

Wars of the United States, who is here today to present the VFW legislative program.

Commander Scerra comes from Gardner, Mass. It is with a great deal of pride that I come before you to tell you about this modest, dedicated friend of the veterans who has earned the hard way the great honors which have come to him from his comrades.

Commander Scerra was elected commander in chief last August after hours, days, months, and years of highly dedicated and everyday hard work for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, work which went far beyond the call of duty, and it can well be said that he earned the high office he now holds by the deep lasting impression of respect, confidence, and admiration that he made upon the rank and file of the VFW all over the Nation.

In the few months he has been in office, Commander Scerra has already established an enviable record as leader of one of our greatest and best veterans organizations.

Truly Commander Scerra has come up the hard way in the VFW ranks, going back to the days of World War II when he joined the Gardner, Mass., Ovile Case Post No. 905 while serving in Europe. In 1945 upon his return home, he was elected the first World War II commander of that post and subsequently, in 1949, he was elected commander of the Worcester County Council.

Early VFW honors were bestowed upon him in 1951 when he was selected as one of the six "Best County Commanders in the United States."

Elected in 1956 to the office of the junior vice commander of the Massachusetts Department of the VFW, Commander Scerra later became the department senior vice commander and department commander. His abilities and hard work were further recognized by the VFW in 1959 when he was designated an All-American Department Commander. The citizens of his home community of Gardner honored him in 1963 as its "Most Outstanding Citizen" for that year.

In 1963-64 Commander Scerra was appointed inspector general of the VFW and elected National Council member from District 2 in 1964.

Let me tell you a bit more, my friends, about this inspiring record of service to the VFW.

Commander-in-Chief Scerra has served as his post service officer continuously since 1945. He served as post quartermaster from 1959 to 1965 and as post blood bank chairman from 1958 to the present time. As chairman of the State VFW Membership Committee, he helped to increase State VFW membership by nearly 50 percent.

At the national level Commander-in-Chief Scerra has served as a member of the National Community Service Committee, a member of the Voice of Democracy Committee, a member of the National Budget and Finance Committee, and a member of the National Convention Corporation. In addition, he has served as vice chairman of the Convention Committee on General Resolutions.

This, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, is the great record of service to the cause of the veteran and/or the organization for which Commander Scerra speaks today. As a dear friend of mine and as a Congressman from Massachusetts, I am greatly honored and very happy, and am truly proud to present to you Commander-in-Chief