

other groups of veterans or dependents is justified. In order to maintain the value of programs for veterans, assessments must be made periodically in light of social and economic changes.

President Johnson recognized this need for periodic assessment of veterans programs. In his January 31, 1967, special message to Congress on veterans affairs, the President stated, "We must assure the continuing soundness of these programs." He then directed the Administrator of Veterans Affairs, "in consultation with leading veterans groups, to conduct a comprehensive study of the pension, compensation, and benefits system for veterans, their families, and their survivors." The President specified two goals for this study: "to assure that our tax dollars are being utilized most wisely and that our Government is meeting fully its responsibilities to all those to whom we owe so much."

To fulfill the President's request, the Administrator of Veterans Affairs selected an eleven man study group, designated as the U. S. Veterans Advisory Commission, including the former chairman of the National Rehabilitation Commission of the American Legion, as its chairman, with five immediate past National Commanders of leading veterans organizations, four state service directors and one retired military officer as members. This group, to carry out the President's request, heard testimony from all over the nation about the adequacy of present veterans programs and about veterans needs for new programs. In addition, they consulted with the nation's veterans' organizations, and conducted independent studies and evaluations.

The U. S. Veterans Advisory Commission held hearings in cities across the country: Seattle, Minneapolis, Chicago, Boston, Las Vegas, Brooklyn, Oklahoma City, Atlanta, and Philadelphia. In addition to these regional meetings, the Commission held two meetings in Washington, D.C. to facilitate presentation of testimony from national organizations. Invitations to present testimony before the Commission were extended to all veterans' organizations and citizens groups. Business, industrial, professional groups and the press were urged to appear as witnesses and present statements to the Commission. Full opportunity was given to all who wished to be heard and at each of its meetings, the Commission heard all interested citizens who wanted to testify. As a consequence, the Commission received over 1,400 different recommendations about veterans programs.

The Commission's consultation with veterans' organizations operated through several channels. Members of veterans' organizations, at the state and local levels, appeared