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National Commander Dolny Presents Legislative Priorities to Congress

Senator Mikulski Receives JWV Medal of Merit

By Ira Brett Greenspan, Executive Assistant

A standing ovation by veteran and congressional attendees followed National Commander Warren S.

Dolny's memorable presentation of JWV's Congressional Priorities to the Joint House-Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, February 25, 1993.

National Commander Dolny informed the committee of JWV's 1993 legislative priorities. The huge audience, which packed the hearing room to capacity, represented a variety of members from various veterans' organizations, including Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Blinded Veterans of America (BVA), Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) and Retired Officers Association (TROA). JWV had a record turn out, with over 200 members from almost all fifty states.

In his testimony, National Commander Dolny outlined JWV's position on defense budget cuts, the VA budget, VA medical care funding, eligibility for veterans' health care, delivery and quality of VA health care, national health care reform, VA construction-equipment backlog and preferred postal rates for non-profit organizations.

Commander Dolny spoke about JWV's stance on non-veterans using VA facilities and veterans affected by co-payments, issues that JWV has been

actively opposed to throughout the years. "JWV strongly opposes non-veterans using VA facilities. VA hospitals are and should remain for veterans only," Commander Dolny testified. The National Commander then went on to proclaim that "JWV is strongly opposed to co-payment charges for veterans. We ask that the \$2.00 pharmacy co-payment be permanently eliminated."

In his presentation before the committee, Commander Dolny expressed support for both older and younger veterans. "JWV believes that government must fully determine the consequences of exposure to Agent Orange and compensate those who are affected." He also declared that there should be "legislation to provide disability compensation to Persian Gulf veterans who were exposed to burning oil wells and other hazardous materials".

JWV's continued opposition to further cuts in the VA budget was a major component of the National Commanders' testimony. Mr. Dolny pointed out that over a decade ago veterans' medical care reached crisis proportions due to insufficient appropriations. Since Fiscal Year 1985, the VA's share of the total federal health care budget has declined from 7.7 percent to 5.3 in FY 1993. The pro-

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NC Warren S. Dolny and Jesse Brown, new VA Secretary. See story on page 5.

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National Commander Warren S. Dolny presents JWV Medal of Merit to Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD).