

veteran, are the VA hospital installations. We have the finest available hospital treatment centers, the finest doctors, and we would like to see that all of our veterans, regardless of the percentage of disability, be treated in these installations.

I would like to see the day when the nursing home care, as a whole concept of a program, would be under the roof of VA-sponsored and administered installations. I really would like to see that day.

Now, I know it is in the distant future because of the availability of nursing home care beds, and because, in many instances, the nonavailability of VA installations, especially in places like Hawaii and Alaska.

I can envision the day when this concept will be a reality because of the multitude of veterans who will be reaching that age where they can apply.

Mr. PUCINSKI. Mr. Chairman, we have heard many fine spokesmen for the AMVETS and other veterans' groups here. I remember Alderman Fifielski was here some years ago testifying as national commander, but I do want to commend you, Commander Ferrino, for your knowledge of this subject. You obviously do your homework well.

I think AMVETS all over the country can be proud of the manner in which you have represented them. I want to thank you for your frank and candid answers here today.

Mr. DORN. Mr. Brown.

Mr. BROWN of California. Mr. Chairman, there is very little I can add to the commendations that have been made. This has certainly been an excellent presentation.

Let me ask this one question having to do with the cemetery situation which I feel, as you do, is reaching crisis proportions and which I hope we will act on at this session of Congress.

I feel sure we are going to have proposals made to us from various sources that we consider the possibility of contracting with private cemetery operations for provision of cemetery space under suitable conditions which can be designated as national cemetery space in possibly existing private cemeteries.

I would like very much to get your reaction to this possibility if it is presented to the committee. Do you feel it would be a workable way of meeting the need, by having the Veterans' Administration lease or obtain a right to a tract of suitable size, that this could meet the needs for an expanded cemetery program in this country, at least in part?

Mr. FERRINO. Let me preface my answer by saying that any step in the direction of improving the existing problem of availability of gravesites would be a step in the right direction but ultimately I would hope that the cemetery system would be on Government-owned lands and, in order to establish continuity of purpose as to the gravesites and the locales, and the need where it is apparent, I would hope that in the good conscience of the members of the Congress that they would take this into consideration because the military cemeteries for veteran interment should follow some basic formula as far as availability of the land is concerned, with a continuity as we have in various cemeteries outside of the continental limits of the United States.