

President to Speak Wednesday at VFW Convention

Aug 14, 2008

WASHINGTON — President George W. Bush has accepted an invitation to speak Wednesday at the 109th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.

The annual convention by America's oldest major veterans' organization starts tomorrow at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Fla. The event is not open to the public.

"It is a time-honored tradition for our nation's leader to address the national convention of America's oldest major veterans' organization and the nation's largest organization of combat veterans," said VFW National Commander George J. Lisicki, a Vietnam veteran from Carteret, N.J. "We are grateful to President Bush for taking the time to speak to us on issues that are vitally important to our nation."

Approximately 10,000 VFW and Ladies Auxiliary delegates will represent the 2.2 million-member organization at the weeklong convention to approve new national priorities to guide the organization as it lobbies Congress on issues important to the nation's 23.5 million veterans, 2.2 million servicemembers, and their families.

The issues include national security, military readiness, homeland security, and military and veterans' healthcare, benefits and Quality of Life programs.

Convention delegates will elect a new VFW national commander and recognize prominent individuals for their support of veterans and military personnel, to include Sen. Jim Webb (D-Va.), hall of fame entertainers Ann-Margret and Mickey Rooney, and retired Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Also addressing the delegates will be the presumptive presidential candidates, Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Barack Obama (D-Ill.), Veterans Affairs Secretary James Peake, acting Air Force Secretary Michael Donley, and Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey, among many others.

The 2.2 million-member Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. and its Auxiliaries is a nonprofit veterans' service organization founded in 1899 and chartered by Congress in 1936.

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The VFW is the nation's oldest major veterans' organization, and the largest organization of combat veterans in the country. The VFW is dedicated to "Honoring the dead by helping the living."

NOTE TO MEDIA: 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 available. To register, contact Peggy Allee beginning tomorrow at (407) 685-4058 or 4059, in room 203A of the Orange County Convention Center, or via e-mail at pallee@vfw.org. Additional VFW onsite contacts are VFW National Headquarters communications director Jerry Newberry at jnewberry@vfw.org or cell 816-835-1851, and VFW Washington Office public affairs director Joe Davis at jdavis@vfw.org or cell 202-374-9998.