

seas by the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliaries at the post, county, district and State levels amounted to more than \$200,000 this year. The "Voice of Democracy" program is truly one of the largest scholarship award programs available to the youth of our Nation.

Certainly no one could wish more wholeheartedly than the members of this committee, Mr. Chairman, and the members of my own organization, that there might be an end to war. But wishful thinking does not deter the Communist aggressor from his goal of conquest.

Once again we are engaged in armed conflict on foreign soil—an undeclared war it is true, but one which surpasses in its violence, its casualties, its human suffering, and the personnel and equipment committed all but three of the official wars in which this Nation has been engaged. With tongue in cheek, I exclude Korea, for as you know, Mr. Chairman, from your own distinguished military record, and that of your gallant sons, war is war, regardless of the name we give it.

More than half a million young Americans are presently fighting for human freedom in Vietnam, 50,000 stand precarious guard in Korea. A substantial portion of our fleet, and many of our aircraft ply the far reaches of the Pacific, where Red China girds her loins with nuclear power for the ultimate destruction of America.

In the trembling bastion of freedom we call Europe, another 200,000 Americans honor our continuing commitment to NATO. Thus, there does not appear within the preview of history, an honorable end to essential military service for the young men of this Nation. It is, therefore, the hope and the collective purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars that certain improvements in veterans' benefits may be effected, and made a permanent right of all veterans of either wars or conflicts in our Nation's cause.

Your committee has done much already to make this hope a reality of law. For this we thank you.

I am sure that you in turn are familiar with the tremendous work being done by the men of our rehabilitation service under the dedicated leadership of committee chairman, Past Commander in Chief Joseph J. Lombardo and Director Norman Jones; of our legislative service under Legislative Committee Chairman James E. Van Zandt, a past commander in chief and a former Member of Congress, and Legislative Director Francis Stover; of the perceptive contributions to national security being made by our distinguished national security committee under the guidance of Committee Chairman General Earl Rudder, president of Texas A. & M. University, and Gen. J. D. Hittle; and the overall competence and intelligence supervision of our Washington office by executive director, Past Commander in Chief Cooper T. Holt.

Again we thank you, for the cooperation you have given them. We are proud of them, and we are equally proud of our long, productive and amicable association with your committee.

It is no secret, Mr. Chairman, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars has steadfastly supported, and will continue to support, the President in our position in Southeast Asia. [Applause.]

We may, on occasion, voice some variant view on military strategy, such as the blockade of North Vietnam, but we stand unflinchingly behind U.S. policy in Vietnam. It is, however, the No. 1 concern of all our members that this conflict be brought to an early and successful conclusion.