

President Obama to Address VFW National Convention

Jul 10, 2012

WASHINGTON — The president has accepted an invitation to speak before the 113th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S., which begins July 21 at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center in Reno, Nev. The event is closed to the public.

“We are very grateful to President Obama for choosing to address America’s oldest and largest major combat veterans’ organization,” said VFW National Commander Richard L. DeNoyer, a retired Marine and Vietnam combat veteran from Middleton, Mass.

The president’s appearance continues a long standing VFW tradition that provides a platform for those seeking the nation’s highest office to address issues of importance to veterans, military service members and their families. DeNoyer said this is especially important during a time of war and instability abroad, and economic belt tightening at home.

“What we hope to hear is how he will continue to take the fight to our enemies, while keeping America safe through strong national defense and homeland security programs,” he said. “We also want to know how he will create, enhance and protect veteran and military healthcare programs, benefits and Quality of Life initiatives, as well as hear a renewed commitment to return our fallen from their battlefields.”

President Obama is scheduled to speak on July 23. He last spoke at the VFW National Convention in 2009, and prior to then as a presidential candidate in 2007 and 2008.

Up to 12,000 VFW and Ladies Auxiliary delegates are expected to represent the organization’s total membership of 2 million at the weeklong convention. Their mission will be to approve new national priorities to guide the VFW as it lobbies Congress on issues important to the nation’s veterans, service members and their families. Convention delegates will also elect a new VFW national commander and recognize prominent individuals and organizations for their support of veterans and military personnel.

Awards presented will be the VFW Gold Medal of Merit to the Montford Point Marine Association; the VFW Armed Services Award to the Army’s Landstuhl Regional Medical

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Center in Germany; the VFW Americanism Award to correspondent and author Joe Galloway; VFW Teacher of the Year awards to Debra Rose Howell (Monte Cristo Elementary School, Granite Falls, Wash.) and George “Bud” Zorman (Mountain Home High School, Ark.); the VFW Dwight D. Eisenhower Award to Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond Odierno; the VFW Citizenship Award to “Kids Thank a Veteran” director Cherie Reid; and the VFW Aerospace Award to women’s aviation and space pioneer Wally Funk.

Also addressing the delegates will be Elizabeth Scannell of Goose Creek, S.C., the \$30,000 scholarship winner of VFW’s annual Voice of Democracy program; Veterans Affairs Commission Deputy Minister Hsiao-hui Chin from the Republic of China on Taiwan; Ekaterina Priyezzheva, Russian co-chair of the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs; U.S. Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki; and Army Maj. Gen. Stephen Tom, commander of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, among many others.

The 113th VFW National Convention is closed to the general public, but everyone can watch it streamed live online at www.vfw.org beginning at 8 a.m. PDT, July 23.

ABOUT THE VFW: The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is a nonprofit veterans’ service organization composed of combat veterans and those currently serving in uniform. Founded in 1899 and chartered by Congress in 1936, the VFW is the nation's largest organization of war veterans and its oldest major veterans’ organization. With more than 2 million members located in more than 7,300 VFW Posts worldwide, “NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.” The VFW and its Auxiliaries are dedicated to veterans’ service, legislative advocacy, and military and community service programs nationwide. For more information or to join, visit our website at www.vfw.org.

MEDIA CREDENTIALING: The VFW National Convention is not open to the public, and only registered and credentialed media from bona fide news organizations will be approved to cover convention activities. A Daybook of speakers, dates and times will be released to interested media next week. To pre-register, contact Randi Law at VFW National Headquarters at (816) 968-1104 or via e-mail at rlaw@vfw.org. Onsite registration will begin July 21 in room D10 of the Reno-Sparks Convention Center, phones (775) 236-1207 or 236-1208. Additional contacts are VFW National Headquarters communications director Jerry Newberry at jnewberry@vfw.org, or (816) 968-1168, and VFW Washington Office public affairs director Joe Davis at jdavis@vfw.org, or (202) 608-8357. In Reno, Newberry and Davis can be reached by e-mail or their cells, which are (816) 835-1851 and (202) 374-9998, respectively.