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PUBLIC HEARING

before

ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Testimony from various local veterans' organizations  
regarding their concerns and recommendations for future legislation

October 23, 1986  
New Jersey Memorial Home  
Vineland, New Jersey

MEMBER OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblyman Peter J. Genova, Chairman

ALSO PRESENT:

Leon J. Cheesman  
Acting Director  
Division of Veterans' Programs  
and Special Services  
Department of Human Services

Brian S. Volz  
Office of Legislative Services  
Aide, Assembly Select Committee  
on Veterans' Affairs

New Jersey State Library

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Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by  
Office of Legislative Services  
Public Information Office  
Hearing Unit  
State House Annex  
CN 068  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

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**New Jersey State Legislature**

**ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE**

**ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

STATE HOUSE ANNEX, CN-068

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625

TELEPHONE: (609) 292-9106

**PETER J. GENOVA**

*Chairman*

**DOLORES G. COOPER**

*Vice-Chairman*

**HAROLD L. COLBURN, JR.**

**PAUL DIGAETANO**

**RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN**

**D. BENNETT MAZUR**

**THOMAS H. PATERNITI**

NOTICE OF CHANGE

The Assembly Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs public hearing which was to be held on Wednesday, October 22, 1986 at 7:00 P.M. at the New Jersey Memorial Home in Vineland, New Jersey has been changed to Thursday, October 23, 1986 at 7:00 P.M.





PETER J. GENOVA  
*Chairman*  
DOLORES G. COOPER  
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New Jersey State Legislature  
ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE  
ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
STATE HOUSE ANNEX, CN-068  
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625  
TELEPHONE: (609) 292-9106

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Assembly Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, October 22, 1986, at 7:00 P.M. at the New Jersey Memorial Home, Vineland, New Jersey.

The Committee will meet to hear testimony from various local veterans organizations regarding their concerns and recommendations for future legislation.

Anyone wishing to testify should contact Brian Völz, Aide to the Committee, at (609) 292-9106.

Directions:

From Trenton - Take Rt. 206 South.  
This will become Rt. 54 South. At the inter-section with Route 40 - 54 South becomes Wheat Road. Take Wheat Road through one stop light and one blinking light and over raised railroads tracks. After crossing the railroad tracks turn left onto Oak Road. The New Jersey Memorial Home will be on the left.



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mjz: 1-76

**ASSEMBLYMAN PETER J. GENOVA (Chairman):** I would like to call the hearing to order. We are anticipating the arrival of Assemblywoman Dolores Cooper, who represents Atlantic County. She is Vice Chairman of the Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Hopefully, Assemblyman Tom Paterniti, from Middlesex County, will also be here.

As I mentioned to a few people informally, we had a session today, and I thought it would be in the best interests of the Committee members to change the hearing from Wednesday to Thursday, because for many of us who live in the northern part of the State, it was much easier to come down here from Trenton, instead of that three-hour ride. So, you know, we cut it in half, not anticipating that the session would be so long. Again, just as a matter of clarification, the committees this morning started at 10 o'clock. My particular interest was in the Labor Committee. We had a bill on drug testing before us, and I am sure many of you are familiar with that particular legislation.

So, we have been going all day in Trenton. The session was supposed to start at two o'clock, after committee hearings and after the conferences of the two parties. It did not get rolling until about four, or maybe about 10 minutes past four. There was some debate on both sides of the issue, but we are very pleased that the environmental bills did go through. We had many other bills that were a bit controversial in nature, but because of the nature of the bills, they passed also.

We left Trenton about 5:30. Tom Paterniti said he would prefer to stay around and vote on a few more bills, but that right afterwards he would be with us. Again, hopefully several other members will be here tonight. We certainly invite any interested parties to come forward to speak -- to testify. I am just so happy to be here. I am Pete Genova. I represent the Twenty-First District in Union County with

Speaker of the House, Chuck Hardwick. I am relatively new. I have only been in the Legislature for a year and a half, so I am still learning.

As many of you know, the Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs is brand-new this year. We are not a standing reference committee responsible for reviewing bills and making recommendations on those bills with respect to possible amendments to them. We review legislation that has been put in by our colleagues in the Legislature, and we determine whether or not those bills should be referred to those standing committees for consideration.

It is going to take a while for us to iron out all of the problems we have. In fact, as the Commander of the VFW knows, we did have a bit of controversy with respect to our Committee and some comments I made. Hopefully, with my communication to him, and to Paul Sutton, and to other veteran leaders in the State, those comments have been put to rest. You have seven members of this Committee who are pro veteran, and who feel that the initiatives that the State will be presenting to both houses of the Legislature and to the Governor will be in the best interest of the veterans of the State of New Jersey. We have a good Committee of concerned people. We are not giving lip service to the veterans. We are trying to learn and understand the veterans better, to make sure that they have one Committee championing their cause, and to make sure that they are not absorbed in the present Division of Veterans' Programs where Mr. Cheesman is Acting Director, in the Department of Human Services -- so that we can go to Human Services and to Leon and his staff with recommendations, and hopefully they will understand exactly where we are coming from as a Committee representing the veterans.

That is basically what we are doing as a Select Committee representing 900,000 veterans in the State of New Jersey.

I would like to introduce the people sitting at the dais: Leon Cheesman, Acting Director of the Division of Veterans' Programs and Special Services. He works directly for Drew Altman, Commissioner of the Department of Human Services. Leon Cheesman?

MR. CHEESMAN: I want to welcome all of you to beautiful southern New Jersey. If you have any questions later on, I will attempt to answer them.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I would hope that most of your questions would be directed to Leon, because he is in charge of the budget over there.

I would also like to introduce Ms. Donna Bahnck. Donna is the Assembly Majority Staff research person assigned to the Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Donna is my right arm. All of the problems I have, I present to her and she tries to handle them. She has done a great job, and I am very, very pleased and proud to have Donna as our staffer.

Many of you have met Brian Volz. Brian is with the Office of Legislative Services. He does all the research and all of the background checking for us. He sends out all of the meeting notices, so if any of you people have not received meeting notices, you have to go after Brian, not me.

We are very pleased to be here tonight. I would like to say that this Committee was created by Chuck Hardwick. Its basic purpose is to evaluate the needs and concerns and programs related to the veterans in the State of New Jersey. The meetings we have had so far throughout the State have been well-attended. We are very pleased with that. We feel the required services and recommended legislation that have been presented to us so far are certainly in line with our goal, which, of course, is to make sure that the veterans are well-represented.

I feel that any member -- and I am going to speak a bit politically to you tonight -- of the house -- the house has

80 members -- who is unable to recognize good veterans' legislation, is certainly missing the boat. We feel the legislation that some of our members have put in so far on both sides of the aisle-- We feel you will be very pleased with it. We have many initiatives that we are going to be presenting to the Legislature and to the Governor. I would hope that with a cohesive grouping, that the legislators in both houses will see that these particular initiatives are necessary for the veterans of the State of New Jersey.

I would like to review some of the bills we have put in so far. Maybe we will just save that for later in the program, because what generally happens when we have our hearings, there never appears to be enough time for the public to speak. There are always time constraints. So, at this time, I would like to have the people who have notified Brian that they would be interested in speaking come before us. I hope you will stay with the agenda of the service group you are representing. I remember the first few meetings we had during the controversial VVLP situation. It seemed like some people followed us around, no matter where we went, and that was all we heard about. And, it wasn't fair. For example, we went to Atlantic County, to Northfield, New Jersey. We wanted to hear from the veterans in that particular area, but we had the same people following us around, of course expressing their displeasure with the VVLP, and on the other side, the people who supported it spoke to us about their support for it. But, it just took up so much of our valuable time -- not that the issue was not pertinent.

We are here because of the veterans who reside in this particular part of the State of New Jersey. We are very familiar with the important part that Vineland plays in the structure of veterans' affairs. We are looking for an outpatient clinic in Vineland. We are looking for a lot of good things for this particular area as far as representing veterans.

So, what I would like to do, without any further ado, is ask for those people who have signed up to speak. We are not going to restrict the speakers just to this list. We certainly would enjoy hearing from anyone else who would like to speak. I am just going to read off this speaker's list in the order that they appear: Jim Schroeder from NJEA -- the New Jersey Education Association. I don't believe Jim is here. Sal Mione, Vietnam Veterans of America. Sal is not here either. Don Feldman, Gloucester County AMVETS. Okay. How are you doing, Don?

D O N A L D E. F E L D M A N: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Don has a statement for us. Would you like to come up and read your statement? (affirmative response) Thank you for coming, Don.

MR. FELDMAN: Thank you. Dear Present Legislators and Guests: Thank you for the opportunity to present, on behalf of my fellow veterans, some of the pressing needs and lack of care facing our South Jersey veterans and their families:

- 1) Absence of cost-effective means for communicating;
- 2) Absence of medical treatment;
- 3) Absence of cost-effective means for transportation;
- 4) Absence of applying and responding to obtain entitlements; and,
- 5) Absence of proper record keeping to support claims for veterans and their families.

There are many remedies to resolve these deficiencies. Example: The VAMC located in Wilmington, Delaware has a pilot program in progress; that is, three local veteran organizations were selected to assist the VAMC to screen veterans in need of health services. Following the screening, the veterans are then scheduled as needed for their respective medical appointments. Transportation vouchers are also arranged. It should be noted that the transportation VA voucher system is soon to be discontinued.

We in South Jersey are adjudicated in Newark, New Jersey, with 200 miles of travel involved for those of us coming from South Jersey. We are requested to seek medical services at the nearest VAMC. This means we must cross State lines in order to receive any medical assistance. It is interesting to point out that a Fee Basis Program exists to help service-connected veterans obtain local medical treatment from the veteran's local doctor. The veteran must first get prior approval from the nearest VA facility.

I have given the Committee copies of information that pertains to the Fee Basis Program -- its total outline and how the program allows use of outside services. Along with that, we also gave you copies of the post's dramatic stress problems and "Can America Treat Vets with Apathy?" and "Veterans Dig Deep for the Means Test Health Care." All of this is very significant to us in South Jersey because of the location of facilities for services and because of all of the above problems I have mentioned in transportation and communications.

Getting a fee basis I.D. card is an experience all its own. For those who are interested, please contact the nearest VAMC and tell them you are from New Jersey. There is a need to empower someone from the veteran's local area to help to assist in following up any request from the veteran that is made to a VA facility, which means we need the use of a local veterans' organization, service officers, and others of value. However, legislative clout is often necessary to prod reluctant VA persons to assist our South Jersey veterans to obtain their entitled fee basis I.D. card. This card is very significant to us in this area because of the locations of medical facilities and, of course, it is issued to only service-connected disabled veterans.

Another suggestion: Arrangements could be made to schedule groups of veterans through a weekly/monthly assisted transportation scheduling program. Presently, transportation

through casino moneys is for senior citizens and handicapped persons. This could be arranged to include veterans. This subsidized program could assist veteran organizations to arrange with prospective VAMC facilities, volunteers to provide transportation for local veterans. By arranging, communicating, local screening services, and cooperation with the VAMC and the New Jersey Bureau of Veterans' Services, local veteran organizations, and legislators, we can improve services to obtain the entitlements for South Jersey veterans and our families.

In summary, a veterans' services assisted State grants project, with guidelines and format, would go a long way toward helping interested and dedicated veteran groups to help our South Jersey veterans and their families obtain their entitlements. This would also help to keep a better paper trail record keeping system. It should be noted that \$600,000 was given to the VVLP. That money could have been better used to share with our veteran organizations.

New Jersey is the most densely populated State in the U.S.A. We rank fourth in per capita tax and seventh to ninth in veteran population, and yet we lose \$70 million to \$80 million of benefits returned to New Jersey. Our AMVETS 77 of Gloucester County would appreciate your assistance in obtaining such a grant to help us to provide a facility. We already own an acre of ground with 190 feet of road frontage on a State highway -- Highway 41. We are willing to offer a free office to the Bureau of Veterans' Services. We have two doctors who are willing to assist us with a screening program and assist us with the fee basis under VA guidelines.

I have much, much more, but in the interest of this hearing I reserve the privilege of offering another time for future follow-up.

I thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you, Don. Just so you will know what we do with the information provided to us, Brian has a record of all the statements presented to the Committee, and for those who do not have prepared statements, he takes notes -- and the information is contained on the tapes here -- and he provides the Committee and I with the necessary recommendations and suggestions. I just want to assure you that whatever is said is looked at and is taken to heart and at the proper time, if necessary, appropriate steps will be taken to fulfill whatever requests you make.

Sharon Vennel, Vietnam Veterans of America? How are you, Sharon? Are you here representing the South?

S H A R O N L. V E N N E L: I am here as a representative for the Vietnam Veterans of America, New Jersey State Council, VVA Chapter 228, which represents the southern part of the State, sir. Not everybody has a prepared statement. I have a combination of both.

First I would like to read to you a resolution passed by the New Jersey State Council VVA, as well as VVA Chapter 228. It reads as follows:

"WHEREAS, New Jersey has more than 33,500 women veterans and this number is increasing as more women are serving in the armed forces, and

"WHEREAS, women veterans have special needs, especially in the areas of house care, which have been overlooked, and this lack of attention has discouraged or prevented them from taking full advantages of the benefits and services which they are entitled to as veterans of the United States,

"BE IT RESOLVED, that we the members of the New Jersey State Council, Vietnam Veterans of America, strongly support the proposed Senate Bill 2199 and the proposed New Jersey Assembly Bill 2636, to establish a temporary women's veterans' advisory commission. Signed this twelfth day of October,

1986." It was signed by all of the officers of the New Jersey State Council, and you may have this for your records.

Number two, we are here to commend the New Jersey Agent Orange Commission on the Point Man Project. We recommend that the Assembly look into bills which would be in concurrence with proposed Senate Bill 2591 and proposed Senate Bill 2543. One is for an appropriation of funds to the New Jersey Agent Orange Commission, and the other one is to create a consortium for research on dioxin and related compounds here in the State of New Jersey.

Another issue we wish to address you about is the homeless issue. We wish to go on record again in support of any type of legislation that can be brought forward on the homeless issue. Our homeless veterans are growing every day, and something has to be done about it.

I thank you for your time.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you, Sharon.

MR. CHEESMAN: I am very interested in the homeless issue concerning the veterans. I concur with you about the growing numbers. I believe the VA brought out a booklet concerning the homeless veteran. I want to inform you that I have submitted my concerns relative to the homeless veterans to the Commissioner. I have made a few suggestions to him along those lines. They are not forgotten.

MS. VENNEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Cheesman.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you again, Sharon. Is Sam Lo Bue here? (affirmative response) How are you, Sam?

S A M L O B U E: I want to show you this picture of a man. He was 23 years old there. You won't find that in a book anyplace, because that was on the border between Germany and Poland. So, you won't find it anyplace, and you won't find any records.

Mr. Chairman, you will have to excuse me. I forgot to bring my reading glasses, and I have these G.I. bifocals that are not worth--

I am very grateful to be able to speak to the Assembly Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs. I would like to thank your Committee Aide, Brian, for selecting me as one of the speakers at this hearing. I would also like to thank the Chairman and the members present for the privilege of speaking to you as a veteran, and as an American citizen, concerned about A-1010.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Oh, I know the bill.

MR. LO BUE: You know the bill, don't you?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Yeah, I know it.

MR. LO BUE: I wish this Committee would help me to right a wrong. At the end of the last session, A-342 was passed in the Assembly 66 to 1 -- 66 in favor and 1 against. I was told that A-342 died in the Senate Appropriations Committee -- Finance and Appropriations Committee -- because, they said, they felt there were too many charter veterans' organizations, and the State of New Jersey would lose too much revenue. I feel that this bill died a dishonorable death.

As a life member of several veterans' organizations, and a past State Commander of the Disabled American Veterans -- and you can see the year here, 1971-1972 -- I am well aware of the number of charter DAV chapters we have, those which have homes and those which do not have homes. There were over 80 charters released -- over 80 charters -- but only 13 of them own homes today. Sixty-nine of the chapters -- DAV chapters -- meet in American Legions, VFWs, AMVETS, Knights of Columbus, town recreation centers, public libraries, municipal complexes, the War Memorial Building, etc. I don't know where the fallacy came from, from the Senate Appropriations Committee, which said the State is going to lose between \$1000 and \$10,000 every year in revenue.

Most of the meetings that are held by these other 69 chapters are held at the convenience of the outfits where they meet. If they meet in the Knights of Columbus, they tell them

where to meet and when to meet. Most of the time, these chapters must move to another location, for one reason or another. As a life member, and as an ex-POW, I was given the task to find a veterans' home in my area to hold a meeting to let the veterans know that a POW was looking for members. Thanks to VFW Post 491 in Yardville, we were given the use of their meeting hall free of charge. We came from different parts of the State at one p.m., on a Sunday. The VFW Post 491, after the meeting, gave us a sit-down dinner free. The VFW Post 491 has a heart of gold. They did not want to send the POWs out to eat on the road home. They also gave us two more meetings in the same manner. The POW is now called the Garden State Chapter No. 1, and meets at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, which is not their own home. None of the POW chapters have a home.

I was talking about the DAVs, now I am going to the POWs. I am a life member of the local POW. The name is the Continental Chapter of New Jersey. Again, thanks to the big heart of gold of VFW Post 491, at no charge, at any time-- If we wish to have a special meeting, or an affair, the Commander of that post will give us the first free date at no charge. In my heart I wish to repay their kindness to the POW of New Jersey. In other words, I am here as an individual veteran who feels deeply that we should help those who have a home.

In closing -- and my heart hurts to say this -- the British and the Canadians, and other nations which fought in World War II, have an international convention, and they are given better benefits than we get in the United States. They feel that the United States does not care for its veterans. Is that true? I am asking the Committee if that is true. If any member of the Committee, or the Chairman, have any questions for me, I will try to answer the questions to the best of my ability. Also, if I don't have the answer, I will do my best to get it and give it to Brian, who will relay the message to you.

**New Jersey State Library**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your kind attention. I am a United States veteran. I am talking as an individual now. I served by choice, not by force. I was born in Sicily. I was not allowed to join the service, and when I did finally get to go in the service I had a double hernia. I had to shed blood twice on the operating table from the double hernia to get into the service. I ended up in the Infantry. Here is their badge. This is the bar star Purple Heart.

Are there any questions from the Committee about why I spoke on this bill?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: No, we can understand why you spoke on the bill.

MR. LO BUE: When the Senate said they would lose between \$1000 and \$10,000 a year-- That's wrong.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I think your figures are somewhat exaggerated. They're not exaggerated, but you are not correct. Brian, what is the fiscal loss on that?

MR. LO BUE: I was told that by Senator Russo's aide two years ago -- his aide.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: It's more like a million dollars, isn't it, Brian?

MR. VOLZ (Committee Aide): The Department of the Treasury estimates that passage of this bill will cost \$1.1 million in Fiscal Year 1987, \$1.1 in '88, and \$900,000 in '89. They do not project it out any further than that.

MR. LO BUE: Well, don't you think the veterans deserve more than that?

MR. VOLZ: It covers more than just DAV and POW chapters.

MR. LO BUE: I'm saying all the veterans.

MR. VOLZ: Right. So, there are over--

MR. LO BUE: Excuse me, Brian. We served our country. I was born on the other side. I am Sicilian by birth. They sent me, naturally, to France to fight the

Germans. They wouldn't send me to Italy because they figured I might betray the American Army, or if I were in the Coast Guard, which I tried to join in December, 1941-- I was turned down because I was born in the wrong country. That is why I say, this is by choice. I am an American citizen. I have my own papers. I found out that a German-American, like me, an Italian-American, was denied to speak before the Federal court because he was naturalized and kept the naturalization papers of his father, which showed a different name. My name is Salvatore Lo Bue. I did not know my name was Sam Lo Bue. I knew it was Salvatore. I didn't even know what my last name was. I never heard it. A Sicilian youngster is not called by his last name. He is called by his first name only, and you better respect your parents and your elders.

If there is any question as to my patriotism, or why I would like to help the organization that has helped us, I would like to hear it. I, for one, think that bill -- A-342 -- died a dishonorable death. If A-1010 should pass the Assembly, and it dies the same death, it is doubly dishonorable, when I hear that the British and the Canadians get better benefits than we do.

Thank you very much. Are there any questions yet?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Yeah. I would say there is little chance that 1010 will be brought before the Appropriations Committee, or before the other various committees responsible for the contents of it, this year. We have -- as I mentioned before, and I will review them later -- some veterans' initiatives that are going to cost the State of New Jersey a lot of money. You, Sam, and several other people who may testify, will say, "Well, the veterans deserve it," and we certainly understand that. We can certainly appreciate that. But there are limitations, fiscally, with respect to what we can provide.

We have to be very selective, to make sure that the legislation which we are going to recommend, which will hopefully be passed by the various bodies in Trenton, is exactly what all of the veterans want. We have not had-- In fact, other than yourself, we haven't had any other people testifying in support of -- maybe one other person -- A-342, now A-1010. So apparently, by virtue of the fact that there has been silence with respect to this particular legislation and what it provides-- This indicates to me, as Chairman of the Committee, that it is not at the highest level of priority with all veterans' groups. I am just being very fair and honest with you.

MR. LO BUE: May I answer you now?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Sure.

MR. LO BUE: A roof on a house -- or a building, like the 13 buildings that the DAV owns-- When you put a roof on, it is a 20-year roof. So, the sales tax on a roof is once every 20 years. VFW Post 491 is having problems with their refrigeration and with the floor -- the joists on the floorboard. They are going to need money. We are not allowed to donate money to the VFW because we are POWs. We are their guests. This is why I am fighting for this bill, not for me. Chapter 41 is my chapter of the DAV. They have their own headaches. Let their own lodge membership fight this. I am fighting this as an individual for a chapter that I thought gave us a heart of gold. The State of New Jersey and the United States do not care.

These shoes are six months overdue to have them replaced by the United States government. They do not answer my podiatrist on a fee basis. I am 100% disabled. Why don't I get an answer to my doctor from the VA hospital. I would like to know that. I brought this to the attention of Bob Clark at Lyons. I showed him the letter. It was dated 5/26/86. Not an answer was given to my doctor. This is a discourtesy from one

professional person to another professional person. That is why the British and the Canadians say that we have a government that doesn't care for the veterans, until they need us. Then they want us.

I have a son who is in the Reserve now. They upped-- It is not 20 years now, it is 30 years you have to serve.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Well, we can't--

MR. LO BUE: I know you can't. That is a Federal law. I'm sorry. I brought that up just to let you know that the Federal law also hurts the veterans, as well as the State laws. I wish the State would help us on State matters.

Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Well, I believe the State makes every effort, you know, to help the veterans out. With respect to the VA's responsibility-- Some of the charges you just recently made are not in the realm of our--

MR. LO BUE: No, they're not. I am just bringing up different points.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I know that this Committee is recommending a bill. I am not going to go into too much detail on it yet, because it has not been finalized. But, it is going to provide a much better line of communication between the Federal government and the State of New Jersey with respect to some of the things you are talking about.

Leon, not to put you on the spot, but what type of cooperation do you receive from the VA pertaining to some of the requests?

MR. CHEESMAN: Well, it is interesting. I copied down your name, Mr. Lo Bue, because I would like to have a service officer in our Division find out what the problem actually is, especially with the shoes you are talking about. If you will give me your phone number--

MR. LO BUE: Area Code 609--

MR. CHEESMAN: Okay.

MR. LO BUE: --586-4735.

MR. CHEESMAN: Yes, sir. I will have one of our service officers contact you, because we are just going to have to investigate this matter.

MR. LO BUE: Yes, because I am having trouble walking. This is my best shoe, and if you look at the heels, I am walking like a duck.

MR. CHEESMAN: Yes, sir. Well, it goes beyond your particular problem.

MR. LO BUE: What the first speaker said about the fee basis card-- You might as well throw it out the window. I'll tell you why: You have to get permission from Philadelphia, which is my jurisdiction. I live in Mercer County. Philadelphia has to okay me to see a specialist. This is wrong. I suffered; the government owes it to me. I want not a penny more, nor a penny less than what the government owes me -- the Federal government or the State government. But I am more against the Federal government right now, and I am fighting it. The International Conference -- I heard -- says that we are very low in benefits, and that includes the State of New Jersey, too.

Thank you very much, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you very much, Sam.

MR. LO BUE: I hope I didn't hurt anyone's feelings.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I see that Sal Mione has shown up. Sal is a good friend of the Committee. He represents the Vietnam Veterans of America. He has been at several of our meetings -- our public hearings -- and he has provided us with some good, legitimate input. I am always very pleased to have Sal come before this Committee to testify. I would also like to say that Sal is a distinguished member of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Commission, which recently concluded its fourth meeting with respect to selecting a site and the design mechanisms for the memorial. I think in a short period of

time-- In fact, today, the Assembly Appropriations Committee authorized seed money of \$25,000 for the Commission. Sal, thank you for coming.

**S A L M I O N E:** Thank you for having me, Peter. It is nice to be here with all of you.

As Peter said, I am the State Chair for the Vietnam Veterans of America Government Committee. One of the things I try to do is look out for the benefit of all veterans, not only Vietnam veterans.

What I have in front of me is a proposal directed to one of the State Senators. It has been in the works since about April. One of the things I would like to do is approach the Select Committee and read it, Peter, if I may.

**ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA:** Sure.

**MR. MIONE:** "Over the years, Vietnam veterans in particular, have pushed for some kind of a halfway house program. In recent days, we have seen veterans discharged from Lyons and VA hospitals with absolutely no place to go. Almost daily we hear of veterans who are homeless in Atlantic City or Camden.

"What distinguishes veterans from other groups in our population is the fact that they have served their country. Secondly, by virtue of their service, they are entitled to benefits from specific programs at the Federal and State levels. A halfway house concept would aid targeted groups in fully realizing their potential benefits from what they have earned.

"I have always envisioned a pilot program of, say, five halfway houses located in urban areas such as Newark, Jersey City, Elizabeth, Camden, and Atlantic City. The houses would be from existing non-utilized stock in these urban areas. Each house could hold from six to twelve residents at a time. The residency would depend on the circumstances. For example, if a veteran had no place to go and he was unemployed,

he could be a resident of a halfway house for three months -- period. The veteran would receive, while in residency, employment counseling, substance abuse counseling, referrals for family counseling, VA benefit counseling, State benefit counseling, and other services."

I won't read the whole thing, Peter.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Why don't you read it? It's just another page.

MR. MIONE: "Each house would have a resident in charge, a veteran who would receive a small monthly stipend. The resident in charge would stay for a six-month or 12-month period. Each house would be visited at least once per week by a specialized, trained social worker, a counselor, or a veteran who would actually consult and monitor the residents-- Each house would be adopted by one of the major veterans' organizations--" This is very important to us -- be adopted. We need input from all of the veterans' groups -- not just the Vietnam veterans -- for this adoption program to work.

(continuing to read) "--which would provide some monetary support, advice, and expertise. They have plenty of all three. The setup costs of each house would be borne by the State as a pilot project. I have observed a vet halfway house in Portland, Maine; additionally, a successful halfway house maintained by the NJIT in Newark, for veteran college students.

"Some added suggestions: During residency, each vet will receive a small weekly stipend, travel to job interviews, basic health care, etc. Item No. B, veterans would be selected for programs after evaluation by a three-person council set up by the State. They would be volunteers. The three-person volunteer council would also handle discipline violations and would have a final say on administration and termination from the program. Case studies are available for review. I have not costed out the proposal yet. I would suggest visiting one or two halfway house operations.

"In closing--" It goes on and on. This is a proposal we have been working on with Wayne Wilson, who is the head of the Agent Orange Commission. When he does something, he looks into it and does it well. Wayne is a member of our organization, and he has this proposal. Again, it is a proposal for a pilot program.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: You have read the statement, so I suppose you are representing Wayne Wilson tonight. I see Paul back there, too.

MR. MIONE: One of the things we are representing, Peter-- When you first did the Select Committee, Bob Hopkins approached you with the pilot program for halfway houses. We said we would get back to the Committee about some type of pilot program, or a proposal. We used the talent available to us, and Wayne's name, as you see, is signed to this, so he is fully aware of what we are doing. As a member, he would like to help us with this. Again, it is not just the VVA. This is for all the veterans of the State of New Jersey. We visit Lyons Hospital once a month, and we visit the East Orange Hospital once a month, so we know what those veterans are looking for. This will help them.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: One of the things in this particular request I can see is that there certainly is a need for this type of a concept. But, why the utilization of homes in just urban areas?

MR. MIONE: From what we see -- and, again, in the research we have done-- Specifically around the Camden area and around the Newark area is where we see most of the need, and the Jersey City area, the Elizabeth area, all of the urban areas. Centrally located in county areas, accessible-- This is where we believe we can get some of the funds to be channeled into the urban areas and utilizing the homes.

One of the things we find is, "Yes, we want halfway houses, but we don't want them in our neighborhoods." Okay?

That has become a real problem. The people in the residential areas do not want halfway houses next-door to them. They would like to see a halfway house, but "It is not going to be the house next-door to mine."

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: That is so true, whether it be homes for the developmentally disabled, homes for former narcotics users, paroled prisoners, or alcoholics. The same refusal is common: "We enjoy the concept; we agree with the concept, but we don't want it in our back yard." No matter what it is, put it on the other side of the tracks. That is basically the same type of response we hear all the time.

Let me ask you this: Where would the existing non-utilized stock of property or homes come from?

MR. MIONE: Let me just give you one example, and it is the one example I am working with in Jersey City. I am going to mention Tom Cowan's name. Senator Tom Cowan, in Jersey City, has already started homeless programs -- not for veterans, but homeless programs for non-veterans. What he wants to do is get involved in the veterans' community.

Also, St. John's Episcopal Church up in Union City-- Half of their population right now is veterans. The pastor, Reverend Kuegler (phonetic spelling), would like to get involved in this. In Jersey City, Mayor Cucci has been interested. Now, instead of Cucci and Cowan going out, and Reverend Kuegler going out, if we could combine their efforts to have different halfway houses in the Jersey City area-- Why put three different functions -- a city function, a State function, and a private function-- Why not use one house for all functions for veterans?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Again, how would these homes become available, only because you are representing this particular statement here? I would like to just know a little bit more about the proposal. Where would these homes come from? Would they be homes--

MR. LO BUE: Salvation Army, Rescue Mission.

MR. MIONE: One of the homes we have right now belongs to St. John's Episcopal Church in Union City. It is already available to us. What we want to do-- Again, we asked Mayor Cucci, and through his people in the development area, he has said he would give us aid. Another person in that area is Jaime Vazquez -- City Councilman in Jersey City -- who is looking for ways to aid us. Exactly where it is going to be will be researched as it goes on.

In closing, I apologize for the brief nature of the proposal. A more detailed analysis might be arrived at by putting together a small working group of Vietnam veterans who need a halfway house. What we are looking for is a proposal. Examples of what we need could be set upon by a veterans' group, or even the Select Committee could be utilized to do that. If there is an interest in it, we are asking you to come back to us.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Has any action been taken on this since July?

MR. MIONE: Just with Senator Tom Cowan.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Yeah, I know that, but what has he done since then?

MR. MIONE: He just got back to our organization -- the VVA -- and said, "Yes, we would like to get together." I said, "How can we get together?" I said, "What I would like to do first is put this proposal to the Select Committee and get their input."

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: That is what the Senator said?

MR. MIONE: That is what I proposed to the Senator.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay. Leon?

MR. CHEESMAN: Commissioner Altman is also aware of this letter. A letter was addressed to Commissioner Altman by Wayne Wilson. The Commissioner asked me to meet with Mr. Wilson. Apparently you are spearheading this.

MR. MIONE: We were the ones who spearheaded it to begin with.

MR. CHEESMAN: Then I would prefer that perhaps you and I could meet some time and get the facts and figures for the pilot program, because Commissioner Altman has expressed his deep interest in this program. Maybe we could set up a meeting together.

MR. MIONE: May I say one thing?

MR. CHEESMAN: Yes, sir.

MR. MIONE: What I agree with is in Wayne's-- I think a veterans' committee should be set up.

MR. CHEESMAN: I understand that.

MR. MIONE: Because I am not all that knowledgeable; Wayne is not all that knowledgeable. What we need are the people he requested to be there: Mrs. Ann Clark of the VA Center in Jersey City and Mrs. Dennis Kealy of the VA Center in Newark (names spelled phonetically). We should have the people who are in our VA Centers right now at that meeting, so they can tell us firsthand what they see.

MR. CHEESMAN: I see.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: The three observations I would like to make are: Number one, funding. What will the magnitude of the costs be to the State of New Jersey?

MR. MIONE: We are hoping that the municipalities -- not only the State -- will pick up part of the funding. If we go on the concept of a city already having a halfway house, or looking into a halfway house-- Why not furnish the State with a combined fund? Maybe a private organization, like the VVA, could help with the manpower, where you might not need to hire people, but use volunteers. What Wayne says in here is "volunteer services."

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I would say you are not going to get too far depending on the municipalities to fund it. We just funded \$4 million to the City of Newark to employ 400

police officers for crack. Sharpe James came before the Legislature and said that his town is broke; that he not only needs assistance to engage new police officers to come down on this problem which is widespread throughout this country -- this crack contamination -- but also for other types of law enforcement programs for the City of Newark. We funded \$2 million to Jersey City to help them in a financial crunch they had.

I am not too sure, Sal, that you are going to get cooperation from the municipalities. If this type of program is going to be launched and be successful, it is going to have to be placed on the shoulders of the State of New Jersey, especially in these particular urban areas, with all due respect.

MR. MIONE: But I don't think -- and I always go back -- I don't think the State should automatically take the burden of any fundings. The buildings themselves-- It has to be worth something for a building to be utilized. To renovate those buildings for a halfway house, we can use our own people.

These are just some of the proposals we have in mind. You know, the stipends we are asking for-- It is not a lot of money. What we want is transportation to and from. If the State can provide transportation instead of money, we will look at that also.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I would rather the municipalities pick up a portion of the financial obligation with respect to the program, but I am just saying that from what I have observed, and from the bills that have been brought before us in the Legislature by Assemblymen representing these areas, the municipalities do have some financial problems. I am just not too sure that they are going to be too receptive to the fact of making an appropriation for this type of money in the line budget area of their particular budgets.

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The second point I would like to bring out is, many municipalities are very proud and very supportive of home rule. I am not too sure that with the development of these group homes, again, for various types of individuals -- whether they be narcotics users or parolees or alcoholics or those who are not as fortunate as we, developmentally disabled people -- whether or not the municipalities are going to be too obliging -- I am talking about the city officials -- to allow these homes to be part of, you know, the aesthetical surroundings of the community. That is going to be something else you are really going to have to sell to the municipalities, because then again, by the State taking this particular obligation upon itself, we are going to have to just by-pass all of their concerns. There are going to be some objections from the local officials. That is another point we are going to have to seriously look at.

MR. MIONE: I believe there will be objections, but veterans must come first. We have been second-class citizens to some of the municipalities here, and we have to bring our needs to them. We upheld the Constitution of the United States to the best of our ability, and we are asking for nothing more, or nothing less than what we deserve for our brothers and sisters sitting in a hospital, looking to get out to rehabilitate themselves, and to become useful in society again.

The veteran community needs the support of this Select Committee and of the Assembly and of the Senate, to try to do something to help. What we are asking you to do, Peter, and members of the Committee, is to help. We won't know that it doesn't work until we try it.

MR. CHEESMAN: I want to tell you once again that the Commissioner has expressed his interest in this. That is where the thrust should go, to the Commissioner, through the Division of Veterans' Programs.

MR. MIONE: Okay.

MR. CHEESMAN: It is essential that we set up some type of a meeting whereby you, and whomever, would meet with me and my group, so we would be able to have a package prepared to present to the Commissioner -- Commissioner Altman of the Department of Human Services. As I said before, he has expressed a keen interest in this concept for the homeless.

MR. MIONE: Very good, thank you.

I only have a couple more things. One of the things that we -- and I mean the Vietnam Veterans of America -- did, was pass a resolution through the State. This is a Federal resolution, but we want to bring it here also. I think Sharon might have mentioned part of it before.

"WHEREAS, New Jersey has 177,900 Korean era veterans who have served our nation honorably during the Korean War;

"WHEREAS, the contributions and sacrifices of these veterans on behalf of their country have not been adequately recognized, thereby denying the veterans public appreciation they so richly deserve;

"BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the members of the New Jersey State Council of Vietnam Veterans of America, strongly support the erection of a Korean War Memorial in our nation's capital in Washington, D.C."

The reason I am bringing this here before this Select Committee is, you are closely in touch with the 14 Congressmen and two Senators in this State. We would like you, as members of this Committee, to let our voice be heard, that we are firmly behind the Korean War veterans, and are in support of their monument. It is signed by all--

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Do we have a house resolution, that you know of, supporting this?

MR. FELDMAN (speaking from audience): The Congress has already approved the erection of the Korean War Memorial in Washington, D.C. (remainder of Mr. Feldman's comment indiscernible to transcriber, since he is speaking without a microphone)

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: So, actually, what Sal is looking for us to support has already been accomplished. (comments here from audience are indiscernible to transcriber)

We try to stay as far away from those Congressmen and Senators as we can. (laughter) For obvious reasons.

MR. MIONE: I was a little late, so I hope I am not being repetitive. Were the Agent Orange bills brought up?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Yes.

MR. MIONE: Okay, I will just put them away. There are two other things I would like to bring before the Select Committee that are very important to me. One is our ex-POWs and our POWs. Two of the things we have been fighting for are two House concurrent resolutions where the Select Committee can help us out. On one of them, the ex-POWs are looking for our support. They just had a dinner down in Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, where they were looking for support for House Concurrent Resolution 864. What I would like to do is have the committees -- Assembly and Senate -- help us to bring attention to that resolution.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I am looking to see if we have already acted on that.

MR. MIONE: That's the House.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Oh, the House.

MR. MIONE: What I am looking for is the Senate's--

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Was that 864?

MR. MIONE: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Yeah, 864-- The Select Committee recommended, on October 2, that by virtue of the submission of AR-92, sponsored by Assemblyman DiGaetano, memorializing Congress to pass HR-864-- Was it 864?

MR. MIONE: Yes, 864.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay, yeah. We have asked the Chairman of the Health and Human Resources Committee to place that bill on his agenda -- that resolution on his agenda -- as

soon as possible, and that the Speaker post it for passage. That was done on October 2.

We have also recommended the release of -- again, Assemblyman DiGaetano and Assemblyman Singer -- A-2549-- I have the wrong one, I'm sorry.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: That is a benefit bill, Sal, right?

MR. MIONE: Yes, a benefit bill. It is a benefit bill for the ex-POWs.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: It memorializes Congress to pass HR-864, which increases benefits to veterans who are former prisoners of war. We passed AR-24 by Assemblyman Frelinghuysen of Morris County, memorializing Congress to enact HJR-105, calling upon the President to seek a full accounting of American MIAs in Southeast Asia. Of course, these particular resolutions are relative to Sal's questions.

We also have AR-16, sponsored by Assemblyman Chinnici, who represents this area, memorializing Congress to increase efforts to seek the return of MIAs and POWs. Okay, Sal.

MR. MIONE: Peter, House Concurrent Resolution 129 -- the Perot Commission-- One of the things that many of us might not know is that we were looking for 218 votes through Congress. We have 239 votes now for the Perot Commission, but Congressman Solarz is, for some reason, trying to keep it from coming out of committee. What we are looking for is your help. We have the votes. We needed 218; we got 239. I gave you that paper in front of you to show you that the votes are there. Congressman Solarz is the one holding it up -- the Perot Commission to be established.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay. We will put together the appropriate resolution, sponsored by the entire Select Committee, doing as you have requested.

MR. MIONE: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you, Sal. Paul, since you are here, would you like to come forward and address the group? Paul Sutton is the State Chairman of the Vietnam Veterans' Civic Council. He is very closely associated with Wayne Wilson, Sal Mione, and many other distinguished leaders in our veterans' community. The first Select Committee hearing we had, there were about-- How much snow was on the ground?

P A U L S U T T O N: I think we got about three inches that morning, and it took me about two hours to get into Trenton.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I thought it was about seven inches.

MR. SUTTON: Normally, it takes me about an hour.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: That was the first time I met Paul, and I was very impressed with his presentation. He is really quite knowledgeable, and it is always a pleasure hearing from him when he presents his concerns to the Committee. It's all yours, Paul.

MR. SUTTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have a prepared statement, but there are a couple of things I would like to touch on. First of all, I would like to offer the deep gratitude of our Civic Council for the co-sponsorship of the entire Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs for Mr. Hardwick's resolution honoring the Secretary of our Civic Council, Mrs. Kathleen Lecato. As you know, Mrs. Lecato was selected as the 1986 Federal Secretary of the Year. In that capacity, she represents 931,000 people in the Federal government who are on that career path. So, that is quite an honor for a Jersey girl who works in a Veterans' Administration facility right in downtown Trenton.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: We are going to be honoring her. Speaker Hardwick will be the primary sponsor of the resolution, along with myself and the other members of the Select Committee. We will be honoring her in Trenton, and on that day I would hope that as many veterans as possible will come out --

people from your particular division -- to show their support for her, too.

MR. SUTTON: Yes, sir. One of the things I wanted to mention was, there was a bill enacted -- signed by the Governor on August 5. It was originally sponsored by Senator Bassano, and was known as S-622. It would provide psychiatric services for incarcerated individuals. Our concern on the Civic Council is for incarcerated Vietnam veterans who experience varying degrees of post traumatic stress disorder, commonly known as PTSD.

Presently, in our penal system in the State of New Jersey, some 28% of the incarcerated population are Vietnam veterans. Nationwide, in the Federal prison system, that figure drops slightly to 23%. Our Civic Council is concerned with the kind of counseling that might be available to incarcerated Vietnam veterans, particularly those who are on medium term sentences -- five to ten years.

In talking with various counselors in the vet centers around the State -- the VA vet centers, of which there are four -- it becomes apparent that as we reach age 40 -- that seems to be a magic benchmark -- as we reach age 40, there seems to be an increasing number of Vietnam veterans who are voluntarily coming into vet centers for counseling. They are experiencing trouble -- problems -- with PTSD. These things range anywhere from marital problems to spouse abuse to substance abuse. You name it, we've got it. Those numbers of people coming into the vet centers for counseling have increased threefold in 1986 alone, and these are healthy people walking the street. Our concern is for the incarcerated veteran.

I personally had the opportunity about three months ago of meeting with 40 prisoners at Trenton State, who expressed their frustrations, if you will, at not being able to get into a counseling mode. I would hope that Senator Bassano's bill, which was signed into law, would go a long way

in addressing that question. From what I know of the law as it was enacted, the Department of Corrections and the Department of Human Services had, I think, 181 days to come up with a plan to address this situation. We offered, in a letter to Dr. Altman, the assistance of our Council, because on our Council are representatives from all four vet centers. We offered them the assistance as far as the incarcerated Vietnam veteran is concerned.

Dr. Altman has indicated that he is looking into that. I would assume that as soon as this plan between the Department of Corrections and the Department of Human Services is worked out, that they may then come back to us for some input. I think that is an important situation, and it ties in with what Mr. Mione was talking about as far as a halfway house, because you've got these prisoners who come out of the penal system-- If a guy has PTSD problems, he probably has very little, or no family life, or had none when he went into the institution. He is coming out eight to ten years later with nowhere to go, and the only thing this guy is going to do is get back in trouble and wind up back in the system, and that is not what we want to happen.

So, we want to kind of jump in there before this guy is lost to us. I would like to impress on Mr. Cheesman -- with whom I have had a number of conversations, not about this particular issue -- but impress on Mr. Cheesman, with his rapport with the Commissioner, that we are still offering our services in anything regarding counseling for post traumatic stress for these incarcerated veterans. I consider it a very serious matter, and I would hope that the two Departments would consider it an equally important matter.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Donna, Paul DiGaetano's bill? Is this Paul's? (Chairman speaking to Donna Bahnck, but response is indiscernible) Donna read my mind. Assembly Bill 3125, sponsored by Assemblyman DiGaetano, has passed the Assembly

Health and Human Resources Committee, and is up for a vote this coming Monday, October 27. What does the "Index" read on that, Donna?

MS. BAHNCK: The "Index" isn't up-to-date on that.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay. That endeavors to concentrate on the PTSD veteran and hopefully to provide some type of direction.

MR. SUTTON: In talking about PTSD, I know that a number of the folks who are here tonight are not from my generation, and I don't hold that against you. I hope you don't hold the fact that I am a Vietnam veteran against me.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: He's talking about me, too, you know.

MR. SUTTON: You know, the Veterans' Administration admits to the figure of approximately 25% of all combat Vietnam veterans suffer from some degree of PTSD. There was a study done at the University of Texas Medical Center in Houston, which was released in February, which stated that 80% of all Vietnam veterans suffer from PTSD to some degree. There is a wide variance there, obviously. The Federal studies which were completed a couple of years ago may not have taken into account the aging process. And, as I indicated before, that magic age of 40 seems to have something to do with it. Thank goodness I am beyond that point, so maybe I am over the hump, because I haven't really gotten into any PTSD problems, although sometimes I wonder.

I want to get off that subject. I want to talk about something else that is important to our Council. In fact, we are going to be discussing this on Saturday at our meeting in Trenton. Sharon Vennel alluded to two bills that are presently before the Senate -- S-2591 and S-2593 -- introduced by Senator Van Wagner on September 29. I would just like to read the statements from these bills, if you don't mind. Are you familiar with these at all, Mr. Genova?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Briefly.

MR. SUTTON: All right. This is the statement that follows the introduction of S-2591. The statement says: "During the last three years, the Agent Orange Commission has spent approximately \$400,000 on its Point Man Project, with breakthrough results which received recent national attention in reopening the Agent Orange issue. For the first time, a method has been developed to precisely show levels of the herbicide dioxin in the blood and fat tissues. Dioxin levels in a test group of exposed veterans were on the average 10 times higher than in the general population. This appropriation of a million dollars would extend the Point Man Project to Phase 2 for continuation of the Agent Orange health-related research and testing."

There is no doubt in my mind that our Civic Council will direct me to write a letter to Senator Van Wagner, and probably Senator Russo, urging them to place this bill in the process for early hearings. I am sure that our sense of that is going to be unanimous. Some might accuse me of feathering my own nest, because as you all know, I work for the Agent Orange Commission. I am not here in that capacity tonight. I did check with one of my nine bosses, who is seated in the back of the room, and he said he didn't think it would be a conflict of interest. Therefore, I bring it to your attention.

The other bill, which is S-2593, also introduced by Senator Van Wagner, would appropriate the sum of two million dollars. "This bill would create a consortium for research on dioxin and related compounds, the purposes of which would be to conduct and fund more extensive research on dioxin exposure and contamination and its resulting health effects; investigate means to reduce those effects, and establish and operate a modern laboratory for dioxin research and analysis. The consortium would coordinate its efforts with those of the Agent Orange Commission. The seven-member consortium would be

composed of five scientists or health professionals from three universities, and two members of the Agent Orange Commission. This bill would appropriate from the General Fund to the consortium the sum of two million dollars, of which a million dollars would be utilized to establish and operate laboratory facilities and equipment for dioxin analysis and research.

"This bill is necessary because recent research has demonstrated that dioxin exposure and contamination continues to be a threat to public health, particularly to Vietnam era veterans, who were exposed to the herbicide Agent Orange, but also possibly to residents of Newark and other areas who have either worked or lived near industrial sites with high dioxin levels. Federal efforts to address the dioxin problem have been ineffective and unresponsive."

I just might add as an aside, this consortium would be responsible for establishing a laboratory. The laboratory would be able to perform the kinds of very complex and sophisticated dioxin analyses that the Agent Orange Commission in New Jersey requires. The laboratory that the New Jersey Agent Orange Commission used is located in Numeo (phonetic spelling), Sweden, 150 miles south of the Arctic Circle. Each one of those dioxin analyses that were performed by Dr. Rappae's (phonetic spelling) laboratory in Sweden cost the Commission, and subsequently the taxpayers of New Jersey, \$3700 per man. The establishment of this laboratory in New Jersey would go a long way towards cutting that cost by two-thirds -- literally by two-thirds.

We in New Jersey are in a unique situation, in that three of the seven chemical companies which manufactured that herbicide, manufactured that herbicide in this State. In the Newark area -- in the Ironbound section of Newark alone -- the potentiality for exposure encompasses 150,000 to 175,000 citizens of that city. Our research shows that the long-term, low-level exposure, the kind of exposure of our people when

they served in Vietnam, is 10 times higher than that of an individual who is exposed by virtue of an industrial explosion -- in other words, a one-time, big shot kind of exposure, and it's all over. In our experience, the 12- or 13-month tour in Vietnam subjected you to that exposure every day. Whether you served in an exposed area or not, the simple fact that you ate the food, drank the water, sat on the ground was enough to indicate to us, through our research, that that exposure was 10 times what it is with people who are exposed by virtue of an industrial accident.

I am not totally cognizant of the legislative process in the Senate and the Assembly, but I would urge the Select Committee, if at all possible, to introduce companion bills to this legislation in the Assembly. We are the leaders. This State is the leader in this nation. I had the opportunity to travel to Indiana last month, and believe me, when people find out that there is a guy in the crowd from the New Jersey Agent Orange Commission, you would think that one of the major rock groups had come to town. It was just unbelievable.

Our reputation is such in this nation that we cannot falter. We've got to get these two bills through the Legislature. We've got to get the Governor's signature on them. We've got to get moving.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: What efforts has your Agent Orange Commission taken to convince the Federal leaders of the State that--

MR. SUTTON: Well, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Falk, our Commission Chairman, were in Washington on Tuesday for the VA Advisory Committee on Herbicide Exposure, which is a VA-chartered organization headed by a physician by the name of Dr. Barkley Shepard (phonetic spelling), who himself is a Vietnam veteran -- a combat surgeon. The thrust of all of this was that the Feds do not feel that our research group was large enough. We anticipated that that would be their strongest

argument against Phase 1 of the Point Man Project. However, the folks who were involved in the selection of these veterans were extremely careful. It took three and a half years to assemble those 30 people. We had to discount anybody who had any kind of an illness or any kind of a potentiality of exposure from any other source other than their service in Vietnam.

Now, along with what we have presented to the Veterans' Administration, the State of Massachusetts has its own research. Their research is based on the same kind of clinical testing; however, they selected individuals based on their illnesses. We selected out people if they were ill. Massachusetts went in the opposite direction. They do not have their dioxin analyses' results completed yet, but the raw data indicates that they are going to be able to announce, almost identically, the findings that this State did. Their approach was slightly different in the area in which they took the specimens from the human body, and the fact that they selected people because they were sick. We went completely in the opposite direction.

I don't think the Federal government -- and I am expressing a personal opinion -- is going to do anything about dioxin exposure until we are able to show them hard and fast, nail-down-all-the-corners proof that the continued use of this herbicide, in whatever form, is a health risk to every citizen of this nation. The Times Beach situation -- Times Beach, Missouri -- where the Environmental Protection Agency bought that town for \$33 million-- The CDC in Atlanta has done some studies on some of the survivors of Times Beach. Their indication and their findings that were reported in Japan at the same time ours were reported, are strikingly similar -- strikingly similar. Those people's exposure came about simply because a contractor sprayed dioxin tainted oil -- refuse oil -- on the dirt roads in that town to keep the dust down. He

did this over a period of 16 or 17 years. That was the only exposure these people had, and yet the people who were in the CDC study had almost identially the same kind of contamination.

The next thing that has to happen -- and I think this will be the proof to the Feds -- is that somebody -- and it looks like it is going to be us, because we are light years ahead of everybody else-- Someone is going to have to prove the causation -- the link -- between exposure and the health effect; the link between the three kinds of rare cancer; the link between early blindness. There is a gentleman sitting right here to my left who served as a Seabee in the United States Navy for two years in Vietnam, who has lost virtually all of his eyesight. It comes home to me personally, because this man has been a friend of mine for a number of years, and I have watched him deteriorate. He does not mind my saying that, because-- When I go out on the road, I have a little dog and pony show, and I use Berle in that dog and pony show.

But, that is just one of the examples. Just to point out something to the gentleman from the American Ex-Prisoners of War, when we were in Chicago for the homecoming, there were seven Australian Vietnam veterans who attended that homecoming parade in Chicago. There were 237,000 Vietnam veterans and their families who came to Chicago for the express purpose of marching in that parade, and 500,000-plus Chicago citizens lined the sidewalks of that city. Those seven Australian Vietnam veterans told us what it takes to get compensation from their government. All seven of those gentlemen were classified as 100% disabled by the Australian government. All an Australian Vietnam veteran needs is a letter from a doctor who is board certified in the country of Australia, stating that this individual's health effects are more than likely due to his exposure to Agent Orange by virtue of his service in Vietnam, and the Veterans' Affairs Commission of the country of Australia automatically awards 100% disability compensation to that veteran.

In this country -- in this country -- the figures I hear are that we are losing four Vietnam veterans a day to the illnesses related to their exposure in Vietnam. And every one of us has a personal story to tell. Very briefly, I will tell you mine. I am in pretty good health for a 42-year-old guy, but I had three sons, one of whom was born following my first tour in Vietnam, and the other two born following my second tour in Vietnam. My eldest son, who now serves with the United States Army in Korea, had a surgically correctable birth defect. In fact, it cost me \$2800 so he could have the privilege to join the United States Army. My second son, for unexplained reasons, died at the age of 93 days. The original coroner's result was that they felt the death might be attributable to SIDS. However, the family physician said that none of the classic symptoms for SIDS were present. Therefore, that child's death certificate says, "Cause Unknown."

My third son, who is 16, is dyslectic, has learning disabilities, and enormous emotional problems. He is one of hundreds of thousands of children just like him. Those are the problems we have to address. There is no agency of Federal or State government even equipped to address the problems of our children, and there are early research results coming from Japan that indicate that the grandchildren of Japanese victims of exposure to high levels of dioxin are also at some risk.

So, this problem is not going to go away. One of the favorite buzzwords in our community is, "The VA is just waiting for us all to die." Well, that may be true, but there are two more generations coming behind us, and they are just as affected, because they have heard their old man tell the sea stories, and the war stories. This makes an impression on a young kid growing up. Berle can attest to that, and I can, too.

I also want to go on record for the Civil Council as being able to endorse the homeless proposal as put forth by the VVA. Again, I would mention that some time ago, Mr. Cheesman

and I had a conversation about homeless people and, to be very honest with you -- to be very candid with you -- we just never got anywhere with it. I am glad to see that Sal and the VVA have taken this thing by the horns.

There was a situation about a year ago, literally on the streets of Trenton, one snowy February day in 1985, where a fellow was found frozen to death behind the old Gino's on State Street. When they went through his personal effects, they found a Silver Star awarded to him by his government for his service in Korea. So, here's a Korean War veteran who received the fourth highest decoration this country can award, and the man froze to death on the streets of Trenton. So, there is a tremendous problem with the homeless.

We can't really, at this point, offer any suggestions or any input to Mr. Mione's proposal. My own personal thought would be that in some of these inner cities there seems to be a tremendous amount of abandoned housing. Certainly, this abandoned housing is not on the tax rolls or, if it is, it is years and years delinquent. Perhaps the suggestion might be put forth that this abandoned housing, if it can be renovated-- I mean, if it is in a state where it can be renovated in some way, perhaps the State and the city could share the renovation of that abandoned housing, using some kind of volunteer service, to have a viable facility in the inner city, at least as a start. That would be better perhaps than going out and building a new facility -- utilizing these abandoned structures.

A good example is that industrial complex there in Trenton, off of Lalor Street, that they turned into a senior citizens' complex. It was an abandoned factory complex, and they have done wonders with that thing. I am sure that for the money they put into the renovation of that building -- and they have renovated to date, I think, three buildings-- For what they have done in the renovation of those three buildings, we

probably could not build a brand-new building anywhere near downtown Trenton for the price of what they have in those three buildings. I just throw that out as food for thought, if you will.

I think that is about all I really wanted to say to you, Mr. Genova. I would also like to publicly say to you, there was some controversy created by purported remarks that you were supposed to have made at Liberty State Park in a meeting of the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Commission. I have received your letter. I don't think there is any more explanation. I don't think there is any more need for an apology. We all know, those of us who have a high enough profile in this movement, that newspaper reporters sometimes have bad memories, or they just like to take shots at people. Unfortunately, you have been misquoted; I have been misquoted; I'm sure Mr. Cheesman has been misquoted a number of times. There are just so many controversial things you can say about those of us who have the guts to work on veterans' affairs. I think if we worried about every bad thing, or every misquoted thing some of these people said, we would probably all be at PTSD counseling, or something very similar.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Well said.

MR. SUTTON: I thank you for the opportunity of coming down here and talking to you, and expressing my personal views in some cases, but the views of our Civic Council, which over this past year has tried to represent itself as an advocate for the veteran, particularly Vietnam veterans, but for all veterans.

In closing, I would just like to say that Mr. Cheesman and I have had a lot of conversations about a lot of things over the last several months. I would like to say it is my personal opinion -- and I have expressed this in my report which will be given on Saturday -- that the direction the Division is taking -- the Division of Veterans' Programs and

Special Services -- and what I personally perceive to be the morale in that Division, have increased a hundredfold in the last seven months.

With that, I bid you good night. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I told you you would enjoy his remarks. I want to thank you, Paul, for your kind remarks. I am more than willing to cooperate with the VVCC.

If anyone would like to have a copy of the remarks presented here this evening, contact Brian, and Brian will make sure that the Office of Legislative Services provides you with a transcript of the testimony. That is why we have the reporter here. We want to make sure that you understand, and can hold us accountable for whatever we might say, and we are going to hold you accountable, too, once we review it. This is a service we want you to be sure will always be provided to the people who attend our hearings. We had a taping at one other hearing; that one was in Bergen County. I don't believe anyone here tonight attended that one. But, if any of you would like to have a copy of the transcript of the remarks, contact Brian. If you don't know how to get a hold of him, certainly we will oblige you after the hearing, and let you have his phone number or his address. That was for you, Sam.

Is Henry Luning here? (affirmative response)

H E N R Y P. L U N I N G: I am Hank Luning, Vice Commander of the American Legion. I will try to keep this brief; it is getting long. It has been long.

We have three bills here on which we wish to reenforce our position with regard to supporting them. One is A-410, or A-1533, by Doyle or Smith. That requests uniformity with regard to the State of New Jersey's classification of veteran and the national classification of veteran. We support the unification of the dates. Another one is A-1010, which we just talked about. We are in support of that issue. The only thing I can recommend on those is, if they are turned down by the

Senate, or by anyone else, since they have usually been brought up by our Blue Hat Legionnaire and up through the organization, I would like to tell them back what has happened. If something could come back to the main offices of the organization so we could transmit this information back to our people, with some small logical explanation as to why-- If it is a million and a half dollars, that is a logical explanation. But, let's get some feedback back to the people who are putting these resolutions in, so we can satisfy everyone.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: The conformity legislation is in under the sponsorship of two other people -- a prime and a co-prime sponsor in the Assembly. What we have done with respect to this is, we have worked very closely with Leon and Commissioner Perselay, at the time, to provide the most liberal dates possible. Of course, I believe we are including Grenada and Lebanon peace keeping missions in that particular bill.

MR. CHEESMAN: Has the Select Committee acted on that?

MS. BAHNCK: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: The Select Committee has reported that bill out -- that conformity bill -- and we forwarded it to Assemblyman Dick Zimmer, who is Chairman of the Assembly State Government Committee. They are in the process now, I believe, of obtaining a fiscal note -- or they may have received that already -- to determine which type of a financial obligation that bill will provide.

MR. LUNING: That's the 410, right?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: No, it's not 410.

MS. BAHNCK: No. It is the most liberal parts of both 410 and, I guess, 1533, also.

MR. LUNING: Assembly Bill 1533, right -- 1984.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Could we just take a second to advise the Vice Commander of the new bill number?

MS. BAHNCK: It took the earliest starting dates and the latest ending dates. (remainder of Ms. Bahnck's comment indiscernible)

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: (after consultation with Ms. Bahnck, Chairman continues) Okay, it's Assembly Bill 2549.

MR. LUNING: Assembly Bill 2549?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Yes, and the Assembly Select Committee has, of course, as I said before, moved that bill out of our Committee. The recommendation has been made to the Committee Chairman to have a public hearing on the bill to hopefully get the bill posted in the Assembly.

MR. LUNING: All right, thank you. We also supported A-342, which looks like it went down due to economic adjustments, or financial justification. Right?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay.

MR. LUNING: The other bill which we also supported was A-2743, by Mr. Paterniti.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: That has to do with the fire--

MR. LUNING: Right. I don't know where that one is right now, but we do support consideration of it.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I have been in touch with Warren Davis regarding that particular bill. I have outlined the problems I feel that particular bill has. I feel that a remedy will soon be reached to make that a much better bill.

MR. LUNING: For the benefit of those here behind me who didn't hear what I said, A-2743 exempts nonprofit corporations from certain fees under the Uniform Fire Safety Act. Some of these fees coming down have been a little bit too much to absorb by some of the local posts of our organization. So, we ask for some relief consideration.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: The Fire Safety Code officials in the State of New Jersey are now in the process of revising the codes, revising the types of organizations that will be assessed these particular fees and, of course, trying to remove some of the heavy burdens that are placed upon, not only veterans' groups, but also on other types of nonprofit volunteer organizations. I feel we are moving nicely on this particular concept. It should become reality quite soon.

MR. LUNING: Thank you. I am going to just give you four pieces of paper in support of the next question, because it is an old question. The last time we discussed it was in a chapel and we had to watch ourselves when we spoke, and we are back in another chapel tonight. I am beginning to think the reason we are in a chapel is a signal that you ought to put it to sleep.

But, this is our position on the Arnytown segregation issue. All right? I will submit these four documents for your review in consideration of the American Legion's position. We are against the segregation practice. We know Mr. Altman's position, and we don't agree with Mr. Altman's position, so we will just leave it at that, unless someone wants to go into detail, because it is a rather lengthy issue.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I am sure everyone here understands this particular issue. Are you all familiar with it? (negative and affirmative responses from audience) Pretty much? The only service organization we have heard from is the American Legion, that is, Commander Himmel (phonetic spelling). He has written each legislator. In fact, what I have done-- I have taken it upon myself to send a communication to the members of the Select Committee, and also copies to Speaker Hardwick, the Majority Leader in the Assembly, and Mr. Karcher, the Minority Leader, and some of his leadership people on the other side, expressing the opinion of the Department of Human Services and the Division of Veterans' Programs and Special Services. Their letter, which Mr. Cheesman provided to me, clearly illustrates their position on this particular matter.

I would hope that the politicians in the Legislature do not use this as an issue. We all individually have our personal feelings about it. You know, I am not going to say how I stand. I just don't think it would be fair. It goes beyond that. I feel this is an administrative problem, and

that they should answer any questions the veterans' groups might have with respect to it. Any changes in policy they may have should only be influenced by the veterans, and not by the elected officials. Leon?

MR. CHEESMAN: I have, just tonight, received a very interesting suggestion concerning the Arnytown Cemetery. I ask you for your patience. I think it is a very viable one, and I would like to pursue it and see what we can do in this matter. I just ask for your indulgence and your patience.

MR. LUNING: The only thing we wish to clarify, as far as the Legion is concerned, is, there is no recognition of ethnic aspects or anything. We are purely interested in the segregation act as far as the veteran is concerned. A lot of times our comments are maybe taken out of context in any type of situation. Within any veterans' organization, we basically would like to follow the national guidelines, because we are -- many of us here are -- an interstate and international organization and are dealing with many hundreds of thousands of people. Uniformity sure helps us in handling and evaluating why we do things within our organization.

MR. CHEESMAN: Also, sir, on your request for updating on the bills, I have already contacted our legislative liaisons. I have asked them if it would be possible to provide the veterans' organizations, such as the American Legion, the VFW, the Catholic War Veterans, the Ex-Prisoners of War, the Jewish War Veterans, the Polish Legion of American Veterans, etc. with an update of the tracking of the veterans' bills. I am waiting for a reply.

MR. LUNING: That would be appreciated.

MR. CHEESMAN: Thank you, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you, Henry, for coming. Margaret Malone, of the American Legion.

M A R G A R E T M A L O N E: I didn't know I was on the list.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: You're on the good list.

MS. MALONE: The good list, okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thanks for coming, Margaret.

MS. MALONE: Thank you. I didn't expect to give any testimony tonight, but as long as I am here, I would like to say that I serve on the VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans. I have just been appointed for another year. I am on the State Committee on Women Veterans. We were appointed by the Director of the Division of Veterans' Services, but we are not bound by any kind of legislation.

I would just like to reiterate what Sharon spoke about earlier, about the two bills that would make our Committee legal, you might say, under the legislative process. It would be a temporary Committee. We do feel deeply that this Committee is needed.

There is just one other thing that I would like to state: The way the bill reads now, the nine members of that Committee do not have to be veterans and do not have to be women. We feel strongly that if it is a Committee that is going to work on veterans-- I am the Vice Chairman of the Veterans' Service Council. That is a nine-member Council, and we are all veterans. We feel that if this Committee is going to work on the needs of women veterans, they should be veterans, and they should be women.

I don't know how far we are going to get with that. Senator O'Connor doesn't seem to think that is feasible, but that is our opinion, and I wanted to make that opinion known to you.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I would say I would tend to support your request. I had an interesting day on Sunday with Edith Sabacule (phonetic spelling), who is the State Chairperson -- President of the VFW Women's Auxiliary. In fact, I am wearing my pin, which she said Commander Gollon would recognize, and would probably forgive me for some of the nasty things he has heard about me.

But, I am very supportive of women veterans. I am a card-carrying member of the American Legion Post 35 in Union, not of the VFW yet, although I may be. I have been the kind of guy who just doesn't join to make myself look good on a resume. I think that in order to join an organization, you have to be productive and you have to be involved, and show that you certainly do belong there. But, I am very, very close to the various women's auxiliary units of the American Legion, the DAV, and the Jewish War Veterans in my district, and I would tend to agree with you that those members should be veterans. We have a great number of qualified female veterans out there.

MS. MALONE: We think so. There are 35,000 of us here in New Jersey. There should be nine who could serve capably on a Committee.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you very much. Thanks for coming.

MS. MALONE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Is Mr. Asbury here, from the DAV? (affirmative response) How are you, sir?

W I L S O N A S B U R Y: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My comments will be very brief. I am going to reiterate what the American Legion stated.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Will you speak up, please, sir?

MR. ASBURY: I will reiterate what the American Legion talked about, mainly Assembly Bill 1010, concerning the sales tax exemption. You said earlier, that there was no chance of 1010 being brought before the Appropriations Committee this year, because you must be selective, and other organizations were not interested. There was something like silence, and the priority on that bill was low.

I think you have quite a few organizations out here interested in that bill.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Well, Henry proved me wrong. He spoke on behalf of it, too.

MR. ASBURY: At our State Executive Committee meeting of the State Disabled American Veterans on September 20, we only picked two bills out of 25 that pertain to veterans. One was the tax exemption bill, and one was the bill to confirm the dates of the end of the Korean War, World War II, and the Vietnam War. We need your support on these two bills.

If I am not mistaken, they mentioned that this bill confirming the dates of the ends of the wars was out of Committee.

MS. BAHNCK: It is out of our Select Committee.

MR. ASBURY: You mentioned that that bill was out of hearing now?

MS. BAHNCK: Out of our Select Committee. It has to be voted in the Standing Committee, which is the State Government Committee.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: We have recommended to the Committee responsible for having a public hearing on it and determining whether or not it should move further in the process-- We have made the recommendation that it should be.

MR. ASBURY: Also, you added the Lebanon conflict to that bill.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: And Grenada.

MR. ASBURY: And Grenada. Okay. You mentioned that the main roadblock to the tax exempt bill being passed would be a monetary roadblock -- \$1.1 million in '87, and \$1.9 through '89. Right?

MR. VOLZ: Yes, \$1.1 million.

MR. ASBURY: One point one.

MR. VOLZ: And then \$900,000 in '89.

MR. ASBURY: Okay. With the strong voices of all of the veterans' organizations coming through and petitioning for this bill to be passed, do you think there is any chance of this bill being passed?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Well, we can be intimidated, I guess. (laughter) You know, next year is an election year. We would do almost anything to get reelected. (laughter)

MR. ASBURY: Well, yes, yes. What I was getting at is, I heard--

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: We don't want lip service.

MR. ASBURY: Right. I heard a lot of negative comments.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Of course, that was all in jest. Are there any reporters around? (laughter)

MR. ASBURY: I heard a lot of negative comments about the reason why it couldn't be done. Perhaps it could be done, because we do have a lot of organizations that are for these bills. I had no idea that the American Legion was going to get here and mention these two bills which are exactly like the ones that the DAV is for.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: That's why I joined them. They are right on top of everything.

MR. ASBURY: Thank you. That is all I have.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you very much. Donna, our Majority Staff Aide, said, "Gosh, I sure hope there are no newspapers around." But, once you get to know me, you'll know that I try to make everyone feel as comfortable as possible. As I mentioned to Paul in my letter, and to Commander Gollon, this Committee is brand-new. We have to iron out the formalities, the prerequisites. We have to learn the way we are going to proceed. And, of course, we have to do that with the best interests of the veterans at heart. As I concluded in that particular communication, some day, hopefully -- and this is not a political plea, or anything, because I am sure none of you live in my district -- you will learn that you do have a very good friend in Union County. I admire the veterans. I am a four-year veteran of the Air Force myself during Vietnam. I

feel the State and the nation owe a great deal of gratitude to the veterans, as we see the way they just rally together and try to present -- I don't think unfair -- requests to their government leaders, but reasonable ones. I have a lot of respect for you.

So, if you see me sometimes being very casual and making what some people may characterize as frivolous statements, I do that to try to make you feel good; to let you know that these particular hearings are being conducted to allow you to say whatever you want to say. I would hope that everyone feels relaxed. If you do have something on your minds, just let us have it. We are not going to refute you that much. When I tell you that we don't have the money for A-1010, I am being very serious with you, Mr. Asbury, but we certainly will look at it, now that you have brought it again to our attention, as Henry has, too. Sam?

MR. LO BUE: May I ask you a question?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: You may.

MR. LO BUE: When you say there are very few people who talk to you, they are the silent majority. Now they are coming out of the woodwork, and they are going to tell you they do want 1010 passed.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Oh, I'm sure they do.

MR. LO BUE: And they are not going to lose as much money as they said they are going to lose.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay. Vietnam veterans' advocate, Berle Schwede. Have a seat, Berle.

I. B E R L E S C H W E D E: I don't want this to last but for a few minutes.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay.

MR. SCHWEDE: I hope everyone is keeping cool and, no, I will not be as my namesake is, motormouth for Vietnam veterans. But, what I would like to say goes along with Mr. Sutton. I would like to say thank you to him first off. He

knows there is a lot I do not like to complain about with my functions at the present time. I am now awaiting a VA meeting in Washington, D.C. for service connection. I do not know why in the hell I do not have it yet. I will say no more on that.

I have a family of five, and what I am doing I am doing to provide for my family. I am trying to give a little thought to other Vietnam veterans, and what they are going through, and trying to assist them in going in the right direction to get themselves, plus their families, taken care of.

I am, by all accounts, and from what I have learned through the past year, year and a half, the only veteran who has designed a medal to be given to the wives of the veterans for the work they are doing in taking care of us. I am trying to get national recognition for that, and it has been awarded to me by the National Vietnam Veterans' Coalition, Washington, D.C. It will take place on November 8 in Washington, D.C. at the Coalition breakfast. I can be reached at any time, as I have been able to be reached at any time, for any aid that is needed by any veteran in the South Jersey area. I have gone on call to help my brothers and sisters out there who are having problems.

I am currently busy formulating a lot of ideas that could take effect in the State of New Jersey, and I may make another first for the State of New Jersey. The Agent Orange Commission, as I said-- I got involved with them in the early '70s, and I have been getting more deeply involved as every day goes on. I go out and do the dirty work. I go into the swamps. I go out into the woods and I dig up the vets who will not come out of the woods for help. I have assisted a number of them, and have records in my basement which people have referred to as "Little Vietnam," by the way. I have records on everything I have done, every person I have handled. I have already to my credit four possible attempted suicides, and nine probable suicides. I have records on them also.

I am out to help the veteran. I am out to get my name and my phone number around the country, and I have been doing so. I am the only New Jersey correspondent who writes for "The Veterans' Observer" in Roseta, California. I wrote my own article, called, "From the East" -- "A View from the East." I started as a correspondent. I am now a staff writer. You don't really wish to see me write, because it looks like the youngest of our children who is home from school teaching us how he learns how to write. But, with my blessed wife at my side, she takes my scribble, and changes it into legible material. I look it over with my magnifying glass. She retypes it. It is not a professional job, but it gets the word out to the brothers and sisters across the country, and I am getting well-known on that issue.

I thank everyone who came here tonight. I hope this Select Committee hears what we are saying down here in South Jersey. I know of land right here within a three-mile area of where you sit right now that can be revamped as a South Jersey Agent Orange Commission retreat for all the members of the families which exist. We need to get help out to the families. The only way we have been able to do that so far is through the Commission that Mr. Paul Sutton works for -- the Agent Orange Commission. I am trying to pass that across the country, and it is gaining momentum. They know New Jersey as being number one in a lot of aspects. What I am trying to do with my work is make a much more indelible mark on society in this country. I want everyone to know what is happening right here in New Jersey.

I would like this Committee to know what possibilities we have for things to happen -- things that could happen, and could take place, and could be afforded by the State right here in South Jersey. This is not a crowded back street city. As a child growing up, I traveled through these woods. My family owns a lot of the woods outlining this area. There are many

places in South Jersey that could be used for the same things that the gentleman tonight spoke about trying to get through the legislative branch of the government. There are buildings available. There are tracts of land available. There are spots that are perfect for what the State is looking for, as long as they are looking for something to help the veterans.

I thank you for your time. I do not wish to take up any more of it.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you very much. Is Mr. Gardner here? (affirmative response)

B. J. G A R D N E R: I just want to thank you for coming, Mr. Chairman. I will be here longer than I anticipated because this is where the train is. (laughter)

I am here on behalf of the veterans of Camden County, Mr. Chairman. I serve as Legislative Officer for District 7 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, which is Camden County. Two years ago, we formed an umbrella group in Camden County of all of the veterans' organizations. This is the Camden County Veterans' Advisory Committee. I also serve as Legislative Officer for this group.

Very briefly, I am here to ask for your continued support from Trenton for a VA outpatient clinic here in South Jersey. I say continued support, because about a year and a half ago Assembly Resolution 126 came out, and some of the people here--

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Assembly Resolution 49, sponsored by Assemblywoman Dolores Cooper, and memorializing the VA to establish an outpatient clinic in southern New Jersey, passed the house. I am not sure of the date, but we recommended it back in August.

MR. GARDNER: Fine. We appreciate that.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: You know, time, in my opinion, was growing late, and the City of Vineland was anxious to -- Mayor Romano, and many of his associates -- have this great

facility in connection with the Newcomb Medical Center, become a reality. If you want to talk about that a bit, we can bring Leon into it also.

MR. GARDNER: Well, the background on this, as I am sure you are aware, is, some time ago, the VA set up for Camden County a VA hospital. This was not only authorized, but was appropriated by the Congress. Then came David Stockman, and I don't have to finish the story.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: We would rather you didn't.

MR. GARDNER: Okay. Well, the Camden County veterans I find very gratifying. It is a very active group. Two of us made a trip to Washington. We had an appointment set up with Congressman Montgomery's Chief Counsel, Montgomery, of course, being the Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. We said, in effect, "Okay, no more hospital. What do you think you could help us with? We need some sort of a medical facility in South Jersey." They gave us what you might call a shopping list of those things which they knew the VA viewed with favor for our area.

We then started -- and this was in March of '84-- District 7 Camden County VFW passed a resolution to this effect looking for a medical facility for veterans. This then became part of the legislative priority list for the VFW. Our Commander, Commander Gollon, will refer to the fact that this particular item is going to be reviewed next year. And here they are talking about a satellite VA facility in South Jersey.

This, then, became translated in the Assembly Resolution that I placed before you. Our Governor, Governor Kean, also recognizes and accepts the need for an outpatient clinic in South Jersey. He, of course, is perfectly right -- and we in Camden County agree with him -- that it is up to the VA to make a choice as to where the thing goes.

Right now, there seem to be two places under consideration. The first is Ocean County -- over in Brick Town

-- and the second is the Vineland project. After we came back from Washington, we went to see Warren Davis, Leon Cheesman's predecessor, of course. We said, "This is what the VA feels we can have. What can you do to help us?" New Jersey being an innovative State -- a pilot program type State -- had already set up a working relationship with the Federal government to establish the cemetery. It also established a joint project for the Paramus Nursing Home. So we said, "Can you continue down the same path, Colonel Davis, and help us to do something in South Jersey for a medical facility? Most likely the VA will recognize an outpatient clinic." So, he started to look in Ocean County. John Dramesi picked this up as a project, but, unfortunately, Warren passed away. We are thankful we have an energetic man to replace him here right now.

This, then, turned into a plan for a joint project between Vineland and the State government and the VA. So, we now have, it appears, two possibilities. I am sure you have seen this, but you might want it for the record. This summarizes the Vineland approach. It came out of The New York Times, August 24. The other approach came out a few weeks later from Congressman Smith's office. He, of course, is also on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. He seems to favor -- and properly so -- the one in Ocean County. Speaking from the point of view of a county which is equally distant from both of these places, we would rather have a VA outpatient clinic in Brick Town than none at all. Failing that, we would rather have one in Vineland than none at all.

So, we would support both, and would ask your support through political savvy and legislative assistance finance-wise, as needed, in order to support one or the other. In other words, what we are saying is, please don't drop either option.

Now, as a little guidance for you, I have a statement here by Chairman Murkowski of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. He is up for reelection. This is what he has to say: "I believe very strongly that it is unwise for the VA to refuse to fully consider the advantages of purchasing or leasing existing facilities when such a facility is needed, and renovated and adapted it could meet the needs of the VA." In other words, before new construction, he is trying to look for some less expensive way to get the same results. He also points out Public Law 99-166, which requires the VA to examine purchasing and leasing options. Okay? Anything the VA is going to put out obviously has to clear Chairman Murkowski, if reelected.

Now, on the House side, we also have Congressman Florio. I don't live in his district. Therefore, I have been doing my best to keep Congressman Jim Saxton up to date as to what is going on. Congressman Saxton has been mentioning in his periodic newsletter to veterans the fact that the VA outpatient clinic in Ocean County is alive. I gave him a lot of material which describes the alternative option, asking him to please keep both going. I have a letter from him dated October 21, which was just in time for your hearing here. He says, in part: "As an outpatient facility for South or Central New Jersey becomes closer to reality, I will certainly keep Colonel Dramesi's proposal in mind." This isn't necessarily John Dramesi's proposal, of course. It started with Warren Davis. Colonel Dramesi was the nuts and bolts man on it. Congress has not only a commitment to veterans' services, but also a commitment to delivering those services in the most cost-effective manner possible. So, he is starting to think here in terms of what Chairman Murkowski in the Senate is thinking of.

Shortly after the VA hospital in Camden went down the tube, Congressman Montgomery came up to South Jersey. A lot of

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people in this room were at that meeting. Two years ago, he promised a VA outpatient clinic in South Jersey within a year and a half. That was two years ago, and everyone's arithmetic can support the fact that Gramm-Rudman came into being. So, I guess what we are looking at is, what can we realistically expect? If you will permit me, I will turn this over to you. It shows some of the cost figures which The New York Times article of August 24 cited, along with Congressman Smith's statement, and along with Chairman Murkowski's guidance. This, then, will support what I hope you will be able to continue to support. In other words, keep these options open to the extent that you feel -- based on Leon Cheesman's overall monitorship of the project -- it might be timely either now or in the near future to introduce some kind of enabling legislation, so that one of these is going to take root. We would appreciate this very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you very much. I would like to just mention with respect to that, that the lower house has already gone on record, by virtue of our passing Assembly Resolution 89, sponsored by Assemblywoman Cooper, Assemblyman Chinnici, and Assemblyman Muziani, urging the VA to establish the outpatient clinic here in Vineland. I support that 100%.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the distinguished Mayor of Vineland, whom I had the pleasure of meeting at one of our hearings -- the Honorable Joseph Romano. (applause) I met with the Mayor one afternoon, with a representative of Newcomb and another gentleman, with respect to the proposal. Colonel Dramesi was present; he had a slide presentation. But, since we are having a public hearing and we are airing it all out, I would like to ask Leon to express the position of the Division. I don't mean to put him on the spot.

MR. CHEESMAN: But, you are. Take me off the hook, will you?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: As you know, I have the utmost respect for Colonel Dramesi, but I am just not too sure whether or not the Department of Human Services is fully aware of this entire proposal, and whether or not it has been stamped with the seal of approval by them to make the necessary funding recommendations to the Legislature.

MR. GARDNER: My understanding is that it is still in the working stages.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay. Leon?

MR. CHEESMAN: The Department of Human Services is aware. Colonel Dramesi and myself presented -- made a presentation to Commissioner Altman and to Mr. Pelovitz and to Mr. Kilstein, his assistants. He listened to us very carefully. He was very impressed, and the end remark was that he wanted to go on record stating he was absolutely in favor of an outpatient clinic in South Jersey. That is where we are today.

MR. GARDNER: We appreciate that very much. If you take a look at the cost figures, and if you take a look at the Gramm-Rudman constraints, my guess is that a joint project might be the more realistic of the two. I am not in a position to get a feel for that, but just looking at the material and the newspaper articles, I think the VA would probably favor some sort of joint project along the lines of the successful cemetery and the successful construction up in Paramus.

In order to do this, it is going to need some legislative backing. I kind of think that by so doing, New Jersey would again go on record as an innovative State, despite what Johnny Carson says. I think by so doing we would get a little bit ahead of so many other states, so many other locations, which are also pressuring the VA for the same kind of a facility. The money just isn't there any more, because of Gramm-Rudman, because of the national budget, and I would hope you could add your support from the State level.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I would hope that quite soon something will be done for the eight southern counties. Right now, I believe the veterans have to travel, I believe, to Wilmington and Philadelphia and Orange. It certainly has to be rectified very soon.

MR. GARDNER: One more minor consideration. There seems to be a discussion that comes up frequently as to the status of the border counties, such as Ocean County. Are they north, are they confederates? Speaking from the point of view of Camden County, we are sort of equally distant. I would merely add that Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln never figured out what to do with the border states, and I am not about to get into that in New Jersey.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: You know, I knew they had problems down in the southern part of the State, but, my God, when you have to go through a border patrol when you enter -- when you go from one to the other, that is kind of taking it to the extreme. We don't have those problems up north.

MR. GARDNER: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you. Mayor Romano, I would like to have you come forward to say hello to a lot of your friends. You know, every politician likes five or ten minutes, right?

MAYOR JOSEPH E. ROMANO: I'm not a--

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: You're not a politician?

MAYOR ROMANO: No, not really. I am a retired individual who ran for office.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay.

MAYOR ROMANO: What I want to say is this: I met, this weekend, with a very important figure in Reagan's Cabinet. He is a military adviser to the Administration. He will be going to Russia very shortly. He is a personal friend of mine. He is a Major General, retired. He was in Reagan's Cabinet in California. I want to talk to you about this off

the record until I-- I want to talk to you after this meeting, or tomorrow morning, if you have the time. It is very important that I let you know what is going on with this particular thing.

I also have a meeting coming up with Senator Murkowski and Congressman Montgomery. I can also tell you this: The \$16 million they want for that hospital-- You're not going to get it; you're not going to get it next year. I can almost tell you that Jersey is on the bottom of the totem pole, when it comes to that kind of funding. The only way you can do it is with the program we suggested. It is the only sensible way to go. If you are interested in dollars, I want to tell you, next year, every city in this State is going to be up against the wall fiscally, unbelievably, with the problems we are going to face next year. I can tell you. I am working on budgets right now. I'll tell you, it is unbelievable. We have to close out a landfill. We are going to lose \$300,000 in revenue for half a year. We are going to lose over \$600,000 in revenue sharing. That is a million dollars I am in the hole before I even start on the budget.

Imagine some of these other cities what they face. So, it is not going to be an easy year financially for anybody. We have a program here that can really work and fly for the benefit of South Jersey, for a change. Let us get this thing down here in South Jersey where it belongs. Toms River is not in the area; Ocean County is not in the area. Let's do something once for South Jersey. They have two facilities up there; we have nothing down here. Let's give the veterans in this southern county a break. This is what I am asking.

I am retired military, with 30 years. I have seen organizations -- we have been together for years and years. But, let's stick together, all of us here. Stick together for once, and try to get something down here where we deserve it.

That is all I have to say. But, I really have some clout in the Administration on this program. As a matter of fact, my friend met with Weinberger Sunday in the White House. He is a personal friend of mine. We were in the military together. He comes from Vineland. He commanded NORAD and all. That whole group out there in California where he was on Reagan's Cabinet-- He is going to be behind this thing 100%. We are going to get a lot of help.

So, I want you to take that into consideration.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I can certainly appreciate your concerns about the lack of revenue for your operating expenses in your local municipal budget. The cut in revenue sharing, the closing of the landfill, the increases in insurance, and the other types of expenditures that municipalities are faced with, are just--

MAYOR ROMANO: You are going to see some cities wiped out. I don't know what Camden is going to do, or Newark, or any of them.

But, what I am trying to say is, feasibility-wise, this is where it should go. What we have to offer is unbelievable. If you miss this opportunity, you are going to miss a big thing, really. We have a beautiful area here. It really is acclimated to the veterans here. It is so convenient, really. The State has its facilities here. There must be some good here. Aims is coming in with a \$14 million expansion across the street from the Developmental Center. You know, there are a lot of things happening.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Well, I am going to take you up on your invitation. I am going to be staying overnight at the Presidential Motor Lodge, if you all know where that is. I am going to be back in the morning to go on a personal tour of the hospital, and I invite you to be present, Mayor, if you can.

MAYOR ROMANO: Yeah. I have a meeting at 8:30 with an outfit from Massachusetts, and then right after that, I will be over.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay, fine.

MAYOR ROMANO: Thank you for listening anyway.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you very much, Mayor. Now you know that when Vineland has a \$300 tax increase it's not his fault. (laughter)

MAYOR ROMANO: No, not really.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Leon, did you want to say something?

MR. CHEESMAN: I appreciate what the Mayor has said, because I live in the neighboring county, the most southern county of New Jersey -- Cape May County. What he said makes sense. If those of us in beautiful Cape May County had to go up to, let's say, Ocean County, we might as well go to Philly or Wilmington. It would be closer. He brought out a very interesting point, which I hope all of you caught. The \$16 million he stated for a new facility, wherever, is definitely not feasible at this time. You might want to look at a co-chairing where there is a \$2 million investment, where the VA will look-- Wait a minute, now. Sixteen million as compared to \$2 million. You've got something by the-- (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Man, don't say that at my hearing.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: It will amount to about a \$20 million saving.

MR. CHEESMAN: That is correct.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Over a period of time.

MR. CHEESMAN: Commissioner Altman has made it perfectly clear that he finds no problem with support for an outpatient clinic in South Jersey. He really feels it is up to the VA to decide where. That is his position.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I think it might be appropriate then, Leon-- I would like to see some type of a position paper from the Department with respect to this facility, with copies

to the Select Committee, copies to the various veterans' leaders in this particular district, and to Mayor Romano, Bill Snyder, Executive Director of the Vineland Industrial Commission, and to Tom Raynor, who is the Senior Vice President of Administration for the Newcomb Medical Center. We haven't really seen a position paper on this.

MR. CHEESMAN: Fine.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: You know, when I am called on, I always place the onus back on the Department of Human Services. I would like the Commissioner, based on the testimony here tonight -- of course, since we are in Vineland -- to let everyone know exactly where the State stands on this. I don't think that is unfair, do you?

MR. CHEESMAN: No, I will relay that to the Commissioner Altman.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I didn't think he would say anything else.

Who else do we have? (no response) I would like to open up the hearing. Sam?

MR. LO BUE: I come from Trenton, New Jersey. For me to go to East Orange, or for me to come down here, would be the same amount of miles, wouldn't it? (no response) This is what hurts me. I have to take my son off of work to take me to East Orange to get my hearing aid. It is not one trip. They have to take all the wax out, so I can hear better. That is why I am talking loud. You don't need no microphone to hear me. I speak loudly so I can get this ringing out of my ear. It's ringing like the devil; you know, it hurts.

I appreciate the Vineland viewpoint, but if Trenton is going to be the halfway point, who is winning?

MR. CHEESMAN: I hope the veterans will be.

MR. LO BUE: Now, there is Baltimore. I went to the Delaware VA system in Wilmington for my dentures. All these teeth were ruined in the POW camp. They were taken care of by

the VA in Wilmington, Delaware. It took me a solid year to get them all fixed up, but it saved me good money. I appreciate the VA for doing that for me.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Yes, sir, in the second row?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE (gentleman gives his name, but he is not close enough to microphone for transcriber to hear him): I am not from a southern county, but I do represent 12 veterans' organizations in Mercer County. I am the Commander of the Mercer County Veterans' Council. I have two points I would like to bring up: We unanimously support the sales tax exemption. We unanimously support the conformity bill that the DAV and the American Legion support.

That is all I have to say. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you. Commander Otto Gollon?

C O M M A N D E R O T T O A. G O L L O N, J R.: May I put this in the record?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: You may do whatever you want, as long as you read my letter at your meeting.

COMMANDER GOLLON: Don't worry, it will be there.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay.

COMMANDER GOLLON: To the Chairman of the Select Committee, to the distinguished members here: I hadn't planned to testify before this Committee tonight, but I received our State Legislative Priorities in the mail. Before I read them, I would like to make a couple of personal statements and, as Paul Sutton stated, Mr. Genova, the differences we experienced, as far as I am concerned after reading your letter, are over and done with. That letter will be read into the record at the Council Administration meeting on Sunday morning.

Also, you made a statement that you have only heard from the American Legion on the Arnytown Veterans' Cemetery. Again, at our Council Administration meeting, this will be brought up, and you will hear. We meet quarterly, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars are in the process of drawing a

resolution, also, to present-- An alternative proposition was presented to Mr. Cheesman tonight that might satisfy everyone. It is a very, very touchy situation. I understand that several things we disagreed with have been reversed. Gravesight burials, I understand, are now allowed. Rifle firing squads are now allowed at the gravesight, instead of a mock grave, and we are very, very pleased, Mr. Cheesman, about that. That will also be brought up on the Council Administration floor Sunday.

I would like to just-- We concur with all of the testimony you have heard this evening, with all of the various organizations. I don't want to belabor a lot of things that were said here just recently, but I would like to reiterate our strong desire in South Jersey. I am a resident. By the way, for the record, I am Otto Gollon, State Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars. Also for the record, I am a South Jersey resident from Gloucester County. We have been working very, very closely with Congressman Florio and Sonny Montgomery on this satellite outpatient facility clinic coming into South Jersey.

Of course, with the proposal that has been put forward by Colonel Dramesi, Mr. Cheesman, and many others, it would be a savings of millions and millions of dollars. We hope that this Select Committee puts its pressure on the VA also, that this facility does come to the Vineland area. From every census that has been taken, it a proven fact that the veterans have a dire need in South Jersey for this medical facility. It is not just another veterans' facility we want that is not needed. It is needed, and very desperately needed.

Now, you know, most of the veterans are getting up in age. You can see how old Mr. Cheesman is. (laughter) Just joshing here. But, seriously, Mr. Genova, there is a very, very dire need here. The veterans of the World War II era are up in their 60s and 70s, and are in dire need in the southern New Jersey area of a medical facility.

The Korean veterans, of which I am one, are getting up there also, and soon you will have an influx of veterans needing medical facilities like this nation has never seen. The World War II and Korean veterans, and even the Vietnam veterans, with their special and very unique medical problems, need facilities here in South Jersey. That is a proven fact. You stated, I am well aware, that it will come here, but I know there are several sites. We would like to impress on this Committee that the dire need is here in the extreme southern area of New Jersey.

I would like to read to you some of the Veterans of Foreign Wars State legislative priorities. Our State Legislative Committee was meeting tonight in Carteret in North Jersey. I decided to come here for personal reasons -- to meet you and to discuss things with you. Of course, when I saw you walk in with our bus on your lapel-- That bus, by the way, which I passed out, represents our Department project, which is a wheelchair van here, and something never attempted on the eastern coast. It is a nine-hole miniature golf course to come to this facility -- the Vineland Memorial Soldiers Home -- for wheelchair patients only. It was designed by an architect firm in Camden. The whole thing is designed strictly for the wheelchair patient. This facility has 200 wheelchair patients out of 300 patients. So, I hope the Select Committee will take that into consideration, also.

I would like to give you some of the basic VFW goals we have set for 1986-1987:

To work cooperatively with the Governor, the New Jersey Senate, the General Assembly, and both major political parties, to ensure that the New Jersey veteran and his family obtain the best aid and service in the nation;

We also have a priority on drugs: To pledge all of our strength and capital equipment at the disposal of the State until the menace of illegal narcotics is eliminated from our society;

Of course, our major priority is a VA facility in South Jersey: To urge that the Veterans' Administration and the State of New Jersey work cooperatively to construct and adequately staff and maintain a Veterans' Administration medical facility in southern New Jersey;

Aging veterans: To explore the need for a fourth State nursing home care facility for veterans in the State of New Jersey, to include location, funding, etc., and to continue the oversight of the facilities at Menlo Park, Vineland, and Bergen Pines;

Home health care: To support the efforts of the Legislature to fund a home health care program for veterans, and to urge them to explore other alternatives to help the elderly veterans' assimilation into the community;

State Senate reorganization: To request the New Jersey State Senate to create a Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee that will give veterans a higher legislative priority;

Veterans' employment: To encourage local private industry councils to target eligible veterans within locally designated priority groups for educational and vocational programs;

Agent Orange: To continue to support the efforts of the permanent Agent Orange Commission, as we have done in the past. We will continue to do so. We have supported Paul and Wayne Wilson. The Veterans of Foreign Wars will never cease their efforts until there is a justifiable settlement to the Vietnam veteran and the Agent Orange problem;

Veterans' preference: To vigorously oppose any move, whether by legislation or any other means, to weaken, dilute, or dismantle absolute veterans' preference laws. We feel the veteran has given of his life, his time, his blood, and he certainly deserves veterans' preference;

Club licenses: To monitor all insurance and drunk driving legislation in a concerted effort to prevent posts with

club licenses from facing potential physical disaster. Of course, one of the things that was brought up here this evening was the fire inspection. Our posts are being hit unmercifully. Exorbitant fees are being charged, and I was very, very happy to see that there is legislation in the process, because I have been deluged from many, many areas of this Department that have been hit financially with bills that are just unreasonable. So, we are very, very happy to see that something is being done to that effect;

Sales tax exemption -- this has been spoken about here, but I will just reiterate this: To urge the Legislature to grant sales tax exemption to veterans' organizations in recognition of the thousands of community service projects sponsored by posts and auxiliaries throughout the State.

I would like to state, Assemblyman Genova, the paper I just gave you showing the Department project-- That project will run somewhere in the neighborhood of \$40,000 to \$50,000. That is just one of the many major projects that the Veterans of Foreign Wars and many other veterans' organizations are involved in.

Military retirees: To support legislation exempting military retirement pay from State income tax for those military retirees permanently residing in our State -- and they should be exempted from that tax;

Korean War Memorial: To take steps to memorialize the forgotten heroes of the Korean conflict. I, of course, know that everyone is aware by now that Congressman Florio's bill -- 2205 -- in conjunction with Senator Armstrong, has passed both the House and the Senate, and back to the House again, with the one million dollar appropriation restored -- \$500,000 for site selection, and \$500,000 for the appropriation. A 12-man committee will be formed by the President of the United States to serve on that site selection, and I am very happy to announce to this Committee tonight that my name has been

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suggested to the President of the United States to serve on that 12-man committee.

The Korean War veteran has long been the forgotten veteran. It just happened that way, no particular reason. The Vietnam War came along, and the Korean veteran was set on the side burner, and rightfully so. The Vietnam veterans got off their duffs; they fought for what they needed and wanted, and they received it. Now it is time that we do the same for the Korean veterans. I am very, very pleased with Congressman Florio and many of the others who are in complete support.

I have here a resolution just passed to show you that the Vietnam veteran is in conjunction with the Korean veteran. This is a resolution just handed to me by Sharon:

"WHEREAS, New Jersey has 177,900 Korean era veterans who have served our nation honorably during the Korean War, and

"WHEREAS, the contributions and sacrifices of these veterans on behalf of our country have not been adequately recognized, thereby denying these veterans the public appreciation they so richly deserve,

"BE IT RESOLVED, we, the members of the New Jersey State Council Vietnam Veterans of America strongly support the erection of the Korean War Memorial in our nation's capital in Washington, D.C." I so strongly thank the Vietnam Veterans of America for that resolution in support of the Korean veteran.

One more thing I have here is the real estate tax exemption: To support legislation that would provide for an increase in the real estate tax exemption for veterans that would not detract from any other benefit received to which the veteran is entitled; and to vigorously support all legislative priorities that are a result of resolutions presented and approved by the delegations attending the State VFW Convention in Wildwood, New Jersey in June, 1986, and the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in August, 1986.

I would like to thank you, Assemblyman Genova, for allowing me to speak to you tonight to present some of the priorities of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Of course, our highest priority -- and I cannot say it enough -- is a medical facility here. It is a dire need for the veterans of the State of New Jersey, especially in the South, and that is a proven fact.

I thank you for taking your time to come down to the southern area of New Jersey to hear our comments, and to hopefully take them back and act on them. Thank you so much.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Yes, sir?

**E D G A R R. S H O R E** (speaking from audience): I imagine my question should be directed to Leon Cheesman. Now that Paramus is open, and because of the lateness of the opening, where there was about a million dollars in surplus in the Division, is that money going to stay within the Division, or is it going to be siphoned off into other divisions?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: For the record, would you please state your name, sir, and tell us where you are from?

**MR. SHORE:** Edgar R. Shore, past State Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you.

**MR. CHEESMAN:** The million dollar surplus that the Division had in Paramus -- in the Paramus facility -- was absorbed by the Department, and utilized in other divisions.

**MR. SHORE:** It has already been utilized?

**MR. CHEESMAN:** Yes, sir, it has.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Pardon?

**MR. LO BUE:** Nothing, I was thinking out loud.

**S T E V E B. L O P E Z** (speaking from audience): I am Steve B. Lopez, Department Commander, American Legion. I have a question on budgetary items. In the funding structure of the Division of Veterans' Programs, in all areas, budget per capita, personnel positions, salary levels not in line with

other divisions, is anything being done to address this situation or to correct this inequity? If you look at the Governor's budget, it's in there -- the inequity is in there -- the salaries, and all.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Are you speaking specifically of the Division?

MR. LOPEZ: Yes. (remainder of Mr. Lopez's comment indiscernible; no microphone)

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I see. What you're saying -- as Sal mentioned before -- is that veterans are treated as second-class citizens. You feel that the Division is at the lowest level with respect to priorities.

MR. LOPEZ: I wouldn't say at the lowest level, but we are not getting our equal share of the money.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Well, there are so many different areas of responsibility the Department of Human Services has. That is why -- I said this once before, and I will say it again -- I would fully support a Department of Veterans' Affairs in the State of New Jersey, with its own Cabinet member and its own funding sources, which could be exclusively used for the veterans of the State. I can't say, without conferring with Leon or with the Commissioner, that what you have said is altogether accurate, because I really don't know.

Leon, take me off the hook, will you?

MR. CHEESMAN: I would suggest, Assemblyman -- Chairman -- that you pose that question to the Commissioner.

MR. LOPEZ: Yes, to the Commissioner.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay.

MR. LOPEZ: Also, look at the Governor's budget. It's the truth; it's right in there. We watch that budget closely.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay, we will certainly-- The Select Committee will address a communication to the Commissioner. We will tell him that his Acting Director has requested that we write to him. (laughter) That's okay, I'll just sign it John Dramesi. (laughter)

Russell String? How are you, Russ?

R U S S E L L S T R I N G (speaking from audience): Fine, Mr. Chairman. I would like to speak to--

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Sure.

MR. STRING: Mr. Cheesman should be put on the budget committee for the Department of Human Services -- on which I serve as a veteran -- so he could listen to the homeless children -- listen to their stories. I think he would understand then what the situation is with the budget.

But, I would like to address two things, which won't cost anything. One is the threshold to enter the home. Why do we have to be poverty stricken to get into a veterans' home? The second question is, why do we have to make our final disposition before our applications are accepted.

MR. CHEESMAN: The first question you asked was, "Why do we have to be almost impoverished--"

MR. STRING: A \$7200 threshold.

MR. CHEESMAN: For a single person, sir, it is \$7500. For a married person, it is \$15,000. That, sir, is not as low as the Medicare/Medicaid thresholds. In fact, in the last past -- I think it was two years ago -- we upped it to \$7,500. This allows those who are in need, those who are not capable of paying their bills, or who are unable to operate within the community-- This allows those who have been impoverished to receive medical assistance from this Division. We did up it, sir. Previously, it was not \$7500.

Your second question-- I don't recall your second question, but I believe Mr.--

MR. STRING: The question was, why do we have to make our final disposition with an undertaker before our applications are even accepted?

MR. CHEESMAN: Mr. Cagno?

J O S E P H M. C A G N O (speaking from audience): I left. (laughter)

MR. CHEESMAN: He said he would like to know why a person who is coming in here has to have a plan for the final disposition of his body prior to coming here.

MR. STRING: Prior to the acceptance of the application.

MR. CHEESMAN: Prior to acceptance of the application.

MR. CAGNO: Because frequently, unfortunately, many of our residents outlive their families, or have families who, for one reason or another, are unable to take care of the veteran or, quite frankly, just don't care. There are legal implications involved when a person dies as to what we can do. It is exceedingly helpful to the State to know how to properly dispose of the body, and to know that there have been funeral arrangements made. If there are none, and we cannot contact the family, then the disposition of that veteran is left entirely to us. Therefore, whenever possible, we attempt to know what the disposition is prior to admission.

By the way, in our general society, it has become a very common factor. Today, most people are making funeral arrangements many years in advance, so that when they die, those questions have already been addressed. Does that clarify it in any way, shape, or form?

MR. STRING: I would like to know a little more about that. Why, then, does not the home interview the person, rather than a service officer having to have this thing performed before the admission? Why doesn't the caseworker get this taken care of?

MR. CAGNO: That is done.

MR. STRING: Mr. Cagno, we had this before under Mr. Davis. It was at first forced that the man had to have it done by his service worker; the caseworker couldn't do it.

MR. CAGNO: We have a-- (remainder of Mr. Cagno's comment indiscernible; no microphone)

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Mr. Cagno, maybe Leon can get back to Russ later.

MR. STRING: I hope so.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay, good. The hour is getting late, and I think I would like to conclude soon. Brian and Donna have a long trip back.

Is there anyone else who would like to make some brief remarks in conclusion? (no response)

I would like to advise you all that, with the assistance of the Office of Legislative Services -- Brian Volz and Donna Bahnck -- we put together a home health care bill for the veterans. The bill was introduced today. It was dropped in the box on Monday. It is Assembly Bill 3343. This particular bill appropriates \$500,000 for a pilot program of home health care services for veterans.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Could you repeat that?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Assembly Bill 3343.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Thank you. Can we get a copy of that?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I have a copy of the draft bill which I dropped in, of course, because of the time it takes for the professional printers to compile all of the information relative to it. We do not have an official copy. This is brand-new. I dropped it on Monday, and it was introduced today. If anyone wants a copy of it, you may call my legislative office. I will give you a business card. I will have my staff send a copy right out to you.

Home health care will be utilized by veterans whose needs are comparatively minimal and home care feasible, thereby rendering the services needed. I think it is long overdue. The Governor mentioned in his State of the State Address that this was one of the initiatives he would support. So, now I have taken it upon myself to see whether or not the State of New Jersey will abide by its word for these veterans. This particular pilot program has to address the fact that many of

our World War II veterans are in their 60s, and there certainly is an immediate need and concern for home health care.

Details of the bill, by virtue of the legislative statement contained in it, will prove to you that this particular pilot program, if successful, will be something that will be financially well-appropriated for next year, and for years to come, for the veterans. It is the first initiative in home health care the State has even taken upon itself, to provide this much needed service. That's A-3343. If you want a copy of it, I will send it to you. I hope you will pass it to your membership, and have them write my colleague, Assembly Speaker Hardwick, and tell him you would like the Legislature to seriously consider it. Just don't sign my name. Sign Leon's. He is in enough hot water as it is. (laughter)

This is going to prove that not all veterans have to be placed in institutions; that feasible and accommodating services and health care can be provided at home for them, which they so richly deserve. You will be very proud of this bill, I think. It is a good bill. It is going to have the support of all 80 members of the lower house, and the members over in the Senate, too, once it is finally enacted.

I am not going to take the time to review the bills that we recommended already. Many of you people who have attended some of our past meetings are fully aware of what we have done so far. We have addressed bills concerning disabled veterans with respect to registration of vehicles and license plates. Sam is gone, but we recently recommended passage of the Order of the Military Purple Heart license plates for Joe Hems (phonetic spelling), which Senator Lynch and Assemblyman Paterniti sponsored in both houses. We are going to be addressing some tuition aid legislation on Monday. We have two bills up in Committee that will provide educational assistance to veterans, not only in secondary institutions where they will matriculate eventually, but also in other types

of institutions -- vocational schools. At the present time, there is not adequate funding assistance offered to our veterans in this respect.

We are looking very closely at the property tax deduction. Right now, we just don't know how far we can go with it. The minimal would be \$100. I would like to go much greater. The fiscal note on that has not been prepared yet, but once it is, the Select Committee is going to make a recommendation to the Legislature on that particular bill.

The conformity bill is in place, and many other bills we have recommended. If anyone would like to have a list of those bills we have recommended for release by the Standing Committees, I will provide you with copies of every communication I have with respect to them. Just call my office. I have a good staff. I have one person who works exclusively on veterans' affairs. We will be more than happy to send you all of our literature and all of our correspondence on those bills. I have done that for Comrade Brinckerhoff (phonetic spelling). Do you know Vince Brinckerhoff, from Cranford?

COMMANDER GOLLON (speaking from audience): Very well. He caught all the heat on this fire inspection thing.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Well, he has been in my office. We have spoken about it. Of course, he was interested in the progress of the Committee. He provided me with a packet of information, and he was very well-pleased with that.

COMMANDER GOLLON: He is my legislative aide.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Yes, and a very good friend of mine, too.

In conclusion, I want to thank everyone for coming out tonight. I hope you feel that the hearing was beneficial. We can only listen and hopefully respond in the most beneficial way to you. We are not going to perform miracles, but we are going to exert every effort on our part to make sure that you

are well-represented. As I said before, you do have friends in the State Legislature.

Thank you very much for coming.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)

**APPENDIX**



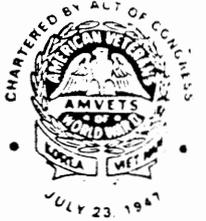


# AMVETS

AMERICAN VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II-KOREA-VIET NAM

10/23/ 86

1 609 468 2678



From the office of

Gloucester County, New Jersey Post No. 77

Donald E. Feldman  
COMMANDER

# 5 Kingsley Road, Sewell, N.J. 08080

Special Veterans Affairs Committee, NJ State Assembly, Meeting 10/23/86 - 7pm

MEETING HELD NJ VINELAND MEMORIAL HOME, VINELAND, N.J.

Dear present legislators and guests;

Thank you for the opportunity to present, on behalf of my fellow veterans, some of the pressing needs and lack of care facing our South Jersey veterans and their families.

- 1) Absence of "COST -EFFECTIVE MEANS FOR COMMUNICATING ".
- 2) " " " MEDICAL TREATMENT ".
- 3) " " " COST EFFECTIVE MEANS FOR TRANSPORTING ".
- 4) " " " APPLYING AND RESPONDING TO OBTAIN ENTITLEMENTS."
- 5) " " " PROPER RECORD KEEPING TO SUPPORT CLAIMS FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES".

There are many remedies to resolve these deficiencies. EG; The VAMC located in Wilmington Delaware, has a pilot program in progress. That is, 3 local veteran organizations were selected to assist; the VAMC, to screen veterans in need of health services. Following the screening, the veterans are then scheduled, as needed, for their respective medical appointments. Transportation vouchers are also arranged. \*\* It should be noted that the transportation, VA voucher system, is soon to be discontinued.

We in South Jersey, are adjudicated, in Newark, NJ, 200 miles of travel involved for those of us coming from South Jersey. We are requested to seek medical services at the nearest VAMC. This means we must cross State lines in order to receive any medical assistance.

It is interesting to point out that a " FEE - Basis" program exists to help service connected veterans obtain local medical treatment, from the veterans local doctor. The veteran must first get " Prior - approval" from the nearest VA facility.

Getting a " FEE - BASIS I.D.CARD " is an experience, in it's own. for those who are interested, please contact the nearest VAMC, and tell them you are from New Jersey. There is a need to empower someone, from the veteran's local area, to help/assist in following up any request for the veteran, made to a VA facility. Use of local veteran organizations, service officers, can be of some value. However, legislative clout is often necessary to prode reluctant VA persons to assist our South Jersey veterans to obtain their entitled "FEE - BASIS I. D. CARD ".

Another sugestion, arrangements could be made to schedule groups of veterans through a weekly/monthly assisted transportation, scheduling program. Presently, transportation, through Casino monies, for senior citizens and handicap persons, could be arranged to include veterans. This subsidised program could assist veteran organizations to arrange with perspective VAMC facilities, volunteers to provide transportation for local veterans.

By arranging, communicating, local screening services, and cooperation with the VAMC, NJ Bureau of Veteran Services, local veteran organizations, and legislators, we can improve services to obtain the entitlements for our South Jersey veterans and their families.

In summary, a veteran's services assisted state grants project, with guidelines and format, would go ~~long~~ way toward helping interested and dedicated veteran groups in helping our South Jersey veterans and families obtain their entitlements. This would also help in keeping a better paper trail/record keeping system. It should be noted that \$600,000 was given to the VVLP and that money would have been better served if shared with our NJ veteran organizations.

New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the U.S.A. , we rank 4th in per capita tax, and 7th to 9th as a veterans population., And yet we lose \$70 to 80millions of dollars in benefit return to NJ.

\* Our AMVETS # 77 of Gloucester County , would appreciate your assistance in obtaining a state grant to help us provide a facility, We own an acre of ground, 190 feet of road frontage on state highway #41, Deptford, NJ. We are willing to offer a free office to the NJ Bureau of Veteran Services. We have Two doctors who are willing to assist us with a screening program and FEE- Basis, under the VA guidelines.

I have much, much, more, but in the interest of this meeting, I reserve the privilege of offering another time for future follow up.

Respectfully



Donald E. Feldman, COMMANDER

AMVETS # 77 NJ

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS New Jersey has more than 33,500 Women Veterans and this number is increasing as more women are serving in the Armed Forces; and

Whereas Women Veterans have special needs, especially in the areas of health care, which have been overlooked, and this lack of attention has discouraged or prevented them from taking full advantage of the benefits and services which they are entitled to as Veterans of the United States.

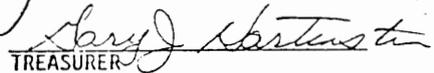
Be it resolved that we the members of the New Jersey State Council Vietnam Veterans of America strongly support the proposed New Jersey Senate Bill 2199 and the proposed New Jersey Assembly Bill 2636, to establish a "Temporary Women Veterans Advisory Commission.

Signed this 12<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1986

  
CHAIRMAN

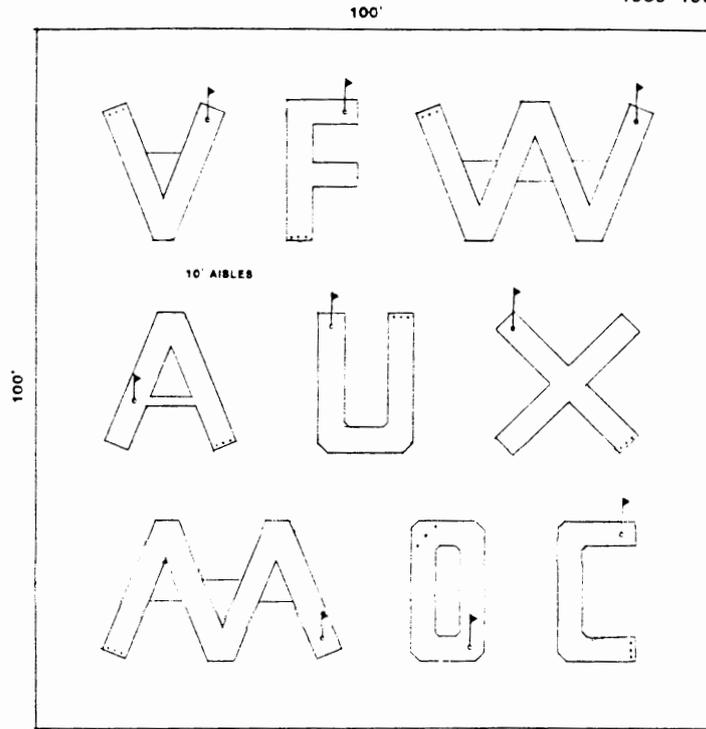
  
VICE CHAIRMAN

  
SECRETARY

  
TREASURER

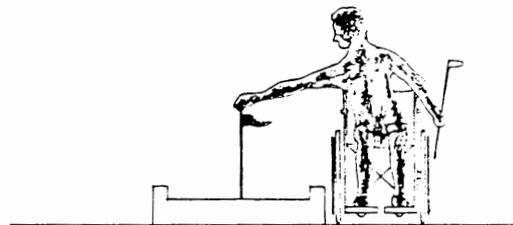
DEPARTMENT OF NEW JERSEY COMMANDER'S PROJECT  
 Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States  
**BARRIER FREE MINIATURE GOLF PLAN**  
 FOR WHEELCHAIR PATIENTS  
 AND A WHEELCHAIR TRANSPORTATION VAN  
 FOR THE  
 VINELAND MEMORIAL SOLDIERS HOME  
 VINELAND, N.J.

1986-1987

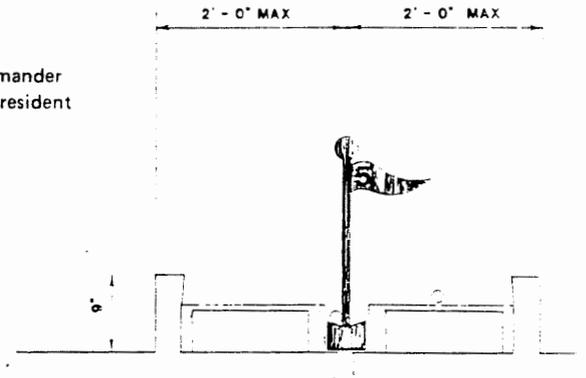


SERVING THE NEEDS OF  
 ★★ ★★ Veterans ★★ ★★

OTTO A. GOLLON JR. - State Commander  
 EDYTHE SAVACOOOL - State Auxiliary President  
 ROGERS R. SHEPHERD SR. - M.O.C. Grand Commander  
 ALICE WORTHLEY - M.O.C.A. Grand Auxiliary President



ELEVATION



SECTION THRU CUP

28 W. CUTHBERT BLVD. COLLINGSWOOD, N.J. 08108  
 856-854-7500  
 JOSEPH V. LISIEWSKI, A.I.A., P.E.  
 N.J. C-4597 PA. B.S.C. FL. AP 0010814  
 Architecture Planning Interior Design Project Management Construction Management

**LISIEWSKI**

VETERANS OF VINELAND HOME  
 VINELAND, NEW JERSEY

DATE: PLAN, ELEV., SECTION  
 DRAWN BY: T.C. DATE: 8/18/88  
 T.C. NONE 8/18/88

DWG. NO.: BK-1  
 SHEET: 1 OF 1

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION  
MEDICAL AND REGIONAL OFFICE CENTER  
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

ASSIGNMENT TITLE: Volunteer Driver Escort

USING SERVICE: Medical Administrative Service

PLACE OF DUTY: Ambulatory Care and Processing Section

DAYS AND HOURS: Flexible (When needed by staff)

SUPERVISOR: Chief, Ambulatory Care and Processing Section

QUALIFICATION, TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE: Volunteer should be flexible, dependable and adaptable. Volunteer will come in contact with members of the professional staff as well as the public, patients and their families, she/he must at all times be willing and show a willingness to be helpful. Volunteer should be self motivated.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Provide transportation for indigent, disabled or other veterans lacking means of travel to come to scheduled VA appointments.
2. Guide patients new to Wilmington facility through appropriate areas.
3. Provide interpersonal support to patients.
4. Encourage the patient population to seek the help of the Veterans Administration.

DESCRIBE ORIENTATION PROVIDED: Initial orientation provided by staff (made aware of the Privacy Act and involvement on this assignment). On site direction as needed. Review of assignment by supervising staff.

