VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

# Skelton to Receive VFW Congressional Award

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**WASHINGTON** — The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. will present its 2010 Congressional Award to Rep. Ike Skelton (D-Mo.) for his outstanding service to national defense, homeland security, and to veterans, servicemembers and their families. The presentation will take place Monday during the opening session of the annual VFW Legislative Conference at the Hyatt Regency in nearby Crystal City.

"The Congressional Award is extremely important to the VFW," said National Commander Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr., a combat-wounded Vietnam veteran from Sussex, Wis., "because it recognizes a champion in Congress who fights for a strong and secure America, and for those who wear and have worn the uniform, as well as their families."

The VFW Congressional Award has been presented annually since 1964 to one member of the House or Senate for significant legislative contributions on behalf of veterans and military service personnel. Past recipients include strong national security and veterans' advocates, such as Mississippi's Sen. John Stennis (D) and Rep. "Sonny" Montgomery (D), and South Carolina Sen. Strom Thurmond (R), among many others. Last year's award went to Hawaii Sen. Daniel Akaka (D), the chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee.

Congressman Skelton chairs the powerful House Armed Services Committee, and he has been a staunch advocate of America's military, her veterans, and their families throughout his 17 terms in Congress.

He hails from Lexington, Mo., and his family was close friends with a local World War I veteran and VFW member by the name of Harry S. Truman, who was a county judge at the time. Young Ike would go on to earn the rank of Eagle Scout, an Associate's Degree from Wentworth Military Academy, and a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Law degree from the University of Missouri. Prior to running for Congress in 1977, he was a member of the Missouri State Senate, as well as a prosecuting attorney and special assistant attorney general.

As chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, it is his responsibility to ensure that the U.S. properly trains and equips the military forces. He is a strong advocate of

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congressional oversight responsibilities, especially as it pertains to weapons acquisition programs, and is a champion for those who perform the mission of securing the nation.

"Our military, veterans and families of past and present have no better friend in Congress than Chairman Skelton," said Tradewell. "I am honored to present the prestigious VFW Congressional Award to him."

More than 600 VFW members from around the country, as well as Europe, the Pacific and Latin America/Caribbean are expected in town next week to meet with their congressional members on issues important to veterans, servicemembers and their families.

Special guest speakers at the VFW Legislative Conference opening session on Monday include Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki, Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr., and Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano.

Other national awards being presented include the VFW Media Award to Army Times Publishing Company; a VFW Gold Medal and Citation to the Army's Old Guard; and VFW Teachers Awards to Patricia Mazure of Taylor Elementary School in Trenton, Mich., Mark D. Leet of Simons Middle School in Flemingsburg, Ky., and William V. Melega of Chapel Hill High School in Chapel Hill, N.C.