

small part, because when you serve with such great men as Olin Teague and the others on this committee, it can only be a small part, but I will always remember it and look back on these 8 years as a time when I certainly tried and hope I did make some small contribution to the welfare of the heroes of this country and to this country itself.

So I congratulate you and the VFW and wish for your continued success and encourage you to carry higher the banner of freedom and courage and integrity that you are doing so well, as your organization has done through the years.

Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Mr. TEAGUE of Texas. Congressman Halpern of New York.

Mr. HALPERN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am always thrilled by these occasions, the most welcome appearance of the VFW national commander in chief before this committee, and today even outshines all the others. I am thrilled and I am awed by what I have heard and seen this morning.

Your presentation, Mr. Commander in Chief, was truly outstanding. Your program is excellent. It is fair, it is reasonable, it is equitable, it benefits not only the veteran but all America.

I agree 100 percent with all of the Veterans of Foreign Wars legislative goals and I am mightily pleased to be a sponsor of many of your recommendations, and I want to say here and now that it has been a real pleasure to work with your national legislative staff, Mr. National Commander, Francis Stover and his staff. Each of his staff has been most cooperative and the most knowledgeable fellows I have ever worked with.

While I have this opportunity, Mr. Commander in Chief, I want to pay a tribute, I want to extend my heartiest compliments to the New York State Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars; the Empire State has truly the most outstanding department commanders and leaders I have ever observed, many of whom are in this day, including the present department commander. What wonderful fellows they are.

And I also want to welcome the fine delegation here today from my own county of Queens. Our county commander is here and so are many of the other officers and workers in the ranks of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I am sure that the leaders of the Veterans of Foreign Wars are aware of the great job being done by the Queens County Council, the job they are doing to fulfill all the concepts and the objectives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, as they served in foreign lands to preserve our way of life, so they serve now in the home community to preserve that way of life to which all of you are so dedicated.

That's what I love about the VFW—not only do you fight for better legislation for the veteran, but through your community service programs, through your youth programs, and other activities you help make this a better America and I congratulate you, Mr. National Commander, having come through the ranks to reach the exalted role of commander in chief and I compliment your program and I salute all the patriotic Americans that comprise all of your organizations; enjoy your visit and I will see you all tonight an hour before your dinner. [Applause.]

Mr. TEAGUE of Texas. Congressman Duncan of Tennessee.