

been put most eloquently, but we are particularly interested in hearing from representatives of the veterans' community, and we would like to give them priority in this testimony. So that the first would be Cooper T. Holt.

MR. HOLT; Mr. Chairman, members of the Fine Arts Commission, I am Cooper T. Holt, and I am the Director of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Washington office.

I appear before you today representing the views of the Veterans of Foreign Wars regarding the proposed sculpture and flag staff for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars represent 1.9 million war veterans and 9,500 posts throughout our great Nation. Among its membership, the VFW has over 530,000 veterans who served in the country of Vietnam.

We thank you for the opportunity of presenting our views. In June 1981, our National Commander in Chief asked all of our Post Commanders for 100 percent participation in raising money for this long overdue tribute to those Americans who served in the Vietnam War. At the same time, we ran a photograph of the basic memorial design in an article describing the project in our VFW National Magazine. This article also asked all posts and auxiliaries to sponsor the

project. The response in the magazine article was extremely gratifying.

In December of 1981, we presented a check of \$180,000 to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and an additional \$40,000 was sent directly to the Fund by our individual posts. Our support for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial continues undiminished, and we urge you to approve today the basic proposal for the sculpture and the flag staff.

The VFW finds the basic design of the memorial to be eloquent, novel and ideally suited to the environment of Constitution Gardens designed, as you know, ^{by} ~~by~~ ^{Dr.} ~~by~~ ^{Dr.} the ^{Bi-} Centennial. Our members contributed to have this concept built and we observed the gratification that this basic design was completed. We are equally enthusiastic about the proposed sculpture and the flag staff.

While the memorial walls are a magnificent expression of this Nation's belated honor for its Vietnam veterans, the sculpture magnificently presents their courage, their sacrifices and, of course, their youth. It captures one of the perhaps intimate number of moments in war when young men, when in difficult circumstances, far from home, are sustained by their comradeship and sense of mutual protection.

For me personally, a glance at this beautiful work

takes my thoughts to a time when I was many years younger, afraid, but willing and proud to serve my country. The addition of this sculpture to the memorial site will commemorate for every veteran of Vietnam, as they were during what was most expected of them during time of war. The human touch of the sculpture is a significant enhancement, we feel, of the memorial itself. It goes without saying, ladies and gentlemen, ^{the flag} for which Vietnam veterans fought should fly proudly above the memorial in their honor. We support its addition to the site. We urge this Commission to ensure that the proposed elements are placed on the memorial site at the most appropriate and artistic location with relation to the walls, yet in such a way that all elements, the walls, the flag staff and sculpture, are integrated units.

Opinions may differ, but one point is certain, ladies and gentlemen. Men and women who serve their country in foreign wars deserve our honor, and this memorial is for them above all else. This November, up to 250,000 veterans of Vietnam will come to Washington for the four-day national salute in their honor. The dedication of the memorial during the salute can be the culmination of this historic event, depending, of course, on your action.

In conclusion, the VFW thanks you again for this

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opportunity to express our views and to urge you to approve today the proposal presented.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

Next Mr. Joseph E. Miller representing the American Legion.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission of Fine Arts, I am Joseph E. Miller. I am Assistant Legislative Director of the National American Legion.

Our comments, like many comments referred to here today, are positive.

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to present our views concerning the proposed statue design and the flagpole for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

For two years, the Legion has been firmly committed to the memorial and opposed to efforts which would seek to delay its construction and dedication. To achieve this, \$1 million was donated by members of the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliaries from all across the Nation. This \$1 million did not come from a few individuals but rather from small donations averaging less than \$9.

Today, the American Legion's support for this worthwhile project continues undiminished and extends to the