bill. The 50th anniversary of the signing was celebrated in June 1994.
- VA implemented a number of measures to provide relief or protection to VA benefit recipients, GI Bill homeowners and insured veterans affected by the Jan. 17, 1994, earthquake in the Los Angeles area.
- VA published rules in the Federal Register that establish presumptive service-connection for Hodgkin's disease and porphyria cutanea tarda (PCT), a liver disorder, based on exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides.
- Secretary Brown announced the appointment of the executive director, Chief Minority Affairs Officer staff, with the goal of assessing VA's delivery of services to minority-group veterans.

Partnerships with Veterans Organizations

- Secretary Brown signed a performance agreement with President Clinton which committed VA to improve customer satisfaction, improve the quality and timeliness of its services, and empower VA employees to meet veterans' needs creatively.
- Presumptive service-connection for disability compensation was established for veterans who experienced full-body exposure to mustard gas and Lewisite.
- VA is providing information on radiation research that may have involved human subjects to the Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments, a committee established by the White House and made up of non government scientists, physicians and ethicists. VA Secretary Jesse Brown had ordered a nationwide medical records search on nuclear medicine and radiation research that may have been conducted in VA facilities years ago.
- VA plans to undertake a survey of the health status of submariners and airmen who may have received radium treatments in military service.
- The Administration supported enactment of a law extending disability compensation to U.S. veterans who suffer from conditions that may have resulted from radiation exposure in atmospheric nuclear weapons tests conducted by other countries.
- The White House has conducted extensive outreach to the veterans service organizations, resulting in greater access to the Administration on a broad range of domestic policy and foreign policy issues. Veterans service organizations have participated in more than 80 significant White House activities and meetings on such subjects as POWs/MIAs, health-care reform, the reaffirmation of veterans' preference, Vietnam, Haiti, employment of people with disabilities and VA's budget. VA also has involved veterans service organizations in the department's decision-making process at an unprecedented level.
- An interagency Veterans' Policy Group of the White House Domestic Policy Council has been established to improve coordination of federal veterans' programs. Topics of focus include homelessness, National Guard and Reserve job security, VA claims processing, veterans' preference, small business loans and employment for disabled veterans.
- Veterans are being included at an unprecedented level as delegates to the White House Conference on Aging, to be held in Washington, D.C., May 1-5.
- In 1993 and 1994, President Clinton invited representatives of the major veterans' service organizations and the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia to be part of the Presidential delegation to Vietnam to address the POW/MIA issue.

March 1995

Talking Points
March 1995

Veterans



"To honor our veterans, gratitude and ceremonies are not enough. We must protect the benefits you have earned, address fully the dangers imposed by modern warfare, and preserve what you fought for: the American Dream at home and our leadership around the world."

— President Clinton
 Speech to VFW Mid-Winter Conference
 March 6, 1995

Moral Obligation

This Administration believes that veterans benefits are a moral obligation. The President recognized, in his State of the Union address, that veterans have earned the benefits they receive, through service to the nation. He reiterated our commitment to veterans in his remarks to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Budget

The President's 1996 budget calls for a \$1.3 billion increase for veterans benefits, including an additional \$1 billion for health care. This will enable VA to provide medical treatment to an additional 43,000 veterans, construct two new hospitals and three nursing homes, and make a number of facility improvements.

Rescissions

President Clinton strongly opposes a House proposal to cut \$200 million from the VA budget already enacted for fiscal 1995. He said this rescission would eliminate outpatient clinics and much-needed new medical equipment for veterans health care. "These cuts are unwise and unnecessary ... Caring for veterans is not a national option or a partisan program; it is a national tradition and a national duty," the President stated. The clinics to be eliminated under the House proposal are Columbia, Mo.; Gainesville and Orlando, Fla.; Hampton, Va.; West Haven, Conn.; and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Persian Gulf Veterans

In the years immediately following the Vietnam War, many veterans felt the government turned a deaf ear to their concerns over Agent Orange and other health risks. Now, Persian Gulf veterans are suffering unexplained illnesses — and this Administration has taken aggressive action to make sure we are responsive and sensitive. The President has signed legislation paying compensation to chronically disabled veterans with undiagnosed illnesses. VA offers thorough medical examinations to all Persian Gulf veterans, provides priority medical care to those who need it, and has established special research centers to study the problem. Additionally, VA will begin surveying 30,000 Gulf veterans to determine the prevalence of symptoms and certain health outcomes in veterans and their family members. VA also established a toll free information line — 1-800-PGW-VETS. Most recently, the President announced he will establish a Presidential Advisory Committee to elevate scientific inquiry into this matter. VA, the Departments of Defense and Health and Human Services will spend up to \$13 million on new research, bolstering the already strong efforts underway at VA's special research centers.

Homeless Veterans

Recognizing that a large percentage of the nation's homeless are men and women who have served in the military, the Administration has taken strong steps to help homeless veterans. VA has increased its funding of programs for the homeless by more than 30 percent in the last three years, to the current level of \$76 million. The Department also awarded the first ever grants to public and private nonprofit groups to develop veterans assistance programs, and initiated the first National Summit on Homelessness Among Veterans.

Partnerships with Veterans Service Organizations

The Administration credits much of the tremendous progress made in serving the nation's veterans to veterans themselves. The Administration and VA Secretary Jesse Brown determined from the outset that veterans service organizations should be brought into the decision making process. The resultant partnership has brought progress throughout VA programs, and has prominently featured veterans serving on VA task forces developing solid answers to concerns about claims and appeals processing.

Outreach Efforts

The Administration has taken unprecedented steps to reach out to veterans who need help. The VA wrote to 1.6 million veterans with high home mortgage interest rates, urging them to refinance their VA loans. As a result, veterans and their families will save \$1.5 billion in mortgage payments over the next 10 years. Similarly, VA wrote to many Vietnam veterans, advising them that they may be eligible for compensation for several new disabilities possibly related to Agent Orange.

The Business of Government

VA is looking to business for new procedures and processes that improve service to veterans while reducing costs to taxpayers. Decentralization of operational authority and responsibility is underway in the veterans health system as the Veterans Health Administration creates a new system of health care networks and reduces management functions at the headquarters level. Increased responsiveness to the patient rather than to bureaucracy is the goal. VA finances are increasingly being expedited through electronic commerce. VA buying and selling is now an electronic process conducted on keyboards rather than paper receipts. Paper is being reduced in other ways: nearly a quarter of the department's 3,500 directives have been reviewed and 93 percent of those reviewed have been thrown out.

Making Government Work Better

The Administration is committed to creating a government focused on the people it serves rather than on programs and regulations. VA has led in supporting and implementing National Performance Review efforts to reinvent a government that works better and costs less. VA reinvention labs are testing customer-oriented business methods in all veteran service areas. These labs are developing service delivery structures and procedures that reduce customer waiting times, staffing and red tape while reducing costs. Seventeen VA employee teams have been recognized by the Administration as "heroes of reinvention" for the consolidation, streamlining and restructuring they have initiated locally to reduce cost and improve services. Complementing this grass-roots reinvention within VA is a new VA customer service program that specifies measurable standards of treatment, service and courtesy for veterans. Those standards are known by both VA employees and their customers and backed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' commitment to put the veteran first.

VETERANS

"To honor our veterans...gratitude and ceremonies are not enough. We must protect the benefits you have earned, address fully the dangers imposed by modern warfare, and preserve what you fought for: the American Dream at home and our leadership around the world."

– President Clinton
Speech to VFW Mid-Winter Conference
March 6, 1995

A MORAL OBLIGATION TO PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN VETERANS BENEFITS This Administration believes that veterans benefits are a moral obligation.

- The soldiers of tomorrow will only be as good as our commitment to the veterans of today.
- When President Clinton took office, he vowed to fight for the interests of America's veterans. This Administration has kept that pledge and will continue to fight to protect and strengthen the benefits veterans have earned through service to our nation.

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION UNDERSCORES COMMITMENT TO VETERANS, INCREASING BENEFITS AND HEALTH FUNDING

The President's 1996 budget calls for a \$1.3 billion increase in veterans benefits, including an additional \$1 billion for health care. This will enable VA to provide medical treatment to an additional 43,000 veterans, construct two new hospitals and three nursing homes, and make a number of facility improvements.

WORKING TO IMPROVE HEALTH CARE FOR VETERANS The Clinton Administration has expanded long-term care programs and established comprehensive centers for women veterans. We process claims faster, and are getting veterans the benefits they're owed.

HELPING VETERANS RECEIVE BENEFITS The President fought to preserve veterans' preferences for federal jobs; made sure that military retirees received their full Cost of Living Adjustments when they were in danger; and reached out to veterans around America to tell them about opportunities to refinance homes bought under the GI bill and about qualifying for compensation for disabilities possibly related to Agent Orange.

KEEPING AN OPEN DOOR TO VETERANS The Administration credits much of the tremendous progress made in serving the nation's veterans to veterans themselves. From the outset, veterans service organizations have been brought into the decision making process. This partnership has led to more responsive policy, particularly in claims and appeals processing.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS The Administration has a coordinated federal strategy to address homelessness.

- The President's budget calls for \$1.6 billion in targeted and performance-partnership funding across 6 federal agencies that will assist local communities in developing local, coordinated solutions to break the cycle of homelessness. VA funding of programs for homeless veterans has increased by more than 30 percent in the last three years, to the current level of \$76 million.
- VA awarded the first-ever grants to public and private nonprofit groups to develop veterans assistance programs, and initiated the first National Summit on Homelessness Among Veterans.

SUPPORTING PERSIAN GULF VETERANS The Administration has taken aggressive action to be responsive and sensitive to veterans of the Persian Gulf suffering from unexplained illnesses.

- The President just announced he will establish a Presidential Advisory Committee to review and make recommendations aimed at finding the causes of this illness and improving the care available to Persian Gulf veterans.
- **Benefits for Disabled Veterans.** The President has signed legislation paying compensation to chronically disabled veterans with undiagnosed illness; he recently presented one of the first checks to a disabled Persian Gulf veteran.
- **New Money for Research.** The Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense, and Health and Human Services will spend up to \$13 million on new research, bolstering the already strong efforts underway at VA's special research centers.
- **Strong Medical Care.** The VA offers thorough medical examinations to all Persian Gulf veterans, provides priority medical care to those who need it. VA also established a toll free information line – 1-800-PGW-VETS.

A MORE CUSTOMER-RESPONSIVE VA VA will continue to restructure, streamline and improve operations to provide even better and more efficient service to veterans.

- VA is working at the grass roots level to reduce customer waiting times, staffing and red tape while reducing costs.

PROPOSED RESCISSIONS "ARE UNWISE AND UNNECESSARY" The House proposal to cut \$200 million from the VA budget already enacted for FY 1995 will eliminate outpatient clinics and much-needed new medical equipment.

67028.

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S RECORD FOR AMERICA'S VETERANS

"To honor our veterans...gratitude and ceremonies are not enough. We must protect the benefits you have earned, address fully the dangers imposed by modern warfare, and preserve what you fought for: the American Dream at home and our leadership around the world."

President Clinton
VFW Conference, March 6, 1995

"We owe it to the World War II generation to remember, but we owe them more. For just as freedom has its price, it also has its purpose, to enable people to live up to their God-given potential and to continue the march of human progress. We, who are heirs of their legacy, must always be the guardian of their dreams."

President Clinton

Commemoration of End of WWII, September 2, 1995

COMMITMENT TO PROTECT AND HONOR VETERANS. President Clinton has fought to protect the benefits veterans have earned through service to our nation.

- Protection of Veterans Benefits. The President is committed to preservation of veterans' preferences for federal jobs; has fought to ensure that veterans and military retirees received their full Cost of Living Adjustments; and has reached out to veterans around America to tell them about opportunities to refinance homes bought under the GI bill.
- Benefits for Vietnam Veterans. In 1993, a VA-sponsored review conducted by the National Academy of Sciences found that certain cancers and illnesses could be caused by Agent Orange exposure. The Administration promptly adopted a policy of presuming service connection in these cases and conducted outreach to Vietnam Veterans to inform them about qualifying for compensation for disabilities possibly related to Agent Orange.
- Real Commitment to Veterans' Health Care. The President's 1996 budget calls for a \$1.3 billion increase in funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs, including an additional \$1 billion for health care. This increase would enable VA to provide medical treatment to an additional 43,000 veterans, construct two new hospitals and three nursing homes, and make a number of facility improvements.
- FIGHTING GOP PLANS TO CUT VETERANS' BENEFITS
The President strongly opposes Republican budget proposals that would eliminate compensation for certain mentally disabled veterans, deny up to 113,000 veterans medical care, make certain veterans pay more for their health care, prevent necessary improvements in VA health care facilities, and impede VA's efforts to improve processing of benefits claims.
- ALSO
In addition, the President is fighting reductions in Medicare and Medicaid that, in combination with the Republican proposals for VA health care programs, threaten to trigger a health care crisis for America's veterans. According to VA estimates, proposed Medicaid cuts would force up to 172,000 veterans to lose coverage; and proposed Medicare cuts would force the 8.8 million veterans on Medicare to pay increased premiums FOR HEALTH CARE.

QUOTE FROM
GOOD STARS
STRIPES
EDITORIAL

MAKES
NO
SENSE?

Clinton

- HIV/AIDS Research and Treatment. VA has been a leader in HIV/AIDS research and treatment, providing treatment for more than 17,200 veterans with HIV or AIDS in 1994.

PROMOTING VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT. As the military downsized after the Cold War, increasing numbers of service men and women separated early from the military. This Administration has worked hard to help them move into civilian jobs.

- Firm commitment to veterans in federal hiring. A recent OPM report documents that despite overall hiring declines across the federal government in the last three years, the percentage of jobs going to veterans has increased. Among new full-time federal hires, the proportion of veterans increased from 30.8% in 1993 to 33.3% in 1994. The federal government continues to lead the nation in the percentage of veterans and disabled veterans in its workforce.
- Protection for Members of the National Guard and Reserve. This Administration has actively fought to ensure that federal personnel practices do not discriminate against any employee because of service in the National Guard or Reserve.
- Training and Assistance. Over one and a half million veterans have been helped into jobs by the Department of Labor's veterans employment service, and nearly half a million separating service members and their spouses have received job search training under the Transition Assistance Program.
- Due in part to these efforts, the veterans' unemployment rate has been reduced by more than half during the first years of the Clinton Administration (7.2% in January 1993 to 3.4% in September 1995). CUT By

SUPPORTING PERSIAN GULF VETERANS The Administration has aggressively responded to veterans of the Persian Gulf War suffering from unexplained illnesses.

- Presidential Advisory Committee. The President established a Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, comprised of scientists, physicians, veterans, and policy experts to review and make recommendations aimed at finding the causes of these illnesses and improving the care available to Persian Gulf veterans. The President has charged this Committee with ensuring that no stone is left unturned in efforts to identify the causes and provide care to Gulf War veterans who are ill. Since being established in May 1995, the Committee has held two full committee meetings and two regional subcommittee meetings.
- Benefits for Disabled Veterans. The President fought for legislation to pay compensation, for the first time, to chronically disabled veterans with undiagnosed illnesses. The first checks have already been presented to Persian Gulf veterans.
- Funding for Research. The Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Affairs are spending up to \$13 million on research into the possible causes, transmission and treatment of Gulf War veterans illnesses. VA has established three new Environmental Research Centers focusing on Persian Gulf veterans' illnesses.

- Expanded Medical Care and Communication. DoD and VA have opened six new specialized care centers for veterans who need additional tests and treatment. In addition, VA and DoD have registered more than 70,000 Gulf War veterans with health concerns to help avoid the kinds of problems that delayed care and compensation for those with Agent Orange. And DoD and VA have opened toll free telephone lines for Persian Gulf veterans to receive information and provide first-hand accounts of incidents they believe may be related to this problem (DoD, 1-800-796-9699; VA, 1-800-PGW-VETS).

ACTIVE AND OPEN COMMUNICATION WITH VETERANS. This Administration has conducted unprecedented outreach to veterans and veterans service organizations, leading to more responsive policy.

- Interagency Veterans Policy Group. An ongoing White House-driven Interagency Veterans Policy Group has successfully worked to solicit and ensure progress on issues of concern to veterans.
- Appointments as Delegates. Veterans have been included on task forces and delegations, such as the White House Conference on Aging and the Presidential delegation to Vietnam.

REINVENTING AND IMPROVING GOVERNMENT AT VA. As part of the National Performance Review, President Clinton proposed changes at VA that will improve services and save money, many of which have long been advocated by veterans.

- Simplifying and Improving. Reinventing government initiatives proposed by the Administration will improve services to veterans, simplify VA's complex medical eligibility rules, determine pilots to test the use of Medicare benefits at VA hospitals, and save money by streamlining, privatizing, or consolidating unnecessary or duplicative activities.
- For example, the eligibility simplification included in these initiatives will replace an onerous four page, 93-question form with a one-page application for VA medical care.
- Top Management Team at VA. The President has helped ensure these changes ~~will~~ ^{will} occur at VA by appointing top-notch, innovative people to lead the agency -- including long-time veteran advocates Secretary Jesse Brown and Deputy Secretary Hershel Gober.

STREAMLINED AND MORE RESPONSIVE VA. VA continues to restructure, streamline and improve operations to provide even better and more efficient service to veterans.

- VA Reorganization. The Administration developed a plan to decentralize VA's national health care system. Through local decision making and resource allocation, VA will deliver care more efficiently to veterans and be better positioned for full integration into a reformed, 21st-century health care environment.
- Customer-Responsive VA. President Clinton and Secretary Brown have executed a

*Time place
BE PUT INTO
ACTION*

performance agreement to improve customer services at the VA. This agreement -- part of VA's strategy of "Putting Veterans First!" -- has created strong customer service standards, improvements in quality and timeliness of services, and has empowered VA employees to meet veterans' needs more creatively.

- Responsive in the Field. VA is working at the grass roots level to reduce customer waiting times and red tape while reducing costs.
- Responsive to Women Veterans. VA has implemented a series of health care initiatives for women, including the establishment of eight Women Veterans Comprehensive Health Centers, four stress-disorder treatment programs, and a women's division to address psychological problems of female veterans exposed to war zone or sexual assault in the military.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS. An estimated one-third of our nation's homeless are veterans. The Administration's coordinated federal strategy to address homelessness includes a special focus on homeless veterans.

- Targeted, Supportive Funding. The President's budget calls for \$1.6 billion to assist communities in developing local, coordinated solutions to break the cycle of homelessness. VA funding of programs for homeless veterans has increased by more than 62 percent in the last three years, to the current level of \$76 million.
- New Homeless Initiatives. As part of a new Homeless Providers Grant Program, VA has awarded more than \$11.8 million to 59 public and private nonprofit groups to develop new programs to assist homeless veterans. In 1994, VA Secretary Brown called the first National Summit on Homelessness Among Veterans.
- Homeless Veterans Task Force. Recognizing the disproportionate size of the homeless veterans population and the often unique needs of this group, the Administration's Interagency Council on the Homeless established a Homeless Veterans Task Force to improve services and programs for homeless veterans across agencies.



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

Molly
207 EUB

Facsimile Cover Sheet

To: Lee Ann Inadomi
Company: C/A
Phone: _____
Fax: _____

From: Harold Gracey
Company: _____
Phone: 273-4808
Fax: _____

Linda Kaufman
273-4880
fax

Phone 273-4850

Date: 11/7
Pages including this
cover page: 6

Comments:

Our Edits as requested!



Putting Veterans First

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S RECORD FOR AMERICA'S VETERANS

"To honor our veterans...gratitude and ceremonies are not enough. We must protect the benefits you have earned, address fully the dangers imposed by modern warfare, and preserve what you fought for: the American Dream at home and our leadership around the world."

President Clinton
VFW Conference
March 6, 1995

COMMITMENT TO PROTECT AND HONOR VETERANS. President Clinton has fought to protect the benefits veterans have earned through service to our nation.

- Protection of Veterans Benefits. The President fought to preserve veterans' preferences for federal jobs; to ensure that veterans and military retirees received their full Cost of Living Adjustments; and has reached out to veterans around America to tell them about opportunities to refinance homes bought under the GI bill and about qualifying for compensation for disabilities possibly related to Agent Orange. *see page 5 for new bullets*
- Real Commitment to Veterans' Health Care. The President's 1996 budget calls for a \$1.3 billion increase in funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs, including an additional \$1 billion for health care. This increase would enable VA to provide medical treatment to an additional 43,000 veterans, construct two new hospitals and three nursing homes, and make a number of facility improvements.
- The President strongly opposes Republican budget proposals that would eliminate compensation for mentally disabled veterans, deny nearly 1 million veterans medical care, make poor veterans pay more for their health care, prevent necessary improvements in VA health care facilities, and impede VA's efforts to improve processing of benefits claims. *incompetent, service*
- In addition, the President is fighting reductions in Medicare and Medicaid that, in combination with the Republican proposals for VA health care programs, threaten to trigger a health care crisis for America's veterans. According to VA estimates, proposed Medicaid cuts would force up to 171,900 veterans to lose coverage; and proposed Medicare cuts would force the 8.8 million veterans on Medicare to pay increased premiums for lower quality care.

SUPPORTING VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT. As downsizing results in increasing numbers of service men and women separating early from the military, this Administration has worked hard to help them move into civilian jobs.

- Maintained commitment to veterans in federal hiring. A recent OPM report documents that despite overall hiring declines across the federal government in the last three years, the percentage of jobs going to veterans has increased. In

Add

① Benefits for Vietnam Veterans

② HIV/AIDS

①

addition, the federal government continues to lead the nation as an employer of disabled veterans.

- Training and Assistance. Over one and a half million veterans have been helped into jobs by the Department of Labor's veterans employment service, and nearly half a million separating service members and their spouses have received job search training under the Transition Assistance Program.
- Due in part to these efforts, the veterans' unemployment rate has been reduced by more than half during the first years of the Clinton Administration (7.2% in January 1993 to 3.4% in September 1995).

SUPPORTING PERSIAN GULF VETERANS The Administration has aggressively responded to veterans of the Persian Gulf War suffering from unexplained illnesses. *We have established a toll free number = 1-800-PGN-VETS to answer questions.*

- Presidential Advisory Committee. The President established a Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, comprised of scientists, physicians, veterans, and policy experts to review and make recommendations aimed at finding the causes of this illness and improving the care available to Persian Gulf veterans. The President has charged this Committee with ensuring that no stone is left unturned in efforts to identify the causes and provide care to Gulf War veterans who are ill.

- Benefits for Disabled Veterans. The President fought for legislation to pay compensation, for the first time, to chronically disabled veterans with undiagnosed illness. The first checks have already been presented to Persian Gulf veterans.

- Funding *are* New Money for Research. The Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense, and Health and Human Services will spend up to \$13 million on ~~new~~ *into* research on the possible causes, transmission and treatment of Gulf War veterans illnesses. *VA has established three new Environmental Research Centers focusing on Persian Gulf veterans' illness.*

- Expanded Medical Care and Communication. *evaluation* ~~DOD and VA~~ *four* have opened ~~six~~ new specialized ~~care~~ centers for veterans who need additional tests and treatment. In addition, VA and DOD have registered more than 55,000 Gulf War veterans with health concerns to help avoid the kinds of problems that delayed care and compensation for those with Agent Orange. And DOD and VA have opened toll free telephone lines for Persian Gulf veterans to receive information and provide first-hand accounts of incidents they believe may be related to this problem.

ACTIVE AND OPEN COMMUNICATION WITH VETERANS. This

Administration has conducted unprecedented outreach to veterans and veterans service organizations, leading to more responsive policy.

- Interagency Veterans Policy Group. An ongoing White House-driven Interagency Veterans Policy Group has

(2)

successfully worked to solicit and ensure progress on issues of concern to veterans.

- Appointments as Delegates. Veterans have been included on task forces and delegations, such as the White House Conference on Aging and the Presidential delegation to Vietnam.

REINVENTING AND IMPROVING GOVERNMENT AT THE VA. As part of the National Performance Review, President Clinton proposed changes at VA that will improve services and save money, many of which have long been advocated by veterans.

- Simplifying and Improving. Reinventing government initiatives proposed by the Administration will improve services to veterans, simplify VA's complex medical eligibility rules, determine pilots to test the use of Medicare benefits at VA hospitals, and save money by streamlining, privatizing, or consolidating unnecessary or duplicative activities.

- For example, the eligibility simplification included in these initiatives will replace an onerous 93-question eligibility interview with a one-stop direct *Application for VA medical care,* verification of income.

*long-time
veteran
advocates*

4 pages, form
Top Management Team at VA. The President has helped ensure these changes occur at VA by appointing top-notch, innovative people to lead the agency -- including Secretary Jesse Brown, Hershel Gober, *and Deputy Secretary* Mary Lou Keener, Charles Cragin, and Ken Kizer.

Department of Veterans Affairs
STREAMLINED AND MORE RESPONSIVE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION. VA continues to restructure, streamline and improve operations to provide even better and more efficient service to veterans.

- VA Reorganization. The Administration *developed a plan* introduced legislation to decentralize VA's national health care system. Through local decision making and resource allocation, ~~the~~ VA will deliver care more efficiently to veterans and be better positioned for full integration into a reformed, 21st-century health care environment.

- Customer-Responsive VA. President Clinton and VA Secretary Brown have executed a performance agreement to improve customer services at the VA. This agreement has created strong customer service standards, improvements in quality and timeliness of services, and has empowered VA employees to meet veterans' needs more creatively. *Department*

- Responsive in the Field. VA is working at the grass roots level to reduce customer waiting times, staffing and red tape while reducing costs. *Putting Veterans First!*

- Responsive to Women Veterans. VA has implemented a series of health care *Replace w/ #3*

NDU-07 95 10:40 PROHIBITED FROM DISSEMINATION
Initiatives for women, including the establishment of four comprehensive health centers, stress-disorder treatment teams, and the hiring of sexual harassment and assault counselors.

Replace w/ #3

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS. Veterans are an inordinate proportion of our nation's homeless. The Administration's coordinated federal strategy to address homelessness includes a special focus on homeless veterans. *President's*

- Targeted Supportive Funding. The President's budget calls for \$1.6 billion to assist communities in developing local, coordinated solutions to break the cycle of homelessness. VA funding of programs for homeless veterans has increased by more than 62 percent in the last three years, to the current level of \$76 million.
- New Homeless Initiatives. *has \$11.8 / 59* As part of a new Homeless Providers Grant Program, *this year* the VA awarded more than ~~\$6.37~~ million to ~~26~~ public and private nonprofit groups to develop new programs to assist homeless veterans. In 1994, ~~VA~~ Secretary Brown called the first National Summit on Homelessness Among Veterans.
- Homeless Veterans Task Force. Recognizing the disproportionate size of the homeless veterans population and the often unique needs of this group, the Administration's Interagency Council on the Homeless established a Homeless Veterans Task Force to improve services and programs for homeless veterans across agencies.

Add
#1

political shock

- **Benefits for Vietnam Veterans** -- VA-sponsored review conducted by the National Academy of Sciences found that certain cancers, a skin condition, and a liver disorder could be caused by Agent Orange exposure. We promptly adopted a policy of presuming service connection in these cases.

Replace #3

✓ **Women's Issues** -- Established eight Women Veterans Comprehensive Health Centers, four women's stress disorder treatment programs, and a woman's division to address psychological problems of female veterans exposed to war zone or sexual assault in the military. Appointed a Director of Center for Women Veterans to coordinate women's issues.

Add
#2

HIV/AIDS

VA has been a leader in HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)/AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) research and treatment almost from the outset of the epidemic in the early 1980's. We treated over 17,200 veterans with HIV or AIDS during FY 1994 alone.

(minor risk)

5

Molly,

Ref; Achievements

I suggest that you add words to reflect something like the following;

The president is committed to ensuring that federal personnel practices not discriminate against any employee or prospective employee because of service in the defense of our nation. The federal government is a "model employer" for providing job rights to those who serve have or are serving in the uniformed services of our nation.

Bob Jones

11/7

Jim Senton ✓

SUPPORTING VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT. ^{the mil} As ^{after Cold War,} downsizing results in increasing numbers of service men and women separating early from the military, this Administration has worked hard to help them move into civilian jobs.

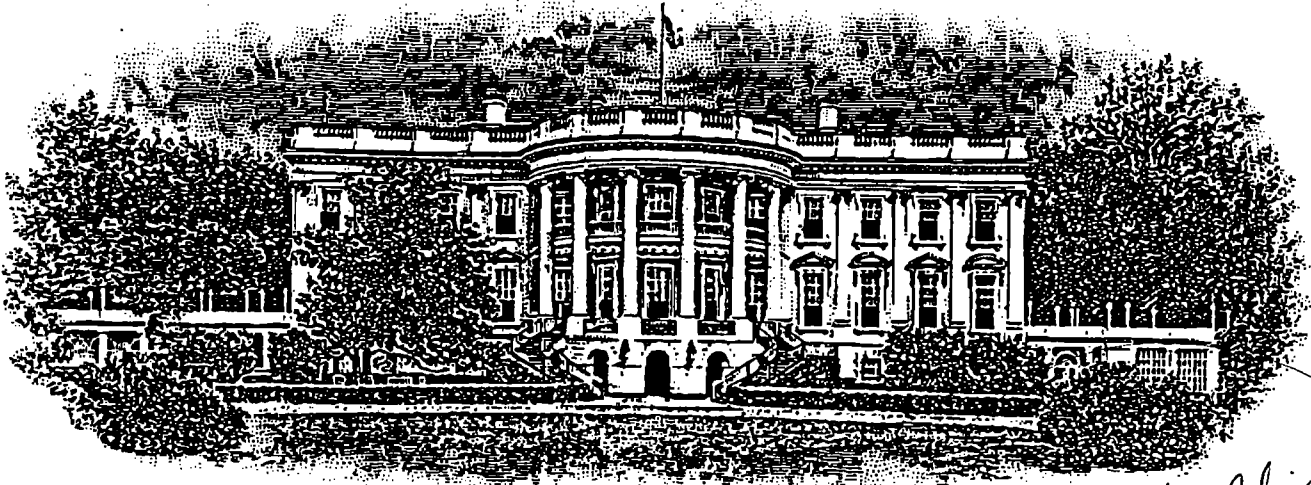
- Firm commitment to veterans in federal hiring. A recent OPM report documents that despite overall hiring declines across the federal government in the last three years, the percentage of jobs going to veterans has increased. The federal government continues to lead the nation in the percentage of veterans and disabled veterans in its workforce.
- Training and Assistance. Over one and a half million veterans have been helped into jobs by the Department of Labor's veterans employment service, and nearly half a million separating service members and their spouses have received job search training under the Transition Assistance Program.
- Due in part to these efforts, the veterans' unemployment rate has been reduced by more than half during the first years of the Clinton Administration (7.2% in January 1993 to 3.4% in September 1995).

SUPPORTING PERSIAN GULF VETERANS The Administration has aggressively responded to veterans of the Persian Gulf War suffering from unexplained illnesses.

- Presidential Advisory Committee. The President established a Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, comprised of scientists, physicians, veterans, and policy experts to review and make recommendations aimed at finding the causes of this illness and improving the care available to Persian Gulf veterans. The President has charged this Committee with ensuring that no stone is left unturned in efforts to identify the causes and provide care to Gulf War veterans who are ill.
- Benefits for Disabled Veterans. The President fought for legislation to pay compensation, for the first time, to chronically disabled veterans with undiagnosed illness. The first checks have already been presented to Persian Gulf veterans.
- New Money for Research. The Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense, and Health and Human Services will spend up to \$13 million on new research on the possible causes, transmission and treatment of Gulf War veterans illnesses.
- Expanded Medical Care and Communication. DOD and VA have opened six new specialized care centers for veterans who need

pm 207

The White House



DOMESTIC POLICY

To: Molly
Elisa
From:

FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION COVER SHEET

TO: Elisa HarrisFAX NUMBER: 6-9180

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

FROM: Molly BrostromTELEPHONE NUMBER: 6-5561 - (F)

PAGES (INCLUDING COVER): _____

COMMENTS: see attached

SUPPORTING VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT. As downsizing results in increasing numbers of service men and women separating early from the military, this Administration has worked hard to help them move into civilian jobs.

- Maintained commitment to veterans in federal hiring. A recent OPM report documents that despite overall hiring declines across the federal government in the last three years, the percentage of jobs going to veterans has increased. In addition, the federal government continues to lead the nation as an employer of disabled veterans.
- Training and Assistance. Over one and a half million veterans have been helped into jobs by the Department of Labor's veterans employment service, and nearly half a million separating service members and their spouses have received job search training under the Transition Assistance Program.
- Due in part to these efforts, the veterans' unemployment rate has been reduced by more than half during the first years of the Clinton Administration (7.2% in January 1993 to 3.4% in September 1995).

SUPPORTING PERSIAN GULF VETERANS The Administration has aggressively responded to veterans of the Persian Gulf War suffering from unexplained illnesses.

- Presidential Advisory Committee. The President established a Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, comprised of scientists, physicians, veterans, and policy experts to review and make recommendations aimed at finding the causes of ~~this~~^{these} illness^{es} and improving the care available to Persian Gulf veterans. The President has charged this Committee with ensuring that no stone is left unturned in efforts to identify the causes and provide care to Gulf War veterans who are ill. *A*
- Benefits for Disabled Veterans. The President fought for legislation to pay compensation, for the first time, to chronically disabled veterans with undiagnosed illness^{es}. The first checks have already been presented to Persian Gulf veterans.
- New Money for Research. The Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense, and Health and Human Services will spend up to \$13 million on new research on the possible causes, transmission and treatment of Gulf War veterans illnesses.
- Expanded Medical Care and Communication. DOD and VA have opened six new specialized care centers for veterans who need

Since being established in May 1995, the Committee has held two full committee meetings here in Washington and two subcommittee meetings. *regional*

not sure
of accuracy
check JA + DOD.

additional tests and treatment. In addition, VA and DOD have registered more than 55,000 Gulf War veterans with health concerns to help avoid the kinds of problems that delayed care and compensation for those with Agent Orange. And DOD and VA have opened toll free telephone lines for Persian Gulf veterans to receive information and provide first-hand accounts of incidents they believe may be related to this problem.

ACTIVE AND OPEN COMMUNICATION WITH VETERANS. This Administration has conducted unprecedented outreach to veterans and veterans service organizations, leading to more responsive policy.

- Interagency Veterans Policy Group. An ongoing White House -driven Interagency Veterans Policy Group has successfully worked to solicit and ensure progress on issues of concern to veterans.
- Appointments as Delegates. Veterans have been included on task forces and delegations, such as the White House Conference on Aging and the Presidential delegation to Vietnam.

REINVENTING AND IMPROVING GOVERNMENT AT THE VA. As part of the National Performance Review, President Clinton proposed changes at VA that will improve services and save money, many of which have long been advocated by veterans.

- Simplifying and Improving. Reinventing government initiatives proposed by the Administration will improve services to veterans, simplify VA's complex medical eligibility rules, determine pilots to test the use of Medicare benefits at VA hospitals, and save money by streamlining, privatizing, or consolidating unnecessary or duplicative activities.
- For example, the eligibility simplification included in these initiatives will replace an onerous 93-question eligibility interview with a one-stop direct verification of income.
- Top Management Team at VA. The President has helped ensure these changes occur at VA by appointing top-notch, innovative people to lead the agency -- including Secretary Jesse Brown, Hershel Gober, Mary Lou Keener, Charles Cragin, and Ken Kizer.

STREAMLINED AND MORE RESPONSIVE VETERANS

ADMINISTRATION. VA continues to restructure, streamline and improve operations to provide even better and more efficient service to veterans.

Len Klein ✓

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S RECORD FOR AMERICA'S VETERANS

"To honor our veterans...gratitude and ceremonies are not enough. We must protect the benefits you have earned, address fully the dangers imposed by modern warfare, and preserve what you fought for: the American Dream at home and our leadership around the world."

President Clinton
VFW Conference
March 6, 1995

COMMITMENT TO PROTECT AND HONOR VETERANS. President Clinton has fought to protect the benefits veterans have earned through service to our nation.

- Protection of Veterans Benefits. The President fought to preserve veterans' preferences for federal jobs; to ensure that veterans and military retirees received their full Cost of Living Adjustments; and has reached out to veterans around America to tell them about opportunities to refinance homes bought under the GI bill and about qualifying for compensation for disabilities possibly related to Agent Orange.
- A Strong Budget to Realize this Commitment. The President's 1996 budget calls for a \$1.3 billion increase in funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs, including an additional \$1 billion for health care. This increase would enable VA to provide medical treatment to an additional 43,000 veterans, construct two new hospitals and three nursing homes, and make a number of facility improvements.
- The President is opposed to Republican budget proposals that would eliminate compensation for mentally disabled veterans, deny nearly 1 million veterans medical care, make poor veterans pay more for their health care, prevent necessary improvements in VA health care facilities, and impede VA's efforts to improve processing of benefits claims.
- ADD BULLET ON IMPACT OF MEDICARE CUTS ON VETERANS
- Firm ~~Maintained~~ commitment to veterans in hiring. A recent OPM report documents that despite overall hiring declines across the federal government in the last three years, the percentage of jobs going to veterans has increased. In addition, the federal government continues to lead the nation as an employer of disabled veterans.
in the percentage of veterans and disabled veterans in its workforce.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

changes → title?

→ add GAO location
- change wording

VETERANS AFFAIRS

"To honor our veterans...gratitude and ceremonies are not enough. We must protect the benefits you have earned, address fully the dangers imposed by modern warfare, and preserve what you fought for: the American Dream at home and our leadership around the world."

President Bill Clinton
VFW Conference, March 6, 1995

President Clinton has fought to protect the benefits that veterans have earned in service to this nation and to address the new needs and challenges created by a changing world. The Clinton Administration has also worked to make the Department of Veterans Affairs more efficient and responsive, proposing and implementing changes at VA that will improve services and save money, many of which have long been advocated by veterans. The Administration has also aggressively responded to veterans of the Persian Gulf War suffering from unexplained illnesses, to the challenges created as the military downsized after the Cold War and to the needs of homeless veterans.

A RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT:

- **Improved and Restructured VA Health Care System:** The Clinton Administration implemented significant management restructuring of VA medical system, creating integrated service networks and consolidating duplicative medical and administrative services, to ensure that scarce resources are focused on patient care. To further expand resources, the Administration proposed "gainsharing" to allow VA medical facilities to retain a portion of the money VA collects from third parties. These changes will allow VA to provide 1.6 million more patient visits in 1996 with fewer resources.
- **Protecting Veterans Benefits:** The Clinton Administration ensured full cost of living adjustment on benefits going to disabled veterans and military retirees; fought to fully fund benefit programs; expanded eligibility for disability compensation for Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange; opposed Congressional proposals to eliminate compensation for certain mentally incompetent veterans; and proposed increased funding for national cemetery system to ensure that veterans and their families are buried with dignity.
- **Persian Gulf War Veterans' Illness:** President Clinton established the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illness aimed at finding the causes of these illnesses and improving the care available to Persian Gulf veterans. As part of Gulf War illness effort, the Administration expanded funding for research, medical care and communication at the Department of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Health and Human Services.
- **Firm Commitment to Veterans in Federal Hiring:** Despite overall hiring declines across the federal government in the last three years, the percentage of jobs going to veterans has increased. The federal government continues to lead the nation in the

Among new full-time federal hires,
percentage of veterans and disabled veterans in its workforce. The proportion of veterans in the federal workforce increased from 23.6% in 1992 to 33.3% in 1994.

- **Training and Assistance:** The Clinton Administration helped over 1.5 million veterans into jobs through the Department of Labor's veterans employment service. Nearly 500,000 separating service members and their spouses received job search training under the Department's Transition Assistance Program. As a whole, the veterans' unemployment rate has been cut by almost a third during the first three years of the Clinton Administration (7.2% in January 1993 to 4.9% in January 1996).
- **Faster Benefits Delivery:** The Administration improved processing time and reduced pending caseload for compensation and pension claims at the Veterans Benefits Administration. The President's FY 97 budget included funding for 50 positions for the Board of Veterans' Appeals to improve timeliness in processing appeals. In FY 97, the Veterans Benefits Administration will process original compensation claims 33 days faster than in FY 96, and the pending caseload will be reduced from 378,600 at the end of FY 95 to 277,000 cases at the end of FY 97 -- a 27% reduction.
- **Targeted, Supportive Assistance to Homeless Veterans:** President Clinton fought for increased funding to assist communities in developing local, coordinated solutions to break the cycle of homelessness. The Administration more than doubled VA funding of homeless programs in three years, to the current level of \$76 million. As part of a new Homeless Providers Grant Program, VA awarded more than \$11.8 million to 59 public and private nonprofit groups to develop new programs to assist homeless veterans. The Administration's Interagency Council on the Homeless established a Homeless Veterans Task Force to improve services and programs for homeless veterans across agencies.

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD:

President Clinton will continue to fight to protect the benefits veterans have earned and to help veterans respond to new needs and challenges:

- Work for passage of reinventing government initiatives that will improve services to veterans, simplify complex eligibility rules, and save money through streamlining.
- Continue restructuring of VA's health care system.
- Continue to improve veterans' benefits delivery system to give veterans increased access and more efficient service.
- Continue to work with Presidential Advisory Committee to find causes and care for Persian Gulf Veterans with undiagnosed illnesses.
- Continue unprecedented outreach to veterans and veterans service organizations.

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S RECORD FOR AMERICA'S VETERANS: OVERVIEW

"To honor our veterans...gratitude and ceremonies are not enough. We must protect the benefits you have earned, address fully the dangers imposed by modern warfare, and preserve what you fought for: the American Dream at home and our leadership around the world."

President Clinton

VFW Conference, March 6, 1995

Overview. President Clinton has fought to protect the benefits that veterans have earned in service to this nation and to address the new needs and challenges created by a changing world. The Administration has aggressively responded to veterans of the Persian Gulf War suffering from unexplained illnesses, to the challenges created as the military downsized after the Cold War, and to the needs of homeless veterans. This Administration has also worked hard to make the Department of Veterans Affairs more efficient and responsive, proposing and implementing changes at VA that will improve services and save money, many of which have long been advocated by veterans.

Accomplishments

- **Protecting Veterans Benefits.** Ensured full cost of living adjustment on benefits going to disabled veterans and military retirees; fought to fully fund benefit programs; expanded eligibility for disability compensation for Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange; opposed Congressional proposals to eliminate compensation for certain mentally incompetent veterans; and proposed increased funding for national cemetery system to ensure that veterans and their families are buried with dignity.
- **Improved and Restructured VA Health Care System.** Implemented significant management restructuring of VA medical system, creating integrated service networks and consolidating duplicative medical and administrative services, to ensure that scarce resources are focused on patient care. To further expand resources, proposed "gainsharing" to allow VA medical facilities to retain a portion of the money VA collects from third parties. These changes will allow VA to provide 1.6 million more patient visits in 1996 with fewer resources.
- **Persian Gulf War Veterans' Illness.** Established Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illness aimed at finding the causes of these illnesses and improving the care available to Persian Gulf veterans. As part of Gulf War illness effort, expanded funding for research, medical care and communication at DoD, VA, and HHS.
- **Firm commitment to veterans in federal hiring.** Despite overall hiring declines across the federal government in the last three years, the percentage of jobs going to veterans has increased. The federal government continues to lead the nation in the percentage of veterans and disabled veterans in its workforce.
- **Training and Assistance.** Helped over one and a half million veterans into jobs through the Department of Labor's veterans employment service. Nearly half a million separating service members and their spouses received job search training under DOL's Transition Assistance Program.

Faster Benefits Delivery. Improved processing time and reduced pending caseload for compensation and pension claims at the Veterans Benefits Administration. Included funding in FY 97 budget for 50 positions for the Board of Veterans' Appeals to improve timeliness in processing appeals.

Targeted, Supportive Assistance to Homeless Veterans. Fought for increased funding to assist communities in developing local, coordinated solutions to break the cycle of homelessness. More than doubled VA funding of homeless programs in three years, to the current level of \$76 million. As part of a new Homeless Providers Grant Program, VA awarded more than \$11.8 million to 59 public and private nonprofit groups to develop new programs to assist homeless veterans. The Administration's Interagency Council on the Homeless established a Homeless Veterans Task Force to improve services and programs for homeless veterans across agencies.

Statistical Backup

In FY 97, the Veterans Benefits Administration will process original compensation claims 33 days faster than in FY 96, and the pending caseload will be reduced from 378,600 at the end of FY 95 to 277,000 cases at the end of FY 97 -- a 27% reduction.

The proportion of veterans in the federal workforce increased from 23.6% in 1992 to 33.3% in 1994.

The veterans' unemployment rate has been cut by almost a third during the first three years of the Clinton Administration (7.2% in January 1993 to 4.9% in January 1996).

Agenda. President Clinton will continue to fight to protect the benefits veterans have earned and to help veterans respond to new needs and challenges.

Work for passage of reinventing government initiatives that will improve services to veterans, simplify complex eligibility rules, and save money through streamlining

Continue implementation of restructuring of VA's health care system

Continue to improve veterans benefits delivery system to give veterans increased access and more efficient service

Continue work with Presidential Advisory Committee to find causes and care for Persian Gulf Veterans with undiagnosed illnesses

Continue strong outreach to veterans and veterans service organizations

March 1996

- ▶ The Department of Veterans Affairs is the nation's pre-eminent spinal cord injury health care and rehabilitation provider. VA medical centers utilize state-of-the-art diagnostic and rehabilitation equipment and cutting edge research to help about 10,000 veterans with spinal cord injuries each year. We are checking on exact funding levels for spinal cord injury health services and research (the research figure is something less than \$25 million).

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
FAX COVER SHEET

NOTE: THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS FACSIMILE MESSAGE IS
CONFIDENTIAL AND INTENDED FOR THE RECIPIENT ONLY.

DATE: _____

TO: _____

Molly

FAX #: _____

67028

FROM: _____

GORDON LI

(PHONE: 202/456-6493)

RE: _____

PAGE 1 OF 2

If there are any problems with this transmission, please call
(202) 456-6493.

FAX SENT: _____

President Clinton And The Veterans

It is a given that some of our readers will not accord the president any praise, no matter how much it may be deserved. Because of circumstances surrounding his lack of military service, detractors are unwilling to put aside their personal feelings and judge performance in the areas of their own special interests solely on merit. While attending the 50th anniversary of the D-Day invasion, we talked about this factor with many of those who actually stormed the tortured and bloody cliffs and beaches of Normandy. We found that, by and large, hardened combat veterans are much more likely to cut Mr. Clinton some slack than are those who may have served in peacetime or in areas slightly or not at all penetrated by the sound of gunfire.

As he completes two years as president of the United States, The Stars and Stripes offers its assessment of President Clinton's stewardship over those who have served this country in the uniformed services. We believe he has done an outstanding job and deserves credit in an area where credit is due.

While we have differed sharply in these pages with Mr. Clinton, and will continue to do so when we feel his decisions are in error, in the field of veterans affairs, where we can claim a degree of knowledge and expertise, we have found little to criticize.

Every president plays an enormously important role in how veterans are treated, how entitlements and other programs are interpreted and administered, and what legislation affecting this more than 27 million-member community is recommended to the Congress. Make no mistake: veterans entitlements will come under severe pressure in the coming years and benefits for veterans will not escape the shears of the budget-cutters.

In every Congress fewer and fewer of the newly elected members are veterans, and thus do not always bring an automatic understanding of, and empathy for, the problems and needs of those who have served. This president, perhaps the most famous of non-veterans, appears to possess that understanding and empathy and, more importantly, has acted accordingly.

The VA remains a glacially slow institution when it comes to changing its ways, streamlining and modernizing. Yet there can be no question that Mr. Clinton's choice of a top management team—Jesse Brown, Hershel Gober, Mary Lou Keener, Charles Cragin, Ken Kizer and others—has created a dynamic group interested in innovative solutions for the VA's crippling entropy.

Among the most impressive of Mr. Clinton's actions has been the administration's strong commitment to seeing that the history of Agent Orange doesn't repeat itself in Gulf War syndrome—for the first time ever allowing the VA to compensate veterans for as-yet undiagnosed illnesses.

The national health care plan failed in Congress, so we will never know if it was the panacea promised by the administration. Still, it is important to note that the Clinton plan was the only bill in the entire health care debate that recognized the special health needs of veterans, offering them a choice between an upgraded VA and private health care.

The president made several promises to veterans. He promised not to cut veterans programs—and the

1996 VA budget proposal contains no cuts. He promised to hold the line on veterans entitlements—and he has, in spite of criticism from some quarters. He promised to support veterans preference, and not to establish full diplomatic relations with Hanoi until the "fullest possible accounting" of America's MIAs from the Vietnam War are accounted for.

Mr. Clinton has also shown that he can keep his promises to veterans even in the face of dissent within his administration. When Postmaster Marvin Runyon attempted to stamp "cancel" on veterans preference in the postal service, one of the federal government's leading employers, Mr. Clinton firmly quashed the effort.

One of the principal characteristics of Mr. Clinton's administration has been access. Veterans service organizations have participated in more than 80 significant White House activities and meetings. Veterans have been appointed as delegates to the White House Conference on Aging, and sent as part of the presidential delegation to Vietnam. The White House Domestic Policy Council has, for the first time, established a veterans policy group to oversee coordination of veterans programs across several federal agencies.

Rarely have veterans activists participated at such a high level or with such frequency in the formulation of policy.

The Clinton administration has its share of problems. But disputes with the president's stands on military, foreign policy or other issues should not interfere with a rational assessment of his domestic efforts to work for veterans.

The Stars and Stripes, an independent newspaper and the nation's oldest national veterans publication, views in a positive light Mr. Clinton's two-year efforts on behalf of veterans. We commend him and his administrators for their accomplishments. ★

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S RECORD FOR AMERICA'S VETERANS: OVERVIEW

"To honor our veterans...gratitude and ceremonies are not enough. We must protect the benefits you have earned, address fully the dangers imposed by modern warfare, and preserve what you fought for: the American Dream at home and our leadership around the world."

President Clinton

VFW Conference, March 6, 1995

Overview. President Clinton has fought to protect the benefits that veterans have earned in service to this nation and to address the new needs and challenges created by a changing world. The Administration has aggressively responded to veterans of the Persian Gulf War suffering from unexplained illnesses, to the challenges created as the military downsized after the Cold War, and to the needs of homeless veterans. This Administration has also worked hard to make the Department of Veterans Affairs more efficient and responsive, proposing and implementing changes at VA that will improve services and save money, many of which have long been advocated by veterans.

Accomplishments

- . **Protecting Veterans Benefits.** Ensured full cost of living adjustment on benefits going to disabled veterans and military retirees; fought to fully fund benefit programs; expanded eligibility for disability compensation for Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange; opposed Congressional proposals to eliminate compensation for certain mentally incompetent veterans; and proposed increased funding for national cemetery system to ensure that veterans and their families are buried with dignity.
- . **Improved and Restructured VA Health Care System.** Implemented significant management restructuring of VA medical system, creating integrated service networks and consolidating duplicative medical and administrative services, to ensure that scarce resources are focused on patient care. To further expand resources, proposed "gainsharing" to allow VA medical facilities to retain a portion of the money VA collects from third parties. These changes will allow VA to provide 1.6 million more patient visits in 1996 with fewer resources.
- . **Persian Gulf War Veterans' Illness.** Established Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illness aimed at finding the causes of these illnesses and improving the care available to Persian Gulf veterans. As part of Gulf War illness effort, expanded funding for research, medical care and communication at DoD, VA, and HHS.
- . **Firm commitment to veterans in federal hiring.** Despite overall hiring declines across the federal government in the last three years, the percentage of jobs going to veterans has increased. The federal government continues to lead the nation in the percentage of veterans and disabled veterans in its workforce.
- . **Training and Assistance.** Helped over one and a half million veterans into jobs through the Department of Labor's veterans employment service. Nearly half a million separating service members and their spouses received job search training under DOL's Transition Assistance Program.

Faster Benefits Delivery. Improved processing time and reduced pending caseload for compensation and pension claims at the Veterans Benefits Administration. Included funding in FY 97 budget for 50 positions for the Board of Veterans' Appeals to improve timeliness in processing appeals.

Targeted, Supportive Assistance to Homeless Veterans. Fought for increased funding to assist communities in developing local, coordinated solutions to break the cycle of homelessness. More than doubled VA funding of homeless programs in three years, to the current level of \$76 million. As part of a new Homeless Providers Grant Program, VA awarded more than \$11.8 million to 59 public and private nonprofit groups to develop new programs to assist homeless veterans. The Administration's Interagency Council on the Homeless established a Homeless Veterans Task Force to improve services and programs for homeless veterans across agencies.

Statistical Backup

- . In FY 97, the Veterans Benefits Administration will process original compensation claims 33 days faster than in FY 96, and the pending caseload will be reduced from 378,600 at the end of FY 95 to 277,000 cases at the end of FY 97 -- a 27% reduction.
- . The proportion of veterans in the federal workforce increased from 23.6% in 1992 to 33.3% in 1994.
- . The veterans' unemployment rate has been cut by almost a third during the first three years of the Clinton Administration (7.2% in January 1993 to 4.9% in January 1996).

Agenda. President Clinton will continue to fight to protect the benefits veterans have earned and to help veterans respond to new needs and challenges.

- . Work for passage of reinventing government initiatives that will improve services to veterans, simplify complex eligibility rules, and save money through streamlining
- . Continue implementation of restructuring of VA's health care system
- . Continue to improve veterans benefits delivery system to give veterans increased access and more efficient service
- . Continue work with Presidential Advisory Committee to find causes and care for Persian Gulf Veterans with undiagnosed illnesses
- . Continue unprecedented outreach to veterans and veterans service organizations

Contact: Molly Brostrom, 207 EOB, X65561

Last Update: 03/21/96

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S RECORD FOR AMERICA'S VETERANS

"To honor our veterans...gratitude and ceremonies are not enough. We must protect the benefits you have earned, address fully the dangers imposed by modern warfare, and preserve what you fought for: the American Dream at home and our leadership around the world."

President Clinton
VFW Conference, March 6, 1995

"We owe it to the World War II generation to remember, but we owe them more. For just as freedom has its price, it also has its purpose, to enable people to live up to their God-given potential and to continue the march of human progress. We, who are heirs of their legacy, must always be the guardian of their dreams."

President Clinton
Commemoration of V-J Day, September 2, 1995

As he completes two years as president of the United States, The Stars and Stripes...believe[s] he has done an outstanding job and deserves credit in an area where credit is due.

The Stars and Stripes, 2/20/95

COMMITMENT TO PROTECT AND HONOR VETERANS. President Clinton has fought to protect the benefits veterans have earned by serving their nation.

- Protecting Veterans Benefits. The President is committed to preserving veterans' preferences for federal jobs; has fought to ensure that veterans compensation and military retiree pay receive their full Cost of Living Adjustments; and has reached out to veterans around America to tell them about opportunities to refinance homes bought under the GI bill.
- Benefits for Vietnam Veterans. In 1993, a VA-sponsored review conducted by the National Academy of Sciences found that certain cancers and illnesses could be caused by Agent Orange exposure. The Administration promptly presumed service connection for these cases and has conducted outreach to Vietnam Veterans to inform them about qualifying for compensation for disabilities possibly related to Agent Orange.
- Real Commitment to Veterans' Health Care. The President's 1996 budget called for a \$1.3 billion increase in funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs, including an additional \$1 billion for health care. This increase would enable VA to provide medical treatment to an additional 43,000 veterans, construct two new hospitals and three nursing homes, and make a number of facility improvements.
- Fighting GOP Plans to Cut Veterans' Benefits. The President strongly opposes Republican budget proposals that would eliminate compensation for certain incompetent service-disabled veterans, deny up to 113,000 veterans medical care, make certain veterans pay more for their health care, prevent necessary improvements in VA health care facilities, and impede VA's efforts to improve processing of benefits claims.

- The President is also fighting reductions in Medicare and Medicaid that, in combination with the Republican proposals for VA health care programs, would threaten the health care of America's veterans. Proposed Medicaid cuts would force as many as 156,000 veterans to lose coverage; and proposed Medicare cuts would force the 8.8 million veterans on Medicare to pay higher premiums and deductibles for health care.

PROMOTING VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT. As the military downsized after the Cold War, increasing numbers of service men and women separated early from the military. This Administration has worked hard to help them move into civilian jobs.

- Firm commitment to veterans in federal hiring. A recent OPM report documents that despite overall hiring declines across the federal government in the last three years, the percentage of jobs going to veterans has increased. Among new full-time federal hires, the proportion of veterans increased from 23.6% in 1992 to 33.3% in 1994. The federal government continues to lead the nation in the percentage of veterans and disabled veterans in its workforce.
- Protection for Members of the National Guard and Reserve. This Administration has actively worked to ensure that federal personnel practices do not discriminate against any employee because of service in the National Guard or Reserve.
- Training and Assistance. Over one and a half million veterans have been helped into jobs by the Department of Labor's veterans employment service, and nearly half a million separating service members and their spouses have received job search training under the Transition Assistance Program.
- Due in part to these efforts, the veterans' unemployment rate has been cut by more than half during the first years of the Clinton Administration (7.2% in January 1993 to 3.4% in September 1995).

SUPPORTING PERSIAN GULF VETERANS The Administration has aggressively responded to veterans of the Persian Gulf War suffering from unexplained illnesses.

- Presidential Advisory Committee. The President established a Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, comprised of scientists, physicians, veterans, and policy experts to review and make recommendations aimed at finding the causes of these illnesses and improving the care available to Persian Gulf veterans. The President has charged this Committee with ensuring that no stone is left unturned in efforts to identify the causes and provide care to Gulf War veterans who are ill. Since being established in May 1995, the Committee has held two full committee meetings and two regional subcommittee meetings.
- Benefits for Disabled Veterans. The President fought for legislation to pay compensation, for the first time, to chronically disabled veterans with undiagnosed illnesses. The first checks have already been presented to Persian Gulf veterans.

- Funding for Research. The Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Affairs are spending up to \$13 million on research into the possible causes, transmission and treatment of Gulf War veterans illnesses. VA has established three new Environmental Research Centers focusing on Persian Gulf veterans' illnesses.
- Expanded Medical Care and Communication. DoD and VA have opened six new specialized care centers for veterans who need additional tests and treatment. In addition, VA and DoD have registered more than 70,000 Gulf War veterans with health concerns to help avoid the kinds of problems that delayed care and compensation for those with Agent Orange. And DoD and VA have opened toll free telephone lines for Persian Gulf veterans to receive information and provide first-hand accounts of incidents they believe may be related to this problem (DoD, 1-800-796-9699; VA, 1-800-PGW-VETS).

ACTIVE AND OPEN COMMUNICATION WITH VETERANS. This Administration has conducted unprecedented outreach to veterans and veterans service organizations, leading to more responsive policy.

- Interagency Veterans Policy Group. An ongoing White House-driven Interagency Veterans Policy Group has successfully worked to solicit ideas and ensure progress on issues of concern to veterans and military organizations.
- Appointments as Delegates. Veterans have been included on task forces and delegations, such as the White House Conference on Aging and the Presidential delegation to Vietnam.

REINVENTING AND IMPROVING GOVERNMENT AT VA. As part of the National Performance Review, President Clinton proposed changes at VA that will improve services and save money, many of which have long been advocated by veterans.

- Simplifying and Improving. Reinventing government initiatives proposed by the Administration will improve services to veterans, simplify VA's complex medical eligibility rules, determine pilots to test the use of Medicare benefits at VA hospitals, and save money by streamlining, privatizing, or consolidating unnecessary or duplicative activities.
- For example, the eligibility simplification included in these initiatives will replace an onerous four page, 93-question form with a one-page application for VA medical care.
- Top Management Team at VA. The President has helped ensure these changes will be put into action at VA by appointing top-notch, innovative people to lead the agency -- including long-time veteran advocates Secretary Jesse Brown and Deputy Secretary Hershel Gober.

STREAMLINED AND MORE RESPONSIVE VA. VA continues to restructure, streamline and improve operations to provide even better and more efficient service to veterans.

- VA Reorganization. The Administration developed a plan to decentralize VA's national health care system. Through local decision making and resource allocation, VA will deliver care more efficiently to veterans and be better positioned for full integration into a reformed, 21st-century health care environment.
- Customer-Responsive VA. President Clinton and Secretary Brown have executed a performance agreement to improve customer services at the VA. This agreement -- part of VA's strategy of "Putting Veterans First!" -- has created strong customer service standards, improvements in quality and timeliness of services, and has empowered VA employees to meet veterans' needs more creatively.
- Responsive in the Field. VA is working at the grass roots level to reduce customer waiting times and red tape while reducing costs.
- Responsive to Women Veterans. VA has implemented a series of health care initiatives for women, including the establishment of eight Women Veterans Comprehensive Health Centers, four stress-disorder treatment programs, and a women's division to address psychological problems of female veterans exposed to war zone or sexual assault in the military.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS. An estimated one-third of our nation's homeless are veterans. The Administration's coordinated federal strategy to address homelessness includes a special focus on homeless veterans.

- Targeted, Supportive Funding. The President's budget calls for \$1.6 billion to assist communities in developing local, coordinated solutions to break the cycle of homelessness. VA funding of programs for homeless veterans has increased by more than 62 percent in the last three years, to the current level of \$76 million.
- New Homeless Initiatives. As part of a new Homeless Providers Grant Program, VA has awarded more than \$11.8 million to 59 public and private nonprofit groups to develop new programs to assist homeless veterans. In 1994, VA Secretary Brown called the first National Summit on Homelessness Among Veterans.
- Homeless Veterans Task Force. Recognizing the disproportionate size of the homeless veterans population and the often unique needs of this group, the Administration's Interagency Council on the Homeless established a Homeless Veterans Task Force to improve services and programs for homeless veterans across agencies.

ISSUES: VETERANS/BUDGET

Background/Republican Proposals:

- The House budget proposal would restrict or eliminate compensation for incompetent veterans (without a spouse or dependents) with assets greater than \$25,000. It phases in an increase in the prescription drug copayment from \$2.00 to \$8.00 for a 30-day supply of drugs.
- The Senate increases an active-duty member's contribution to the GI Bill Educational Benefits program by about 35%. It redefines and narrows eligibility for VA service-connected disabilities. It phases in an increase in the prescription drug copayment for upper income veterans. *- only natural life disease*
- In discretionary spending the House and Senate would freeze VA's 1996 medical care budget at the 1995 level (\$700 million below the President's request). The House and the Senate would cut VA's 1996 construction budget by \$300 - \$400 million below 1995. These cuts would prevent VA from replacing the medical center at Martinez, California, which was closed due to the San Francisco earthquake. *- 95% of them are poor & disabled CVA ~ 1-2 M vets*

Administration's Position:

- The 1996 budget calls for a \$1.3 billion increase in funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs, including an additional \$1 billion for health care.
- This increase will enable VA to provide medical treatment to an additional 43,000 veterans, construct two new hospitals and three nursing homes, and make a number of facility improvements.

Impact of President's Plan for a Balanced Budget

- The Administration's VA budget proposals are close to the House levels in total over the next 7 years.
- Beyond 2002, the Administration's proposals are much higher than the House and Senate (assuming that the Congressional 7-year budget trends extend to 10 years).
- The President's 10 year budget in aggregate is \$4 billion higher than the House and \$13 billion higher than the Senate resolution.

[NOTE: These numbers are NOT YET PUBLIC. The only balanced budget numbers that are public are non-defense discretionary totals.]

Administration Accomplishments for Veterans:

- **Benefits:** The President has fought to preserve veterans preference for jobs; and to ensure that veterans and military retirees receive their full Cost of Living Adjustments.
- **Reinvention:** VA REGO II proposals will improve services to veterans, simplify VA's complex medical eligibility rules, determine pilots to test the use of Medicare benefits at VA hospitals, and save money by streamlining, privatizing, or consolidating unnecessary or duplicative activities.
- **Persian Gulf Veterans:** The President established a Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses to ensure that no stone is left unturned in efforts to identify the causes and provide care to Gulf War veterans who are ill. He also fought for legislation to pay compensation, for the first time, to chronically disabled veterans with undiagnosed illness. VA, Defense, and HHS will spend up to \$13 million on new research on the causes, transmission, and treatment of Gulf War veterans illnesses. And DOD and VA have opened 6 new specialized care centers for veterans who need additional tests and treatment.
- **Outreach:** This Administration has conducted unprecedented outreach to veterans service organizations. A White House-driven Interagency Veterans Policy Group works to ensure progress on issues of concern to veterans.
- **Homelessness:** VA awarded the first-ever grants to public and private nonprofit groups under a program to develop new homeless veterans assistance programs. Forty-four new or expanded programs were approved for homeless veterans at VA facilities nationwide. VA funding of programs for homeless veterans increased by more than 62 percent in the last three years, to the current level of \$76 million. VA Secretary Brown called for the first National Summit on Homelessness among Veterans, held February 24-5, 1994 in Washington, D.C.

E X E C U T I V E O F F I C E O F T H E P R E S I D E N T

09-Nov-1995 06:26pm

TO: Christopher C. Jennings
TO: Molly Brostrom
TO: Alex S. Keenan
TO: Nancy-Ann E. Min

FROM: Aaron J. Rappaport
National Economic Council

SUBJECT: Veterans

As a conservative estimate of the number of veterans who will lose Medicaid coverage in 2002, Jean Lambrew suggests using 156,000. If it's good enough for Jean, it is good enough for us.

This number is based on HHS' new estimate that 8 million people will lose Medicaid coverage under the revised House formula. Specifically, for those who care, 156,000 is calculated by dividing 8 million by 8.8 million (the ratio of veterans losing coverage under the new and the old formulas) and then multiplying that ration by 171,900 (the number of veterans losing coverage under the old formula). Don't hesitate to call if you have questions.

CYRIL WINSICK WAS SERVING AS A forward spotter for a mortar crew when he was captured by German troops near the town of Aachen in October 1944. He spent much of the following winter being force-marched across Germany before he was liberated in April 1945. A half-century later, Winsick still can't speak of his ordeal without crying, but at least it did earn him one benefit: as a former POW, he was entitled to lifelong free medical care from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Or so he thought.

Winsick's doctors at the Long Beach, California, VA hospital discovered a benign tumor growing in his brain five years ago but decided he could not survive surgery to remove it because of a heart condition, which had required a quadruple by-pass operation. Fortunately, there was a life-saving alternative: he could undergo "gamma knife" radiation. The VA hospital didn't offer that particular treatment, but the nearby private Hospital of the Good Samaritan did. Winsick's VA doctors set out to arrange VA funding for Winsick's treatment there.

Five years later, they are still trying. VA bureaucrats insist that Winsick does not qualify for such funding and should rely on his Medicare medical coverage. But Winsick, thinking he was covered by the VA, never signed up for Medicare. He is eligible to sign up in January 1996, but his coverage will not begin until next July. By then he could be dead. "I fought in the war, and I was a prisoner," says Winsick. "I expected humane treatment afterward. I'm getting shafted."

This Saturday marks the 50th Veterans' Day since the end of World War II. Church bells will peal at 11 a.m., 50,000 active and veteran servicemen and -women will march up Fifth Avenue in New York City, and President Clinton will dedicate the site for a World War II memorial on the Mall in Washington. Wreaths will be laid, flags saluted, taps blown and countless speeches delivered to honor those who served in what's been called the Good War. Then the nation will get back to business, and the business of the nation these days is balancing the budget, and if balancing the budget requires cutting back on veterans' medical care—well, *c'est la guerre*.

According to Richard Robinson, benefits-services director of the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association, Winsick's special status as an ex-POW obligates the VA to get him the treatment he needs by contracting with a private provider if necessary. "We run into this type of wrongful, dollar-driven disallowance all the time,"

says Robinson. "They're trying to cut corners. The name of the game is to try to save money and to hell with the veteran."

Access to free health care from the VA Department, once available to all honorably discharged veterans, has since 1986 been restricted, for the most part, to low-income veterans and those with service-connected disabilities, categories that include 10 million of the nation's 28.5 million veterans. Almost 3 million individual veterans utilized VA care in fiscal 1994. Now Congress's budget bill projects flat spending of \$16.2 billion annually for VA medical programs through the year 2002, with no provision for inflation or mandated salary increases or an influx of patients owing to reductions in Medicare and Medicaid. In real dollars, this amounts to a massive cut; President Clinton's budget proposal would have tightened the screws even more.

Paradoxically, the VA, notorious as a pork pipeline and bastion of bloated bureaucracy, is at the same time starving for

resources. Its medical-programs budget has been declining in real dollars for 16 years. Some congressional mandates restrict access and ration care in often misconceived efforts to keep costs down, while others keep federal dollars flowing to unneeded facilities in Congressmen's districts, driving costs up. Long-forgotten political horse trades, now enshrined in law, make it difficult for the VA to deploy its resources rationally to best meet the real needs of veterans.

So as 7.7 million World War II veterans enter their years of peak medical need—their median age is 73—the VA may be decreasingly able to serve them. "If you lock us into the 1995 spending levels for the next seven years, you make some assumptions almost as though there's nobody out there to treat," says Jesse Brown, Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. "A lot of people are behaving as though our veterans are already dead."

Eight and a half million veterans are 65

HEALTH CARE

MORTAL COMBAT AT T

The doctor of last resort for poor, injured vets is struggling

T THE VA

gg ing to do its duty

or older. Twenty-five thousand of them suffer from paralyzing spinal-cord injuries or diseases, and in many cases, their spouses are growing too frail to care for them at home. Six hundred thousand veterans, by VA estimate, will be suffering from Alzheimer's and other severely dementing conditions by the year 2000. Yet the VA and state veterans homes today can provide fewer than 40,000 nursing-home beds. "The demand for long-term care is going to skyrocket over the next five to 15 years," observes VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Kenneth Kizer, who estimates that in the year 2010, 1.6 million vets will be 85 or older. "If you don't have the money, you can't provide the service."

The VA's medical system, which claims a backlog of \$870 million in unmet needs for equipment and \$800 million in deferred maintenance and repairs, will lay off 5,000 to 10,000 employees next year, and not all of them will be bureaucrats. As it is, the care-giving staff is stretched so thin on

AMERICAN LEGIONS: Nearly 3 million of the nation's veterans got VA care last year

some wards that quadriplegics complain of spending days in bed for lack of anyone to help them up. Gerald Barba, 39, a peacetime Navy veteran who broke his neck in a swimming accident, praises the dedication of the staff at the VA Hospital in the Bronx, New York, but says they are short-handed. "Sometimes when I need to have my lungs suctioned—I cannot cough—no one comes until I'm bubbling over, gargling for breath." Winsick confirms that in Long Beach, staff and services are being "nibbled away all the time." A diabetic who usually sees a podiatrist once a month, Winsick says none has been available for several months.

Representative Bob Stump, Republican from Arizona and chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, calls the charge that Congress has balanced the budget on the backs of veterans "just plain mean, disgraceful." He argues that a declining veteran population, coupled with streamlined management and reform of the arcane eligibility rules that keep veterans' hospitals from delivering care in the most efficient way, should enable the VA to maintain its level of service. "Without a balanced federal budget," he adds, "rising interest payments on the national debt would soon crowd out our ability to continue providing for the nation's veterans."

Veterans' advocates and the VA itself agree that relief from congressionally mandated rules that tilt the system toward expensive in-patient care could squeeze far more bang from the buck. (Under the present system, for example, many veterans cannot receive treatment for hypertension as outpatients. They have to wait to be admitted as in-patients for a heart attack or stroke.) But while the House has passed eligibility reform, the Senate has not.

Given its many Byzantine rules, it's not surprising that the VA has been the health-care provider of last resort for many vets, who turn first to employee benefits, Medicare or Medicaid. But according to estimates announced last week by the VA and the Department of Health and Human Services, as many as 172,000 veterans could lose their Medicaid coverage in 2002. At the same time, increasing premiums and copayments for Medicare could spur an additional 400,000 veterans to head to VA medical centers. The numbers

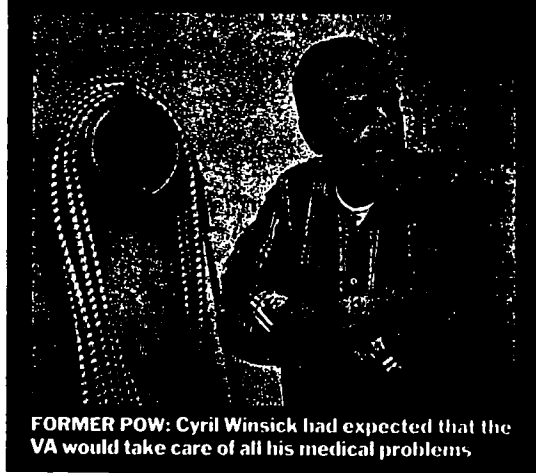
are debatable, but the basic dynamic is not: all three systems of medical coverage are cycling down together.

"People think of the VA as that red brick building up on the hill, where Uncle Charlie died," says Richard Fuller, director of health-policy program development for the Paralyzed Veterans of America. "They don't realize that the VA is an integral part of the health-care network. With the VA budget being cut and Medicare and Medicaid being capped below existing growth rates, you have people going into health-care limbo."

Under Secretary Kizer was brought in last year to try to make the VA system more



PARALYZED KOREAN WAR VETERAN: Richard Ortiz fears the VA will quit treating noncombat injuries



FORMER POW: Cyril Winsick had expected that the VA would take care of all his medical problems

efficient, consolidating redundant facilities and shifting the emphasis from in-patient to outpatient care to the extent the law allows. But if demand begins to dwarf resources, he says, the VA will circle the wagons around its core mission of providing for veterans' service-related disabilities. Other services, such as nursing-home care, says Kizer, "are subject to being diminished." The extent to which the VA will be able to treat the poor or nonservice-related maladies will depend on the political decisions Americans make—after the Veterans' Day hoopla fades.

—Reported by

James Willwerth/La Mirada

DAV



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

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

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

October 13, 1995

All Members of the United States House and Senate

Dear Senator/Congressman/Congresswoman:

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) is vehemently opposed to the provision in H.R. 2099, Fiscal Year 1996 VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies Appropriations bill to means test VA disability compensation paid to certain mentally incompetent veterans.

Taking away compensation from veterans who became disabled as a result of service to their country is reprehensible. Such a callous move strikes at the very heart of our nation's sacred obligation to provide compensation to all citizen-soldiers disabled in defense of the social, political, and economic freedoms we all enjoy. Disability compensation for veterans is not some form of welfare -- it is recompense for illness or injury incurred as a result of military service.

My staff has prepared a fact sheet containing pertinent information on the provision in H.R. 2099 to means test VA disability compensation. Please review the document, and if you have any questions, please call DAV's legislative staff at (202)554-3501.

Thank you for your support to remove the means testing provision from H.R. 2099.

Sincerely,

COPY

THOMAS A. MCMASTERS, III
National Commander

TAM:nb
Enclosure

**CONGRESS VOTES TO TERMINATE VA COMPENSATION TO COMBAT
DISABLED VETERANS**

Do you know that:

- * A provision of H.R. 2099, the Fiscal Year 1996 VA, HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriations bill would terminate VA compensation to mentally incompetent veterans who have no spouse or **dependent** children or **dependent** parents and whose estate is greater than \$25,000.
- * Some of these veterans are mentally incompetent due to combat injuries or as a result of severe psychiatric trauma directly related to combat.
- * The term "remote heirs" refers to and includes a mentally incompetent veteran's adult children, siblings and parents.
- * In many cases, a mentally incompetent veteran has been cared for over the years by parents, siblings or children, who are now being considered "remote heirs."
- * By VA's own guidelines/instructions, fiduciaries have been encouraged to, and in some cases forced to, save a large portion of the veteran's VA compensation, thereby building a large estate.
- * The estate limit of \$25,000 does not distinguish between liquid or non liquid assets (except for the veteran's residence) and there are no safeguards to prevent "cash-poor" veterans from being irreparably harmed.
- * DAV filed a class action law suit against a similar provision in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990.
- * In granting DAV's request for a temporary injunction, U.S. District Judge Shirley Wohl Krom found that withholding compensation payments to certain incompetent veterans was based on "irrational discrimination against the mentally disabled...the virtually exclusive, if unattended result, is impermissible discrimination against mentally incompetent disabled veterans."
- * DAV and the Department of Veterans Affairs ultimately settled this lawsuit resulting in the return of \$100 million in compensation payments to these deserving service-connected disabled veterans.

Do not repeat this irreprehensible act of discrimination against this class of defenseless incompetent veterans.

Please vote to remove the "incompetent veterans" provision from H.R. 2099.

For more information, please call DAV National Service and Legislative Headquarters at (202)554-3501.

and are an appropriate and necessary response to BSA actions. The NATO and U.N. operations are intended to reduce the threat to the Sarajevo safe area and to deter further attacks there or in any other safe area. These operations will continue until NATO and U.N. commanders determine that they have achieved their aims.

During the first day of operations, some 300 sorties were flown against 23 targets in the vicinity of Sarajevo, Tuzla, Gorazde, and Mostar. The aircraft struck a variety of BSA targets, including heavy weapons emplacements, command and control facilities, communications sites, air defense sites, and ammunition facilities. Initial reports suggest that the strikes were successful in damaging or destroying a number of BSA targets. No U.S. aircraft were destroyed during the strikes nor were any U.S. personnel killed, wounded, or captured. At the same time that the air strikes were being conducted, the U.N.'s Rapid Reaction Force fired over 600 artillery and mortar rounds at BSA heavy weapons systems and ammunition storage sites around Sarajevo.

I authorized these actions in conjunction with our NATO allies to implement the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions and NATO decisions. As I have reported in the past and as our current diplomatic actions clearly indicate, our efforts in the former Yugoslavia are intended to assist the parties to reach a negotiated settlement to the conflict. I have directed the participation of U.S. forces in this effort pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed about developments in the former Yugoslavia, consistent with the War Powers Resolution. I am grateful for the continuing support that the Congress has provided, and I look forward to continued cooperation in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of

the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 2.

Remarks at the National Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu

September 2, 1995

Thank you very much, General Wilson, for your outstanding remarks, and even more for your service to our country. Reverend Perkins, Rabbi Goldfarb, Reverend Fujitani, Secretary Brown, General Shalikashvili, Secretary Perry, Members of Congress, Governor, Mayor, representatives of the Allied Nations who are here, and most of all, to the honored veterans of World War II: Today we commemorate this day 50 years ago, when the most destructive conflict in all human history came to an end. On this island, where America's peace was first shattered and then restored, we commemorate the triumph of freedom over tyranny. We remember the extraordinary sacrifice that victory required. We honor the extraordinary generation of Americans who came together to meet the challenge of war and then, as General Wilson has said, worked together to seize the promise of peace.

World War II lasted 2,194 days. It stretched from Pearl Harbor to St. Petersburg, from the beaches of Normandy to the shores of Iwo Jima. It destroyed whole cities. It ravaged countrysides. It cost in total the lives of 55 million people: Soldiers killed in battle, civilians and prisoners felled by disease and starvation, children buried in the rubble of bombed buildings, millions wiped out in the gas chambers. It cost the lives of all kinds of people.

And victory was won by the courage and character of citizen soldiers, citizens we remember for their bravery from Britain to Russia, from all the islands in the Pacific, island by island, and the battles that were won.

We remember all these Medal of Honor winners who are here among us today and humbly express to them our profound gratitude. We know that the heroism of millions of other men and women in uniform was never adequately recognized. We know that things happened here in the Pacific which bred a certain spirit and character and deter-

mination which infused the lives of those who served us when they came back home.

The war in the Pacific enjoyed the service, among others, of five men who became President of the United States, from the extraordinary heroism of President Kennedy and the legendary *PT-109* to President Bush who was shot down and rescued over the Pacific 51 years ago this very day.

We must never forget both the tragedy and the triumph of that time because it holds lessons for all time. We learned in World War II the forces of darkness give no quarter; they must be confronted and defeated. We learned that the blessings of freedom are never easy or free; they must always be defended.

We learned, too, something remarkable about America. This century, marked by so much progress and too much bloodshed, witnessed humanity's capacity for the best and the worst in life, is now known as the American Century.

For America, World War II was the pivot point of that century, the moment when we understood more than at any other time the core of the American spirit, the ties that bind us together, and the duty we owe to one another. Americans found in World War II unity in a shared mission, strength in a common purpose. More than ever, in World War II, our United States were truly united.

On December 7, 1941, James Daniels, the young Navy pilot born and raised on a farm in Missouri, was stationed aboard the U.S.S. *Enterprise*. As the ship steamed back toward Pearl Harbor, a general alarm sounded. He ran to his plane. He took to the skies to fly what would be the very first American combat mission of the war, because of what had happened at Pearl Harbor. On that first mission, he searched in vain for the enemy fleet. He said, "I had no briefing, no map. I didn't know what the heck was going on." At nightfall, all he saw were the remains of our sinking fleet.

At that time, things looked pretty bleak for the United States and a lot of people doubted that our democracy was up to the job. We had a standing Army of less than 200,000 men. Seventeen countries had larger armies than the United States on December 7, 1941.

Our soldiers, believe it or not, trained with wooden rifles.

But our enemies sold short the strength and will of the American people, the grocery clerks and farmers, the students and salesmen, the short-order cooks and the factory workers, the whites, the blacks, the Hispanics, the Asian-Americans who served, including Japanese-Americans, the Native Americans, including the famous Navajo code-talkers. Most of them didn't know a lot about each other and even less of the world beyond our borders. But they had a core of shared traits bred in the American bone, determination, optimism, an unshakable dedication to freedom, and a faith that right would prevail. They merged their disparate voices into a harmonious chorus of defiance. President Roosevelt called them the incalculable force of American democracy, a free people united by a common purpose.

At home, they built democracy's arsenal, hundreds of thousands of planes, ships, tanks, and trucks. They planted the victory gardens. They collected scrap metal. They bought the war bonds. They rationed the gas. They learned to do with less in every part of their lives so those in uniform could conduct the war. And abroad, in the rain-drenched jungles and on rocky ridges, under the seas, over the waves, in the clouds, Americans fought on the frontlines of fear.

We know, and others have said today, that tens of thousands lost their lives, leaving their loved ones with only memories: parents who would never again see the pride of their lives; wives who would never again embrace their husbands; children whose fathers would never again take them swimming or see them graduate or know the adults they would become.

Here, in the peace of these sacred grounds where thousands of these brave Americans lie at rest, let us now join briefly in a moment of silence for those who gave their dreams for our freedom.

[At this point, a moment of silence was observed.]

Amen.

Fifty years ago today, on the deck of the aircraft carrier *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay, freedom finally prevailed. On this anniversary of

V-J Day, we celebrate the end of the war but also the beginning of a new American era of peace and progress. At the end of the war, there were 12 million Americans in uniform, and 7 million were still overseas. We brought them home where they applied the lessons learned in war to the promise of peace. In peace, as in war, they understood that developing and uniting the energy and genius of every American is the best way to fulfill our country's potential.

Before the war, in the darkness of the Great Depression, millions of you veterans who are here today and your family members could only have dreamed of going on to college, could only have dreamed of building a better life than your parents had and of passing an even better one on to your children. But after the war, you seized the opportunities a grateful nation offered. You took advantage of the GI bill of rights. You became graduates. You bought your first home. And we know by the lives you've lived and the hopes you've passed on you took responsibility to make real your American dreams.

From Pearl Harbor to V-J Day, 16 million American women worked assembly lines; 300,000 more wore uniforms, drove trucks in combat zones, trained troops, nursed them back to health. After the war, America would begin to integrate this extraordinary force into the economy and into our Nation's military and change the face of America forever.

From Pearl Harbor to V-J Day, thousands of African-Americans distinguished themselves in military service, as Tuskegee airmen and Triple Nickel paratroopers, Sherman tank drivers, and Navy Seabees. And slowly, after the war, America would begin to act on a truth so long denied, that if people of different races could serve as brothers abroad in uniform, they could surely live as neighbors at home.

In peace, the World War II generation gave America the security, the prosperity, and the progress the rest of us have known and cherished for half a century. You understood that you could, together, make the world a better place and that you could not permit America again to withdraw from the world; from former enemies and allies who were in ruins, from the looming threat of the cold war.

You gave us the Marshall plan. You chose reconciliation over revenge and helped to turn former enemies into close allies today. When the terrible new tyranny of communism arose, you held it in check until the power of democracy, the failure of repression, and the heroic determination of people to be free won the cold war. The seeds of democracy you planted and nurtured flower today in every corner of the globe.

From the cliffs of Normandy to the beautiful waters of Hawaii, we have celebrated over the last year and a half the extraordinary achievements of the generation that brought us victory in World War II. It is only fitting that here, in the middle of the ocean whose name means peace, the place where World War II began and ended for America, that we mark the war's end and honor the men and women who saved our world.

We owe it to the World War II generation to remember, but we owe them more. For just as freedom has its price, it also has its purpose, to enable all people to live up to their God-given potential and to continue the march of human progress. We, who are the heirs of their legacy, must always be the guardian of their dreams.

It falls now to us to stand against those who sow the seeds of war and to stand with those who take the risks of peace; to create a new prosperity for ourselves and for others; to help our people to prepare for the challenges of a new century; to strengthen our families, our faith, our communities; to give all Americans the opportunity to make the most of their lives.

In order to succeed, we must remain true to the spirit of that brilliant time. A time when our people cared for each other and sacrificed for others, when our Nation stood united in purpose and mighty in spirit as never before, a time when Americans forged the strength of their diversity into a community for victory and progress.

I told you earlier about Jim Daniels, who flew that first flight after Pearl Harbor. After Pearl Harbor, Jim took command of a 37-plane squadron. He logged 55 combat missions in the Pacific. The pilots under his wing came from as many different backgrounds as there are States in the Union, country boys who'd never seen a paved road, city dwellers

The President's Radio Address September 2, 1995

Good morning. On this Labor Day weekend, I am paying tribute to some of the most important labor ever performed on behalf of the American people. Hillary and I are in Hawaii, where we have gathered with veterans of World War II to honor the bravery and sacrifice of an extraordinary generation of Americans.

Fifty years ago today, freedom triumphed over tyranny because those brave men and women, along with their colleagues from the allied nations, won a victory for freedom in the great struggle of World War II. America and the entire world will forever be in their debt.

So when the veterans of World War II came home, America was ready to pay its debt to our soldiers. Even before the war ended, President Roosevelt had already signed the GI bill into law. The GI bill opened the doors to college for veterans and helped them to get a start on life with a new home. And because our Nation provided that kind of opportunity for the World War II veterans, the opportunity to build good lives for themselves and their families, they in turn were able to play an enormous part in making our Nation the strongest and most prosperous on Earth.

Today, our challenge is to build on the foundation they laid, to keep our Nation strong and to give all Americans the opportunity to make the most of their own lives as we move into the 21st century.

A central part of that challenge is our effort to balance the Federal budget, to relieve future generations of Americans of the crushing debt burden imposed almost entirely in the 12 years before I took office. During that 12-year period, our national debt quadrupled. In 1993, in our administration's economic program, we passed the bill that cut the deficit from \$290 billion a year all the way down to \$160 billion in just 3 years. In fact, our budget would be balanced today but for the debt run up in the 12 years before I became President.

Well, now we all have to go the rest of the way to balance that budget. But how we do it will say a lot about the values we have

who couldn't swim, well-to-do's and ne'er-do-well's. The only thing they had in common was that when they started flight school they all didn't know how to fly. Jim Daniels remembers that, and I quote, "It didn't matter. We had a job to do, and we had to do it together."

On August the 15th, 1945, the very last day of World War II, Jim Daniels was in the air again. It was a picture-perfect South Pacific morning. Then the word crackled over the radio: The enemy had surrendered; come on down. And so Jim Daniels, the American who flew on the first day and on the last day of our Nation's war, turned toward home.

Today, Jim Daniels and his wife of 55 years, Helen, are here with us today. I'd like to ask them to stand. Mr. and Mrs. Daniels. [Applause] Bless you.

And I would like to ask all the veterans of World War II who are here today to stand and be recognized or to wave and be recognized. Please stand up. [Applause]

On August the 15th, 1945, when Jim Daniels brought his plane down he descended through the clouds, along with all the other Americans in uniform, not toward a dark night of uncertainty but toward a bright future of hope, blessed by peace, graced by prosperity, a future in which more Americans than ever before would have the opportunity to live the lives God meant for them to have. It was a future won by a remarkable generation who found unity in war and built us a half century of progress in peace.

Now, my fellow Americans, we stand at the dawn of a new century and their challenge has become ours. Their spirit must be ours as well. We pledge to carry on their work. And we vow to remember Jim Daniels' words, "We have a job to do, and we have to do it together." For us, as for them, the future depends upon it.

May God bless the Americans who brought us to this day, and may God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:21 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Lewis H. Wilson, USMC (Ret.), former Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps; Rev. Kenneth D. Perkins, Rabbi Morris Goldfarb, and Rev. Yoshiaki Fujitani, who gave the invocations; Gov. Benjamin J. Cayetano of Hawaii; and Mayor Jeremy Harris of Honolulu.

Howard, to the millions of others they see embodied in these fine stamps. And I hope all of us will be inspired to carry forward their work of continuing to make our Nation safe and strong and free.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, the first sheet of stamps was presented to the President.]

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 12:40 p.m.

**Remarks at a World War II
Commemorative Service
in Honolulu, Hawaii**

September 3, 1995

Thank you, Bishop, for your remarks, your service, your introduction. To all of the distinguished people who have participated in this magnificent program today, let me say that after Captain Lovell spoke and Colonel Washington sang and the Bishop made his remarks, I'm not sure there's much else to say. *[Laughter]* And I'm certain that the rest of us have been warmed by this ceremony beyond belief.

But I do believe—I think there are two brief things that ought to be said. One is we ought to express our appreciation to this magnificent choir for the music they have given us today. *[Applause]* And secondly, inasmuch as this is the last of a long and magnificent series of events commemorating the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, I would like to ask General Mick Kicklighter and any other members of the World War II Commemorative Commission who are here to stand and receive our gratitude for a job very well done. *[Applause]*

Let me ask you as we close what you believe people will say about World War II 100 or 200 or 300 years from today. I believe the lesson will be that people, when given a choice, will not choose to live under empire; that citizens, when given a choice, will not choose to live under dictators; that people, when given the opportunity to let the better angels of their natures rise to the top, will not embrace theories of political or racial or ethnic or religious superiority; that in the end, we know that Thomas Jefferson was

right: God created us all equal, with the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and whatever differences there are among us, we have more in common.

That was the ultimate lesson of the magnificent remarks that Captain Lovell made. And it better be the ultimate lesson we learn from the tragedy of World War II. As we move into the 21st century, as the world gets smaller and smaller, as the fragile resources we have that sustains life and permit progress have to be maintained and enhanced, we must remember that.

That was a lesson that some people knew even in World War II. And I'd like to close with a reading from this little book, "The Soldier's and Sailor's Prayer Book," that a lot of our veterans carried with them in battle in World War II. This is a prayer written by the famous American poet, Stephen Vincent Benét, that became known as the President's prayer because President Franklin Roosevelt prayed it on Flag Day, June 14th, 1942. I hope this is what people remember as the lesson of World War II one and two hundred years from now:

"God of the free, grant us brotherhood and hope and union, not only for the space of this bitter war but for the days to come, which shall and must unite all the children of Earth. We are, all of us, children of Earth. Grant us that simple knowledge. If our brothers are oppressed, then we are oppressed. If they hunger, then we hunger. If their freedom is taken away, our freedom is not secure. Grant us the common faith that man shall know bread and peace; that he shall know justice and righteousness, freedom, and security; an equal opportunity and an equal chance to do his best not only in our own land but throughout the world. And in that faith, let us march toward the clean world our hands can make."

Amen, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:18 a.m. at the Waikiki Band Shell. In his remarks, he referred to Bishop James Matthew, World War II veteran and bishop of the United Methodist Church; former astronaut Capt. James A. Lovell, Jr.



Veterans' Employment and Training Service
U.S. Department of Labor

F A X

Transmittal Cover Sheet

SEND TO: Molly BROSTRON

FAX #: 456-7028

LOCATION: W. H.

FROM: Tom Keefe

LOCATION: VETS

Total number of pages (including cover sheet) 3

SUBJECT: _____

Please call if you do not receive all pages or need further information.

Telephone: (202)219-9116

FAX: (202)219-4773

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS:

OP-ED BY SECRETARY OF LABOR ROBERT B. REICH
VETERANS DAY 1995

There's something amiss on Veterans' Day 1995. As we commemorate the sacrifice millions of men and women have made for our country, Congress is demanding that veterans sacrifice even more.

Already, Congress has eliminated a \$5 million program to help get homeless veterans off the street and onto payrolls. And there is more bad news for veterans if Congress has its way -- nearly \$20 million will be subtracted from several other programs that have successfully placed vets in jobs. And this is in the face of 250,000 men and women who leave the service each year.

As Secretary of Labor, I am very concerned about these cuts because they will affect programs run out of my department that help vets get jobs in the civilian workforce. If these cuts planned by Congress are passed, we will be unable to help at least 10,000 veterans next year who need help finding jobs. Instead, they will likely continue occupying the same sad places in society -- some homeless, some severely disabled, some simply unable to make the difficult transfer from military to civilian work.

Congress may have its way because of certain prevalent misconceptions about veterans. Many people believe vets walk away from the military with very comfortable lifetime pensions. In fact, 80 percent get no pensions at all. Others believe that military men and women are well trained; while it's true they are extremely well disciplined, excellent team workers and leaders, it's equally true they often need help matching military training with civilian jobs.

President Clinton recognizes that veterans are a tremendous asset at any workplace. His proposed budget would continue funding for these programs at their current level.

Unfortunately, Congress seems to be making decisions based on misconceptions. If Congress' budget is passed, something will indeed be amiss not only with jobless veterans, but with the businesses that stand only to benefit by hiring them.

U.S. Department of Labor

Assistant Secretary for
Veterans' Employment and Training
Washington, D.C. 20210

**MISCONCEPTIONS AND VETERANS**

Misconceptions are a fact of life. They exist in every culture. Misconceptions blind us to realities and lead us to bad decisions.

Many people believe that veterans have no problem getting jobs, but that is a misconception. The downsizing of the military has ended but it is a fallacy to think that assimilation of some 250,000 entrants into the civilian workforce is not a challenge.

Many believe that because veterans are relatively well educated, and many worked in high-tech military jobs, they are the cream of the crop with little need for help. Many believe that all vets receive a hefty retirement annuity, and don't need good jobs to support themselves and their families. Many believe that since we are not at war, few veterans suffer service-connected disabilities that may impair their success in civilian life.

The realities are, while veterans ARE educated and have many attributes, such as self discipline, teamwork experience and leadership abilities, they often cannot get good jobs right away because their military training doesn't always transfer readily into civilian jobs. Only one in five separatees in 1994 qualified for retirement benefits. We have not been in a major war for many years, but about 136,000 veterans filed disability claims last year.

The reality is, providing all honorably discharged veterans the opportunity to gain a secure foothold in the civilian economy is still one of America's responsibilities. President Clinton recognizes our responsibility to veterans and has proposed a budget equal to the current level. But Congress, which wants to cut job training programs, must be lost in the misconceptions.

The truth is, thousands of veterans need our help finding jobs. We CAN afford to assure that veterans have the opportunity to succeed in the thriving economy that their dedicated service helped to create and protect. The question is, will the Congress value veterans' employment as highly as the President does?

Preston M. Taylor Jr.
Assistant Secretary for
Veterans' Employment and Training
U.S. Department of Labor

Talking Points
March 8, 1995

Veterans



"To honor our veterans, gratitude and ceremonies are not enough. We must protect the benefits you have earned, address fully the dangers imposed by modern warfare, and preserve what you fought for: the American Dream at home and our leadership around the world."

— President Clinton

Speech to VFW Mid-Winter Conference

March 6, 1995

Moral Obligation

This Administration believes that veterans benefits are a moral obligation. The President recognized, in his State of the Union address, that veterans have earned the benefits they receive, through service to the nation. He reiterated our commitment to veterans in his remarks to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Budget

The President's 1996 budget calls for a \$1.3 billion increase for veterans benefits, including an additional \$1 billion for health care. This will enable VA to provide medical treatment to an additional 43,000 veterans, construct two new hospitals and three nursing homes, and make a number of facility improvements.

Persian Gulf Veterans

In the years immediately following the Vietnam War, many veterans felt the government turned a deaf ear to their concerns over Agent Orange and other health risks. Now, Persian Gulf veterans are suffering unexplained illnesses — and this Administration has taken aggressive action to make sure we are responsive and sensitive. The President has signed legislation paying compensation to chronically disabled veterans with undiagnosed illnesses, and he recently presented one of the first checks to a disabled Persian Gulf veteran. VA offers thorough medical examinations to all Persian Gulf veterans, provides priority medical care to those who need it, and has established special research centers to study the problem. VA also established a toll free information line — 1-800-PGW-VETS. Most recently, the President announced he will establish a Presidential Advisory Committee to elevate scientific inquiry into this matter.

Outreach Efforts

The Administration has taken unprecedented steps to reach out to veterans who need help. The VA wrote to 1.6 million veterans with high home mortgage interest rates, urging them to refinance their VA loans. As a result, veterans and their families will save \$1.5 billion in mortgage payments over the next 10 years. Similarly, VA wrote to many Vietnam veterans, advising them that they may be eligible for compensation for several new disabilities possibly related to Agent Orange.

Homeless Veterans

Recognizing that a large percentage of the nation's homeless are men and women who have served in the military, the Administration has taken strong steps to help homeless veterans. VA has increased its funding of programs for the homeless by more than 30 percent in the last three years, to the current level of \$76 million. The Department also awarded the first ever grants to public and private nonprofit groups to develop veterans assistance programs, and initiated the first National Summit on Homelessness Among Veterans.

Partnerships with Veterans Service Organizations

The Administration credits much of the tremendous progress made in serving the nation's veterans to veterans themselves. The Administration and VA Secretary Jesse Brown determined from the outset that veterans service organizations should be brought into the decision making process. The resultant partnership has brought progress throughout VA programs, and has prominently featured veterans serving on VA task forces developing solid answers to concerns about claims and appeals processing.

The Business of Government

VA is looking to business for new procedures and processes that improve service to veterans while reducing costs to taxpayers. Decentralization of operational authority and responsibility is underway in the veterans health system as the Veterans Health Administration creates a new system of health care networks and reduces management functions at the headquarters level. Increased responsiveness to the patient rather than to bureaucracy is the goal. VA finances are increasingly expedited through electronic commerce. VA buying and selling is now an electronic process conducted on keyboards rather than paper receipts. Paper is being reduced in other ways: nearly a quarter of the department's 3,500 directives have been reviewed and 93 percent of those reviewed have been thrown out. And as it adopts business practices, VA's commitment to small business grows. It plans to spend \$200 million on small business purchases this year and has increased its spending goals in every small business category.

Making Government Work Better

The Administration is committed to creating a government focused on the people it serves rather than on programs and regulations. VA has led in supporting and implementing National Performance Review efforts to reinvent a government that works better and costs less. VA reinvention labs are testing customer-oriented business methods in all veteran service areas. These labs are developing service delivery structures and procedures that reduce customer waiting times, staffing and red tape while reducing costs. Seventeen VA employee teams have been recognized by the Administration as "heroes of reinvention" for the consolidation, streamlining and restructuring they have initiated locally to reduce cost and improve services. Complementing this grass-roots reinvention within VA is a new VA customer service program that specifies measurable standards of treatment, service and courtesy for veterans. Those standards are known by both VA employees and their customers and backed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' commitment to put the veteran first.

HONORING OUR VETERANS -- PRESERVING AMERICA'S LEADERSHIP IN THE WORLD

March 6, 1995

Today, the President reiterates themes he laid out in a speech to the Nixon Center last week: America must remain engaged in the world. We cannot retreat from world leadership as the new isolationists in Congress would have us do. He also will announce new measures to help veterans suffering from Gulf War illnesses.

UPHOLDING AMERICAN WORLD LEADERSHIP.

In a speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars today, President Clinton continues his call for America to remain engaged in world affairs. He honors the sacrifice of veterans by vowing to uphold the tradition of American leadership they fought so hard to preserve.

PRESERVING A STRONG MILITARY

To honor the sacrifice of those who have served, we must preserve their legacy, a half century of American leadership. In his speech, the President makes clear that we can only preserve that leadership in the world by maintaining a strong and ready military:

Maintaining Our Troops Readiness. The President is determined to honor his vow that our armed forces are the best-equipped, best-trained, best prepared military in the world. That's why he asked Congress to increase defense funding by \$25 billion over the next six years to raise military pay and provide better housing and child care for our troops and their families.

PROTECTING AND STRENGTHENING VETERANS' BENEFITS IS VITAL TO OUR WORLD LEADERSHIP

The soldiers of tomorrow will only be as good as our commitment to the veterans of today. When President Clinton took office, he vowed to fight for the interests of America's veterans. Our Administration has kept that pledge by:

Keeping an Open Door to Veterans. The White House doors are open to veterans, and President Clinton has looked to veterans for help shaping our policy for veterans.

Working to Improve Health Care for Veterans. The Clinton Administration has expanded long-term care programs and established comprehensive centers for women veterans. We process claims faster, and are getting veterans the benefits they're owed.

Helping Veterans Receive Benefits. The President fought to preserve veterans' preferences for federal jobs; made sure that military retirees received their full Cost of Living Adjustments when they were in danger; and reached out to veterans around America to tell them about opportunities to refinance homes bought under the GI bill.

HELPING VETERANS SUFFERING FROM PERSIAN GULF ILLNESS

President Clinton has worked hard to help veterans suffering from Persian Gulf illnesses, improving both treatment and efforts to cure the illness. He has already moved to treat and compensate those veterans fairly while making every effort to find medical answers; ensured that VA and military hospitals are fully equipped to treat those who need care; and enlisted some of the nation's finest scientific talent to find the roots of these ailments.

A Presidential Advisory Committee

Today, the President will announce his intent to establish a Presidential Advisory Committee to review and make recommendations regarding all efforts aimed at finding the causes of this illness and improving the medical care available to Gulf War veterans.

More Steps to Help Gulf War Veterans

Today, he will also announce new measures to help those veterans:

New Money for Research. The Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense, and Health and Human Services will spend up to \$13 million on new research.

New Survey to Track Illness. VA will begin surveying 30,000 Gulf Veterans and active duty personnel to examine whether their illnesses have been transmitted to spouses and children.

Declassification Continues. Data will continue to be declassified, including information regarding cancers and other serious illnesses among Gulf War Veterans.

The First Lady's Commitment.

The First Lady has been visiting Gulf War veterans at military hospitals to discuss their illnesses. She has made a personal priority of ensuring that we do all we can to solve this vexing health problem and ease the suffering of its victims.

Weekly Review - Look Ahead

Friday, March 3 1995

THIS WEEK

February 27- March 3, 1995

New Economy. Protecting Social Security. Yesterday, the President spoke on the Senate's failure to pass the Balanced Budget Amendment he had opposed:

"The balanced budget amendment was defeated, because Republicans could not provide enough Democratic Senators with the simple guarantee that Social Security would be protected...." President Clinton, March 2, 1995.

New World. Standing up to the New Isolationists. In a speech to the Nixon Center, the President restated his commitment to America's engagement in world affairs:

"If we withdraw from the world today, mark my words, we'll have to contend with the consequences of our neglect tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow. This is a moment of decision." President Clinton, March 1, 1995.

New Community. Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Criminals. On Tuesday, the President marked the anniversary of the Brady Bill and vowed to safeguard that law:

"Mark my words: The Brady Law and the Assault Weapons Ban are working, and they are here to stay." President Clinton, February 28, 1995.

New Covenant. Standing Up For Children and the Poor. This week, the President stood up against the mean-spirited and short-sighted effort to cut help for children and the poor, including cuts in: **national service** in America's communities for 15,000 young people; **healthy nutrition packages** to about 100,000 women, infants, and children for 6 months; **summer jobs** for over 1.2 million youths over two years; **housing assistance** for low-income households; **teacher training**; and support for **drug-prevention efforts** in schools.

NEXT WEEK

March 4 - March 10, 1995

New World. Maintaining America's Readiness. In a speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, President Clinton will restate his plan to remain engaged in the world in the face of those who favor a period of new isolationism. The President will make the case that:

- It is vital that we maintain the unparalleled readiness of our Armed Forces;
- We must provide the resources our soldiers need to maintain America's world leadership;
- We must honor the sacrifice of America's veterans and improve their quality of life.

New Covenant. Ending Welfare as We Know It. Before the National Association of Counties on Tuesday, the President will discuss welfare and the proposal he submitted to Congress last fall. He will offer a critique of recent congressional activity on welfare reform, and reiterate his commitment to uphold the basic values that must guide that effort:

- **Work**
- **Personal Responsibility**
- **Family**

New Government. Fighting for the Line Item Veto. The President called on the Senate to pass the line-item veto next week:

"We can cut millions, tens of millions, hundreds of millions of dollars in spending with the line-item veto. ... I will work as hard as I can to persuade members of both parties to support it and to continue the important work of reducing the deficit." President Clinton, March 2, 1995.

Version prepared
by Kathy Juado's
staff.

—

Talking Points
March 1995

Veterans



"To honor our veterans, gratitude and ceremonies are not enough. We must protect the benefits you have earned, address fully the dangers imposed by modern warfare, and preserve what you fought for: the American Dream at home and our leadership around the world."

— President Clinton
 Speech to VFW Mid-Winter Conference
 March 6, 1995

Moral Obligation

This Administration believes that veterans benefits are a moral obligation. The President recognized, in his State of the Union address, that veterans have earned the benefits they receive, through service to the nation. He reiterated our commitment to veterans in his remarks to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Budget

The President's 1996 budget calls for a \$1.3 billion increase for veterans benefits, including an additional \$1 billion for health care. This will enable VA to provide medical treatment to an additional 43,000 veterans, construct two new hospitals and three nursing homes, and make a number of facility improvements.

Rescissions

President Clinton strongly opposes a House proposal to cut \$200 million from the VA budget already enacted for fiscal 1995. He said this rescission would eliminate outpatient clinics and much-needed new medical equipment for veterans health care. "These cuts are unwise and unnecessary ... Caring for veterans is not a national option or a partisan program; it is a national tradition and a national duty," the President stated. The clinics to be eliminated under the House proposal are Columbia, Mo.; Gainesville and Orlando, Fla.; Hampton, Va.; West Haven, Conn.; and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Persian Gulf Veterans

In the years immediately following the Vietnam War, many veterans felt the government turned a deaf ear to their concerns over Agent Orange and other health risks. Now, Persian Gulf veterans are suffering unexplained illnesses — and this Administration has taken aggressive action to make sure we are responsive and sensitive. The President has signed legislation paying compensation to chronically disabled veterans with undiagnosed illnesses. VA offers thorough medical examinations to all Persian Gulf veterans, provides priority medical care to those who need it, and has established special research centers to study the problem. Additionally, VA will begin surveying 30,000 Gulf veterans to determine the prevalence of symptoms and certain health outcomes in veterans and their family members. VA also established a toll free information line — 1-800-PGW-VETS. Most recently, the President announced he will establish a Presidential Advisory Committee to elevate scientific inquiry into this matter. VA, the Departments of Defense and Health and Human Services will spend up to \$13 million on new research, bolstering the already strong efforts underway at VA's special research centers.

Homeless Veterans

Recognizing that a large percentage of the nation's homeless are men and women who have served in the military, the Administration has taken strong steps to help homeless veterans. VA has increased its funding of programs for the homeless by more than 30 percent in the last three years, to the current level of \$76 million. The Department also awarded the first ever grants to public and private nonprofit groups to develop veterans assistance programs, and initiated the first National Summit on Homelessness Among Veterans.

Partnerships with Veterans Service Organizations

The Administration credits much of the tremendous progress made in serving the nation's veterans to veterans themselves. The Administration and VA Secretary Jesse Brown determined from the outset that veterans service organizations should be brought into the decision making process. The resultant partnership has brought progress throughout VA programs, and has prominently featured veterans serving on VA task forces developing solid answers to concerns about claims and appeals processing.

Outreach Efforts

The Administration has taken unprecedented steps to reach out to veterans who need help. The VA wrote to 1.6 million veterans with high home mortgage interest rates, urging them to refinance their VA loans. As a result, veterans and their families will save \$1.5 billion in mortgage payments over the next 10 years. Similarly, VA wrote to many Vietnam veterans, advising them that they may be eligible for compensation for several new disabilities possibly related to Agent Orange.

The Business of Government

VA is looking to business for new procedures and processes that improve service to veterans while reducing costs to taxpayers. Decentralization of operational authority and responsibility is underway in the veterans health system as the Veterans Health Administration creates a new system of health care networks and reduces management functions at the headquarters level. Increased responsiveness to the patient rather than to bureaucracy is the goal. VA finances are increasingly expedited through electronic commerce. VA buying and selling is now an electronic process conducted on keyboards rather than paper receipts. Paper is being reduced in other ways: nearly a quarter of the department's 3,500 directives have been reviewed and 93 percent of those reviewed have been thrown out.

Making Government Work Better

The Administration is committed to creating a government focused on the people it serves rather than on programs and regulations. VA has led in supporting and implementing National Performance Review efforts to reinvent a government that works better and costs less. VA reinvention labs are testing customer-oriented business methods in all veteran service areas. These labs are developing service delivery structures and procedures that reduce customer waiting times, staffing and red tape while reducing costs. Seventeen VA employee teams have been recognized by the Administration as "heroes of reinvention" for the consolidation, streamlining and restructuring they have initiated locally to reduce cost and improve services. Complementing this grass-roots reinvention within VA is a new VA customer service program that specifies measurable standards of treatment, service and courtesy for veterans. Those standards are known by both VA employees and their customers and backed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' commitment to put the veteran first.

David Zavada 5-4568

VA Claims Processing

94 - 213 days

95 - 161 days

timeliness has improved

(94 timeliness at all time low)

- VA goal of 104 days by end of 97

still criticism for claims backlog

452,000

end of 94

370,000

end of 95

backlog reduced

(consistent decline from 93)

- still 100,000 above normal backlog of 250,000

(- ^{higher} cost per claim to VA 71d)

Other budget #'s → Congress gave more than Pres request

95 Outreach to veterans to get them to take adv of ↓ interest rates
- successful

- Agent Orange newsletter from VA (2-3 x years)
↳ mostly talks abt medical care

"certain veterans" would have to pay more for
prescrips
Reconcil bill would ↑ copay
H for prescrip by \$1 - to \$3

IMPACT OF REPUBLICAN MEDICARE AND MEDICAID CUTS ON VETERANS

The Congressional Majority has proposed deep cuts in Medicaid and Medicare programs that provide vital medical support for America's veterans. Combined with the reductions that they propose from the President's budget for VA health care programs in 1996, these drastic reductions threaten to trigger a health care crisis for veterans in the United States.

- **Medicaid** cuts alone could force as many as 171,900 veterans to lose Medicaid coverage in 2002, leaving many veterans without any health care coverage at all.
- **Medicare** cuts would force the 8.8 million veterans on Medicare to pay increased premiums for lower quality care, a harsh burden for this vulnerable population.
- **Taken together**, these cuts in Medicaid, Medicare, and VA appropriations make a mockery of the nation's historic commitment to the health and safety of its veterans.

IMPACT OF MEDICAID CUTS ON VETERANS

As many as 171,900 veterans could lose Medicaid coverage in 2002 under Republican proposals. More than 600,000 veterans currently depend on Medicaid for their health care. Republican proposals to block grant and cut Medicaid would deny Medicaid coverage to as many as 171,900 veterans in 2002, including:

- 103,700 elderly veterans,
-- 34,600 of whom live in nursing homes
- 68,400 disabled veterans under the age of 65

Most veterans denied coverage would be unable to afford private insurance. More than three-quarters (78%) of the Medicaid-eligible veterans have incomes below \$20,000; 90% have incomes below \$30,000. As a result, few of those denied Medicaid coverage would be able to afford private health insurance.

IMPACT OF MEDICARE CUTS ON VETERANS

Republican Medicare cuts would force the 8.8 million veterans on Medicare -- one-third of all veterans in the United States -- to pay more in out-of-pocket expenses for lower quality care. These 8.8 million veterans include:

- More than 4.3 million veterans with combat experience
- More than 1.2 million veterans with disabilities connected to their service

Many of the veterans who are eligible for Medicare have significant medical expenses but limited incomes.

- **Significant medical needs.** 20% of the Medicare-eligible veterans were hospitalized in 1992, and 62% received medical services on an outpatient basis.
- **Limited Income.** 45% of Medicare-eligible veterans had incomes of less than \$20,000. Some 27% had no private health insurance coverage.

IMPACT OF VA CUTS ON VETERANS

Republican cuts in appropriations for VA medical programs could force the VA to deny medical services to as many as 113,000 veterans, compared to the President's budget request. Congressional action sets VA funding for health care programs significantly below the President's budget request for 1996.

- **President's Request.** The President has requested a \$1 billion increase for VA appropriations in 1996, of which \$750 million is earmarked for improvements in veteran's health care. That increase reflects the President's continuing commitment to meeting the nation's obligations to our veterans.
- **Republican Plan.** Congressional appropriations for VA health care programs is set more than \$510 million below the President's request in 1996, denying medical services to as many as 113,000 veterans.

Cuts in Medicare and Medicaid would force many veterans to seek access to VA medical facilities, but most would be shut out.

- **As many as 150,300 veterans denied Medicaid coverage -- and 55,600 disabled veterans denied coverage -- would be unable to obtain treatment in VA facilities.** Given current spending constraints, the VA estimates that it would not be able to accommodate some 150,300 of the 171,900 veterans who could lose Medicaid coverage in 2002.
 - **As many as 55,600 severely disabled veterans denied Medicaid coverage would also be denied treatment in VA facilities.** Of the 150,300 veterans denied Medicaid coverage and access to VA facilities, some 55,600 are severely disabled. Given current spending constraints, the VA projects that it would not be able to provide medical treatment for these veterans, many of whom require extremely costly care, such as long-term psychiatric care and AIDS treatment.
- **As many as 400,000 veterans on Medicare may be forced to seek medical assistance from VA facilities as a result of the Republican budget cuts, but would find themselves left out in the cold.** According to VA projections, if Medicare premiums and deductibles are increased as proposed in the Republican budget, more than 400,000 veterans who currently have no private health insurance may find it financially necessary to seek medical care in VA hospitals. Given its resource constraints, however, the VA would be unable to accommodate this increased demand. These veterans comprise a particularly vulnerable population:
 - 73% have a limiting disability
 - 56% report having poor or fair health
 - 87% have incomes of less than \$20,000

From VA (use with caution)

MEDICARE AND VETERANS

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Of the 27.4 million veterans in the United States in 1992 an estimated 8.8 million or 32% were covered by Medicare.¹

- Most Medicare-eligible veterans are white, married males. Almost half have combat service and 14% have service-connected disabilities. Twenty percent reported a hospitalization in 1992, and 62 percent received health care services on an outpatient basis.
- More than 58% of the Medicare-eligible veterans reported relying only on non-VA health care during 1992.
- Twenty-seven percent of Medicare-eligible veterans have no private health insurance.
- A surprisingly large number of veterans who are Medicare-eligible are under the age of 65 (1.8 million).
- Twenty-four percent of Medicare-eligible veterans report their family incomes as below \$15,000 in a year. Another 21% of Medicare-eligible veterans' annual incomes are from \$15,000 - \$20,000.
- Sixty-five percent of the Medicare-eligible veterans perceive their health status to be "Good to Excellent," some 49% report having limiting disabilities of some sort/degree.
- Those diagnoses most frequently cited by Medicare-eligible veterans included high blood pressure (46%), arthritis (39%), and heart trouble (31%).

VA AND MEDICARE-ELIGIBLE VETERANS

- Veterans are eligible for care by the VA based on a variety of mandated priority criteria. Access to VA health care is limited by the availability of VA resources (as appropriated by Congress). Of the Medicare-eligible veterans, only 4.2 million are among the VA's top priority group, Category A veterans for whom care is provided as resources permit.²

¹ *National Survey of Veterans*, Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Veteran Analysis and Statistics, Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning, Washington, DC, April 1995. This nationwide telephone survey of almost 12,000 veterans was conducted in 1992 and is the fourth in a series of surveys. It is used to delineate the characteristics of the veteran population, compare the characteristics of veterans who use VA programs to those who do not, and provides a current data resource for policy analysts and future program and facility planning for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

² Category A veterans are defined in law and include veterans who have disabilities related to their military service, certain special groups (WWI, former prisoners of war, Agent Orange exposed, etc.) and veterans determined by means test to meet VA's low income criteria (approximately \$20,000 for an individual).

2.

- Of those 4.2 million veterans who are among the VA's top priority group for health care, 1.2 million reported that they had no other insurance (except a small percentage with Medicaid) beyond Medicare. Of these Category A veterans who have only the VA and Medicare on which to rely for their health care, 380,000 (or 30%) did use the VA for health care needed in 1992.
- Of those Medicare-eligible veterans who were hospitalized in 1992 (1.8 million), only about 230,000 were hospitalized in a VA facility. But some 638,045 received outpatient care from the VA during that year.
- It is estimated that as many as 420,000 veterans who could expect to be eligible for VA care as Category A veterans but who have previously used non-VA sources of health care as Medicare beneficiaries, could turn to the VA for their health care in the future, particularly if their Medicare coverage is reduced or if their out-of-pocket costs were increased.
- VA's appropriation could not accommodate a 17% increase in the medical care workload.

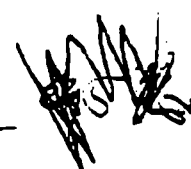
PREPARED BY:
THE OFFICE OF POLICY AND PLANNING
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, WASHINGTON, DC
OCTOBER 25, 1995.

MEDICAID AND VETERANS

- Of the 27.4 million veterans in the United States, it is estimated that 604,000 or 2.2% are enrolled in Medicaid.
- At some time during 1992, 237,000 Medicaid-covered veterans are estimated to have used health care services. 59% of them relied on non-VA providers for that care.¹
- Veterans are eligible for VA care based on a variety of mandated priority criteria. Generally, those individuals who are Medicaid-enrolled will also meet VA low income eligibility criteria (the threshold is currently around \$20,470 for individuals).
- Individuals determined by means testing to meet VA's low income criteria are considered "Category A" veterans. Category A also includes veterans who have disabilities related to their military service ("service-connected") and certain other groups specified in law, including WWI veterans and former prisoners of war, and veterans with special limited eligibilities such as those exposed to Agent Orange.
- Only 8.81% of veterans covered by Medicaid are also service-connected for a disability according to the 1992 National Survey of Veterans.
- The VA's medical care appropriation is discretionary funding. Hence, access to VA health care is limited by the availability of VA resources. Of the 27.4 million veterans in the U.S., only 10 million (36%) comprise the priority group, "Category A" veterans, those veterans to whom VA provides care as resources permit.
- In 1995, VA resources are budgeted to support the care of 2.4 million veterans. Of these veterans, it is estimated that approximately 4% are enrolled in Medicaid.
- Under the House Medicaid block grant proposal it is estimated that by the year 2002 as many as 171,900 veterans could lose their Medicaid coverage. This could include 103,700 aged veterans and 68,400 disabled veterans under the age of 85.
- Of the veterans losing their Medicaid coverage, as many as 150,308 (87.44%) could be nonservice-connected.² VA could not replace the Medicaid coverage lost by those veterans within its current resources.

¹National Survey of Veterans, Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Veteran Analysis and Statistics, Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning, Washington, DC, April 1995. This nationwide telephone survey of almost 12,000 veterans was conducted in 1992 and is the fourth in a series of surveys. It is used to delineate the characteristics of the veteran population, compare the characteristics of veterans who use VA programs to those who do not, and provides a current data resource for policy analyses and future program and facility planning for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

²Assuming the same ratio of nonservice-connected to service-connected would occur among Medicaid-eligible veterans losing coverage as currently exists among Medicaid-eligible veterans today.

- 
- Further, among these nonservice-connected veterans losing Medicaid coverage, it is estimated that as many as 65,678 of them are severely disabled and under the age of 65, not covered by Medicare, and using health care services.³ Today, that population includes some of the most costly care in the United States, e.g., treatment of AIDS, long term psychiatric care.
 - The disenfranchising of veterans from the Medicaid program will result in the expansion of the number of uninsured in the country and of the amount of uncompensated care provided by health care providers.

PREPARED BY:
THE OFFICE OF POLICY AND PLANNING
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, WASHINGTON, DC
OCTOBER 25, 1995

³ Assuming the same ratio of under-age 65, severely disabled, nonservice-connected, users of non-VA health care would occur among nonservice-connected, Medicaid-eligible veterans losing coverage as currently exists among nonservice-connected, Medicaid-eligible veterans today.

8.8
14%

From VA

Draft Estimates of the Number of Veterans Losing Medical Coverage Under The House Republican Block Grant By 2002*

Estimated Number of Veterans Losing Medical Coverage					
	Aged (Over 65)				
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(B+C)	(A+B+C)
	Under 65 and In Community (i.e. Disabled)	In Community	Nursing Home Residents	Total Aged	Total
Total	68,400	69,100	34,600	103,700	171,900
Alabama	300	400	100	500	800
Alaska	900	500	0	500	1,400
Arizona	300	500	200	700	1,000
Arkansas	1,500	600	500	1,100	2,600
California	7,400	9,500	2,500	12,000	19,400
Colorado	1,400	1,300	600	1,900	3,300
Connecticut	900	1,000	700	1,700	2,600
Delaware	100	300	100	400	500
District of Columbia	100	300	600	900	1,000
Florida	4,300	6,500	1,900	8,400	12,700
Georgia	1,000	2,000	700	2,700	3,700
Hawaii	300	200	0	200	500
Idaho	300	200	200	400	700
Illinois	1,800	1,400	1,400	2,800	4,600
Indiana	1,400	1,000	1,400	2,400	3,800
Iowa	1,000	700	500	1,200	2,200
Kansas	100	100	100	200	300
Kentucky	1,500	700	400	1,100	2,600
Louisiana	600	800	500	1,300	1,900
Maine	500	800	200	1,000	1,500
Maryland	1,500	1,400	500	1,900	3,400
Massachusetts	2,300	1,200	1,200	2,400	4,700
Michigan	1,600	1,400	400	1,800	3,400

Post-It® Fax Note

7871

Date	10/27	# of pages	6
From	Pat O'Neil		
Co.			
Phone #	456 5363		
Fax #	456 2223		

**Continuation Of: Draft Estimates of the Number of Veterans Losing Medicaid Coverage
Under The House Republican Block Grant By 2002***

Estimated Number of Veterans Losing Medicaid Coverage					
	Aged (Over 65)				
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(B+C)	(A+B+C)
State	Under 65 and In Community (i.e. Disabled)	In Community	Nursing Home Residents	Total Aged	Total
Minnesota	2,100	1,700	1,000	2,700	4,800
Mississippi	600	700	200	900	1,500
Missouri	0	0	0	0	0
Montana	800	300	300	600	1,400
Nebraska	300	600	700	1,300	1,500
Nevada	200	400	100	500	600
New Hampshire	0	0	0	0	0
New Jersey	1,300	2,500	1,200	3,700	5,000
New Mexico	600	200	100	300	900
New York	5,700	6,100	3,100	9,200	14,900
North Carolina	1,700	2,300	1,200	3,500	5,200
North Dakota	200	200	200	400	600
Ohio	3,600	2,100	1,600	3,700	7,300
Oklahoma	700	1,200	900	2,100	2,800
Oregon	900	700	700	1,400	2,300
Pennsylvania	4,200	1,700	1,600	3,300	7,500
Rhode Island	600	600	400	1,000	1,600
South Carolina	900	200	200	400	1,300
South Dakota	200	400	300	700	900
Tennessee	1,300	1,900	800	2,700	4,000
Texas	1,800	2,100	900	3,000	4,800
Utah	200	300	200	500	700
Vermont	700	700	200	900	1,600
Virginia	900	3,600	1,100	4,700	5,600
Washington	4,900	3,000	1,300	4,300	9,200
West Virginia	1,300	1,500	600	2,100	3,400
Wisconsin	1,400	1,000	900	1,900	3,300
Wyoming	200	300	100	400	600

Notes:

This is an adaptation of an analysis done by the Urban Institute, July 1995, "The Impact of the Budget Resolution Conference Agreement on Medicaid in Federal Spending".

0 indicates that there was no estimated impact upon the veteran population

* - Estimated numbers rounded to the nearest 100's

OCT 27 '95 13:16 No.006 P.03
 OFC. OF POL. & PLANNING ID:

**Table 4: Profile of Veterans With Medicare Only or Medicare/Medicaid Only
 Who Used Only Non-VA Health Care in 1992 By Age**

Veteran Characteristic (Percent)	All (%)	Less Than Age 65(%)	Age 65 and Over(%)
Male	98	96	100
Not Looking for Work Due to Disability	34	57	19
Served in Combat	38	16	53
Served in WWII	48	1	80
Served in Vietnam	16	34	4
Married	61	58	63
Divorced	12	15	10
Less Than \$15,000 Family Income	67	69	66
\$15,000 to \$20,000 Family Income	20	20	20
Reporting Only Poor or Fair Health	56	77	41
White	74	71	76
Less Than a High School Education	45	35	52
Ever Diagnosed as Having High Blood Pressure	59	52	65
Ever Diagnosed as Having Heart Trouble	34	42	29
Ever Diagnosed as Having Arthritis	34	29	37
Ever Diagnosed with Drug/alcohol Abuse Problems	9	18	2
Ever Diagnosed as Having Other Mental Problems	13	22	7
Having 3 or more ADLs	25	33	19
Having a VA SC Condition	21	13	26
Receiving SSDI Payments	28	56	8
Having a Limiting Disability	73	91	60
Ever Used Nursing Home	3	0	5

The 420,000

Table 1: Profile of Veterans Eligible for Medicare
All Ages

DRAFT

Veteran Characteristic (Percent)	All (%)	Used VA Health Care in 1992(%)	Ever Used Nursing Home Care(%)
VA Inpatient Users	3	32	21
VA Outpatient Users	7	89	26
Not Looking for Work Due to Disability	13	41	48
Served in Combat	49	55	27
Served in WWII	71	59	67
Served in Vietnam	6	11	6
Married	81	69	60
Divorced	6	15	30
Less Than \$15,000 Family Income	24	55	51
\$15,000 to \$20,000 Family Income	21	24	17
Reporting Only Poor or Fair Health	34	66	65
White	89	78	89
Less Than a High School Education	31	38	27
Ever Diagnosed as Having High Blood Pressure	46	62	54
Ever Diagnosed as Having Heart Trouble	31	46	37
Ever Diagnosed as Having Arthritis	39	56	44
Ever Diagnosed with Drug/alcohol Abuse Problems	2	6	23
Ever Diagnosed as Having Other Mental Problems	5	14	25
Having 3 or more ADLs	15	40	75
Having a VA SC Condition	14	44	34
Having Only Public Insurance Coverage	27	64	51
Having a Limiting Disability	49	86	98
Used/needed Health Care in 1992	66	12	2
Ever Used Nursing Home Care	1	6	100

DRAFT

**Table 2: Profile of Veterans Eligible for Medicare
 Aged 65 and Over**

Veteran Characteristic (Percent)	All (%)	Used VA Medical Care in 1992(%)	Ever Used Nursing Home Care(%)
VA Inpatient Users	2	30	19
VA Outpatient Users	6	89	20
Male	96	98	90
Not Looking for Work Due to Disability	8	30	39
Served in Combat	55	66	30
Served in WWII	85	82	80
Served in Vietnam	2	4	0
Married	81	73	65
Divorced	5	10	29
Less Than \$15,000 Family Income	23	51	49
\$15,000 to \$20,000 Family Income	22	26	19
Reporting Only Poor or Fair Health	32	63	62
White	91	79	89
Less Than a High School Education	31	40	27
Ever Diagnosed as Having High Blood Pressure	45	64	52
Ever Diagnosed as Having Heart Trouble	30	46	43
Ever Diagnosed as Having Arthritis	40	60	44
Ever Diagnosed with Drug/alcohol Abuse Problems	2	3	22
Ever Diagnosed as Having Other Mental Problems	3	11	18
Having 3 or more ADLs	12	40	79
Having a VA SC Condition	15	47	33
Having Only Public Insurance Coverage	25	57	44
Having a Limiting Disability	46	83	99
Used/needed Health Care in 1992	65	11	2
Ever Used Nursing Home	1	5	100

**Table 3: Profile of Veterans Eligible for Medicare
Less Than Age 65**

Veteran Characteristic (Percent)	All (%)	Used VA Health Care in 1992(%)	Ever Used Nursing Home Care(%)
VA Inpatient Users	5	38	31
VA Outpatient Users	11	88	49
Not Looking for Work Due to Disability	31	65	84
Served in Combat	22	32	15
Served in WWII	17	9	18
Served in Vietnam	18	27	27
Married	78	59	43
Divorced	11	25	34
Less Than \$15,000 Family Income	27	65	56
\$15,000 to \$20,000 Family Income	18	19	9
Reporting Only Poor or Fair Health	44	73	80
White	85	76	88
Less Than a High School Education	27	32	26
Ever Diagnosed as Having High Blood Pressure	49	57	65
Ever Diagnosed as Having Heart Trouble	32	45	14
Ever Diagnosed as Having Arthritis	34	49	46
Ever Diagnosed with Drug/alcohol Abuse Problems	4	13	26
Ever Diagnosed as Having Other Mental Problems	17	22	50
Ever Diagnosed as HIV Positive or AIDS	0	3	0
Having 3 or more ADLs	23	42	58
Having a VA SC Condition	12	36	38
Having Only Public Insurance Coverage	36	78	78
Having a Limiting Disability	61	92	95
Used/needed Health Care in 1992	70	18	2
Ever Used Nursing Home Care	1	6	100