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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 29, 1982

TO: Judy Pond

FROM: Morton C. Blackwell *MB*

I do not recommend accepting
any invitations for speakers
for this group.

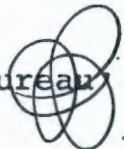
They are not a VA recognized
group. They are small and
exist mainly as a letterhead
group for leftist causes.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 16, 1982

MEMORANDUM

TO: MORTON BLACKWELL

FROM: JUDY POND, Speakers Bureau 

SUBJECT: SPEAKER REQUEST

PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR RECOMMENDATION AND COMMENTS ON THE FOLLOWING
REQUEST UNDER CONSIDERATION:

Event: American Veterans Committee Panel Discussion on
"Has America an Effective National Security Strategy
and How Can It Be Improved?"

Date: February 5, 1983

Location: Washington, D.C.

Background: See attached correspondence

RECOMMEND ACCEPT

RECOMMEND WHITE HOUSE STAFF

RECOMMEND REGRET

RECOMMEND CABINET MEMBER

RECOMMEND SUBCABINET MEMBER

COMMENTS:

Your response is needed by: December 23, 1982.



AMERICAN VETERANS COMMITTEE

"CITIZENS FIRST, VETERANS SECOND"

NATIONAL OFFICE • 1346 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, N.W., SUITE 930, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036 • 202-293-4890

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December 13, 1983

Ms. Judy Pond
Speakers Bureau
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Ms. Pond:

On Saturday, February 5, 1983, National Capital Area Chapter No. 1 of the American Veterans Committee is planning a panel discussion on the question "Has America an Effective National Security Strategy and How Can It Be Improved?" We understand Mr. Thomas C. Reed and Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle, among others, have effectively addressed this subject in the past. We earnestly hope your Bureau can get one of these gentlemen or someone else as knowledgeable to give us the Administration position. We contemplate an opening statement of about 15 minutes, a 5-10 minute reply to other speakers, and about five minutes answering questions from the floor for a total of no more than 30 minutes per speaker. We plan on four speakers representing four different positions. Earl Ravenal of Georgetown University is the only one from whom we have yet received a commitment.

The discussion will start at 8:00 p.m., following a buffet commencing at 6:30, to which the speakers and their spouses are cordially invited. Both activities will be held in the Disabled American Veterans National Service Headquarters at 807 Maine Avenue, S.W., Washington, D. C. 20024.

Besides members of our Chapter we hope to have AVC's National Board and representatives of other Veterans Organizations present for a total attendance of about 50 people.

We hope you can help us with a good Administration Speaker. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Laurence Davis
Laurence Davis, Chairman

To achieve a more democratic and prosperous America and a more stable World



AMERICAN VETERANS COMMITTEE

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April 22, 1981

Mr. Morton Blackwell
The White House
Old Executive Office Building

Dear Mr. Blackwell:

We would appreciate it if you would expedite this matter as our deadline for Convention Journal copy is this Friday.

Please call and let us know when we might come and pick up the greetings.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

June A. Willenz
Executive Director

Enclosed: one copy of previous letter to President Reagan
copy of President Carter's greetings

I suggest
no message
be sent.
this is an
old left-
wing group.
Morton
Blackwell
4/23

already sent
to late

February 11, 1981

President Ronald Reagan
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The American Veterans Committee annually publishes a Journal in connection with its annual convention. This year, we will put out a combined journal which will also represent our "Salute to the Woman Veteran." This Journal gives an opportunity for the friends of AVC to send greetings to the delegates and members.

In the past, your predecessor has graciously sent messages of greetings (see enclosed). We would be most appreciative if you would send your message which would appear prominently in the 1981 AVC Journal.

If there are any questions, kindly have a member of your staff call the AVC National Office (293-4890).

We look forward to receiving your message.

Sincerely,

Gus Tyler
National Chairman

June A. Willenz
Executive Director

JAW:lw
Enclosures



Office of the
Administrator
of Veterans Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20426



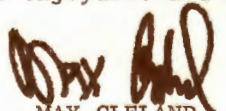
TO THE OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE
AMERICAN VETERANS COMMITTEE

Personally and on behalf of my Veterans Administration associates, I am happy to extend greetings and good wishes on the occasion of the 36th Anniversary Convention of the American Veterans Committee.

Each of you and your organization have earned the esteem of all Americans for your tireless dedication to the strength and progress of our nation. My Veterans Administration associates and I are especially aware and appreciative of your work on behalf of America's veterans, their dependents and survivors of deceased veterans.

I know that from the American Veterans Committee's 36th Anniversary Convention will come a renewed and stronger than ever commitment from each of you to continue your essential work for our country and our 30 million veterans.

May your convention be most enjoyable and successful.


MAX CLELAND
Administrator

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

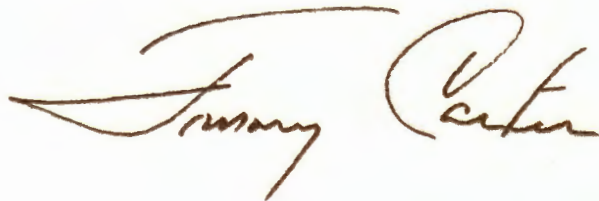
March 28, 1980

I send warmest greetings to the members of the American Veterans Committee as you hold your 36th Annual Convention.

By your unselfish and distinguished wartime military service, you helped immeasurably to ensure the preservation of our priceless freedoms. But your peacetime contributions to the building of a more democratic and prosperous America and a more stable world have been equally important and commendable.

I welcome this annual opportunity to congratulate and thank you for your dedication to our national security and strength and to the well-being of all our people.

May your meeting be most enjoyable and successful.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Jimmy Carter". The signature is written in a cursive style, with "Jimmy" and "Carter" connected by a large, sweeping loop.

May 25, 1982

It is a pleasure for me to extend greetings on the occasion of your 38th Annual Convention.

You are all to be congratulated for the successful efforts that have built your organization's programs of assistance and support to America's veterans and their families.

The American Veterans Committee's record as an organization devoted to the protection and perpetuation of basic American ideals is deserving of our continued respect and admiration.

May your convention not only be enjoyable and productive, but also mark the renewal of the AVC's valued service to our nation and its veterans.

THIS HAS TO BE AT ROOM 45 EARLY AM TUESDAY 5/25
CALL MISS DELANEY 293-4890 FOR PICK UP

RR:Livingston:
cc: K.Osborne/M.Blackwell/D.Livingston/CF
EVENT: June 4-6
NEEDED: AM May 25
(Draft information provided by VA)

*File
American Veterans
Comm.*

April 24, 1981

I am very happy to send greetings to the members of the American Veterans Committee as you gather for your 37th Annual Convention.

I also want to thank you for what you do for this great country of ours. Your military and civilian service has helped build and preserve the United States.

In the years ahead I hope you will continue to support the needs of veterans, not only through governmental programs but also through voluntary efforts. It is this partnership which has made American veterans benefits an example throughout the world.

You have my best wishes for a very successful meeting.

Sent to: Ms. June A. Willenz
Executive Director
American Veterans Committee
1346 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Enclosure: 8x10 glossy photo

RR:Livingston:ck
cc: H. von Damm/D.Livingston/M.Blackwell/CF
DUE: ASAP (printing)
Draft information provided by VA.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

File

MEMORANDUM

9 FEBRUARY 1981

TO: RED CAVANEY
FROM: GREGORY J. NEWELL
VIA: TRICIA RODGERS
SUBJ: MEMBERSHIP REQUEST

THE AMERICAN VETERANS COMMITTEE HAS INVITED THE PRESIDENT TO RENEW HIS MEMBERSHIP IN THAT GROUP. APPARENTLY, HE WAS A MEMBER MANY YEARS AGO. THE LANGUAGE IN THEIR LETTER HAS GIVEN US SOME PAUSE-- CAN YOU PLEASE ADVISE?

3/9 Morton -

Please stop + advise!
Thanks.

Reu



S/IC - would like Pres. to renew his membership in their Org.

AMERICAN VETERANS COMMITTEE

"CITIZENS FIRST, VETERANS SECOND"

000096

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Hon. Stephen M. Young

January 15, 1981

President Ronald Reagan
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear President Reagan:

May I, on behalf of the American Veterans' Committee, join with all those who wish you well as you assume the awesome responsibilities of your new office. We feel especially privileged to do so because you were one of those who as a veteran of the Second World War joined with like-minded ex-GIs in AVC to help shape a safer and saner world. You were one of our earliest members.

In your autobiography you note your experiences in AVC, your encounter with the Communists, and your decision to leave. I joined about the same time you did fully aware the Communists were "boring from within" to take over. Indeed, one of my primary reasons for joining was precisely to do whatever I could to see to it that the Stalinists should not turn AVC into another front.

I set up the Independent Progressive Caucus to counter the Stalinist Progressive Caucus. I was chosen to chair the caucus probably because I had considerable credentials. My union, the ILGWU, had gone through its baptismal fires in two decades of war against the Communists in the union. I was then (as I am today) the Political Director of the ILGWU.

Our objective was to rid AVC of the Communists. It took two conventions to do so--first in Des Moines and then in Milwaukee. But we did it.

That must have been 1948. Now 32 years later, AVC is alive and well and living in a changing world whose contours we should like to help shape. Today, as when founded, AVC is a distinctive kind of veteran outfit. While we join with other veteran organizations to champion the needs of ex-service people, we still hold to our original objective: "Citizens First, Veterans Second."

To achieve a more democratic and prosperous America and a more stable World (over)

President Reagan

1/15/81

page 2

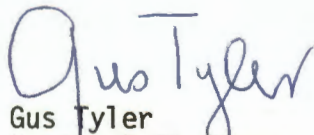
As such, we try to act as a cementing element in a time that seems to be threatened by a dangerous fragmentation--domestically as well as internationally.

I am enclosing three stories that relate to a few of the areas of our concern: the need for societal cohesiveness; the role of the female veteran; the international role of the American Veteran. We should very much like to amplify on any of these matters with any deputy you may wish to assign for what we feel will be fruitful conversations.

Before closing, however, I should like to extend a personal invitation to you to renew your membership in AVC. We lost you because of the Communist presence; we should like to feel that we have regained you not simply because we have preserved our integrity against Communist perversion but also because we have been making more than a modest contribution to the public need.

Dues are \$20 for the year and we are prepared to offer forgiveness for the years since you left us.

Sincerely,



Gus Tyler
National Chairman

GT:km
oeiu 153
enclosures

1710 Broadway, N.Y. 10019

(212) 265-7000

The Stars and Stripes

The National Tribune

THE ONLY NATIONAL VETERANS NEWSPAPER

THE STARS AND STRIPES—THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE, Thursday, October 23, 1980



American Veterans Committee

Disarmament Week—1980



Gus Tyler

National Office
1346 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Suite 930
Washington, DC 20036

It was a tough old American soldier, General William Tecumseh Sherman, who said: "War is Hell." He knew, because he had been there.

Millions of veterans around the world know because they have been there. So it should not really come as a shocker that a meeting in Rome, Italy, last year, put hundreds of veteran organizations from dozens of countries officially on record as favoring what they call "balanced disarmament," what others call "arms control," and what Franklin Delano Roosevelt called "freedom from fear."

FDR's statement came in the midst of World War II when the world was yearning for some greater purpose than the simple slaughter. He proclaimed his aims in a brief historic statement on the Four Freedoms. They were freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear.

In defining the last of these, he spoke of a world that would not be haunted by bombs blowing bodies

apart, a world of enduring peace. To achieve such a condition, he spoke straightforwardly of the need to reduce arms by mutual agreement and to continue doing so until there was a state of universal disarmament.

To achieve such disarmament has not been easy. No one wishes to disarm unilaterally; to strip one's self of defenses against an armed enemy. To get some measure of arms control requires agreement—conversation, bargaining, negotiation—between parties who are not necessarily on the same wave length.

But hard as this nut is to crack, we have to keep gnawing away at this toughy—if mankind is to survive.

Right now, the arms buildup keeps zooming ahead. This year, arms expenditures around the world will eat up more than \$500 billion dollars.

The cost is reflected in higher taxes, in rising prices, and—in some countries—in an imposed

poverty to finance armaments.

Beyond the cost, of course, is the unthinkable moment when nuclear war is unleashed. That's the day when the planet is Hell.

Contrary to the common notion that the veteran is a calloused killer, veterans have every reason to be more sensitive to the horrors of war than the man or woman who has never seen a buddy ripped to shreds, has never felt the shrapnel tear through his gut, has never had to incur cancer or be the parent of a child deformed by inherited radiation.

"As witnesses to genocide, of the mourning, suffering, and destruction caused by war," states the resolution of the Rome conference, "those who fought side by side or faced each other in bloody conflict, make a most earnest appeal to the community of war veterans and through it, to world opinion and governments" to build "a world free of war" and "to support all endeavors aimed at halting the arms race...under effective international control."

In line with this commitment, the World Veterans Federation (in existence since 1950) urges cooperation with the United Nations that, through its General Assembly, designated the week beginning October 24 as Disarmament Week. That date was chosen because it is a sort of anniversary, U.N. Day.

At this point, there probably is little more we can do than just talk about mutual disarmament. But talk generates talk. And what talk can be more meaningful, persuasive, and authoritative than the talk of the men and women who have returned from Hell? ★

The Stars and Stripes

The National Tribune

THE ONLY NATIONAL VETERANS' NEWSPAPER

The Weekly Voice
Of Veterans & Dependents
Of All Wars Of
The United States

"To Care For Him Who Shall
Have Borne The Battle And
For His Widow And His Orphan"
Abraham Lincoln

Our 103rd Year

Number 36

WASHINGTON, DC, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1980

50¢ PER COPY



American Veterans Committee

Women Veterans:

A Forgotten Population?



June A. Willenz
National Office
1346 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Suite 930

Washington, DC 20036
(202) 293-4890

Women Veterans. Almost 700,000 of them. So what! They're veterans aren't they? They are eligible for veterans programs—home loans, veterans preference, GI Bill, VA hospital care, and more. But there's something different. In the past, some women veterans were denied benefits for decades—i.e., the WASPS, the Signal Corps women. There was also a time when the dependents of a woman veteran were not treated the same as those of a male veteran.

Some of the inequities have been corrected. Others continue to exist. Women veterans as a population are not recognized as a separate group by government agencies collection data on women. There is almost no historical data on women veterans. NO substantive social science research has been done on women veterans. The 1980 Census is the first time that women have been queried as to their veteran status. Astonishingly, the

VA, charged with administering veterans benefits, has little, if any, data on women veterans. To this day, the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics compares unemployment figures for veterans against male non-veterans, ignoring women veterans entirely. A recent study of the National Academy of Sciences on the VA Hospital system only considered male veterans in their study "because the female veterans amount to less than 2 percent of the current total." But that is changing. The Department of Defense is projecting a participation rate of 12 percent by 1984 and there is a strong possibility that this figure may be low.

The American Veterans Committee (AVC) has been struck by the lack of information and concomitantly, lack of interest about women veterans. Last year, AVC began an exploratory investigation of women veterans in our society.

under the auspices of the Ford Foundation. Not only did we find out that government agencies do not systematically collect data on women veterans but they have operated on the assumption that what is good for male veterans is good for female veterans. Since veterans benefits and programs have been designed for male veterans, this is an assumption that may or may not be correct.

There has never been an analysis of what veterans benefits programs women veterans have used, how many used them, and whether they were helpful to them. Furthermore, there has never been an inquiry of women veterans as to what veterans benefits other than the existing ones would be of value to them. AVC is planning to conduct an in-depth study of these important questions.

Women veterans may have needs that are not being met under the present system. AVC's initial review began to uncover these problem areas. Often, women veterans have assumed traditional roles as wives and mothers after leaving military service. These roles have meant that women veterans delayed use of many benefits programs until their children were grown, or sometimes under the adverse circumstances of either widowhood or divorce. These events often take place long after eligibility has run out; women find themselves high and dry when they need their veterans benefits most.

While it is true that often male

veterans delay their use of benefits for equally good reasons, the traditional roles of women almost automatically become a barrier to using the veterans' benefits rightfully theirs, because of the limited time frame.

Another instance where women veterans are shortchanged is in the VA hospital system which does not provide any of the specific services that women need, such as gynecological and obstetrical. Many women veterans are not even aware that they can obtain contract services through the VA. There are reports of insensitivity towards women veterans seeking medical or hospital care and little that we know of has been done to make the VA medical system responsive to the needs of women veterans.

AVC has called upon the VA to establish a Veterans Administration Advisory Panel of Women, structured along the Department of Defense' Defense Advisory Committee On Women In The Services (DACOWITS). This independent citizens' advisory body would provide a useful channel of advice, council, and suggestions to the Administrator on the problems of women beneficiaries of veterans

programs. This would include the problems of survivors and dependents, as well as those women veterans themselves.

VA Administrator Max Cleland has turned down the AVC suggestion and stated that such a Panel

"is not the best approach at this time." Administrator Cleland indicated that actions had been taken at the VA to expand the VA's capabilities in dealing with the concerns of women veterans.

AVC applauded the actions of the Administrator but pointed out that his actions would not preempt the desirability of setting up a VA Advisory Panel on Women. The AVC suggested Panel would be outside the institution of the VA itself and would therefore have more credibility in its recommendations. A parallel group to the DACOWITS would serve the VA well, AVC pointed out, and would also provide women veterans another channel of communication if VA avenues were closed or not responsive.

In its response to the Administrator's negative decision regarding the creation of this Panel, AVC asked Mr. Cleland to reconsider his decision. Women veterans have rendered unique service to this nation, and they are proud of it. But they have too often been treated like second-class veterans. AVC called upon the VA to take a courageous step forward and set up this Panel.

(Editor's Note: Women veterans may respond to Willenz comments directly to the American Veterans Committee, 1346 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 930, Washington, D.C. 20036, or to *The Stars and Stripes*.)★

The Daily News

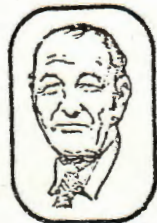
Gus Tyler

Citizen Motto Of Veterans Crucial Now

NEW YORK — For the last dozen years or so, I have been saying "no" to the American Veterans Committee whenever they asked me to serve as their national chairman. I had "more important" things to do.

This year, I said "yes," because I believe that AVC's rubric "Citizens First" has a special relevance and urgency in our troubled time.

When Charles Bolte, the author of "The New Veteran," and Gilbert Harrison, later editor and publisher of The New Republic, conceived AVC in the closing days of World War II, they were inspired with the vision of a returning legion of ex-servicemen and women (some 14 million of them) who would turn the energies of an anti-fascist generation into an engine for social change.



Working for the Nation

They did not want the returnees to be a self-interest lobby, in the traditional mode, subordinating the well-being of the nation to the welfare of the veterans. Hence, their slogan: "Citizens First, Veterans Second."

As I look back now over the 35 years since AVC was founded, I get the feeling that more and more people — especially the social activists — have come to think in terms of "citizens last, everything else first."

The social order, national and international, seems to have become unglued as the dedicated drive in diverse directions.

We seem to be at the mad moment when "things fall apart, the center can not hold."

I get exposed to this retribalization of mankind whenever I go to a coalition for something or other. The "get together" usually ends as a "pull apart" as dedicated souls rise to proclaim their primary purpose as women, blacks, hispanics, right-to-lifers, right-to-workers, old, young, handicapped, environmentalists, industrialists, homosexual, immigrants or Indians.

Repeatedly I have consoled myself with the thought that this disorder is merely the passing price we must pay for a better order.

Prelude to Chaos

Yet I cannot dispel the fear that present disorder is a prelude to a universal chaos such as descended upon Europe in the Dark Ages.

At a moment such as this, it seems appropriate that there be voices saying: Whatever we are, whatever our separate sincerities, whatever our private passions, we are citizens first — citizens of our land and citizens of the planet.

I do not fault those who are outspoken about "selfish" issues, for as Rabbi Hillel said, If I do not speak for myself, who will?"

Another Question

But I do suggest that we, the zealous, dare not disregard Hillel's second dictum: If I speak for myself only, what am I?

Because I see "citizens first" as the modern version of Donne's admonition that "no man is an island, entire of itself," I have taken on the added load of chairing AVC.

It is my hope that we, veterans, can join with other groups dedicated to "special interests" in reasserting our common humanity.

Perhaps we can set a centripetal force in motion even as we are tossed about on the present centrifuge. Help, anyone?