Vice President to Speak Monday at VFW Convention

Aug 20, 2010

WASHINGTON — Vice President Joe Biden has accepted an invitation to speak Monday at the 111th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. The annual convention of America's oldest major veterans' organization starts Saturday in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis.

"It is a time-honored tradition for the president or vice president to address the national convention of America's largest organization of combat veterans," said VFW National Commander Thomas J. Tradewell Sr., a combat-wounded Vietnam veteran from Sussex, Wis.

"We are grateful to Vice President Biden for taking the time to speak to us on issues that are vitally important to our nation's veterans, her military and their families."

Almost 13,000 VFW and Ladies Auxiliary delegates will represent the 2.1 million-member organization at the weeklong convention. Their mission will be to approve new national priorities to guide the organization's advocacy efforts in Congress on behalf of the nation's 23 million veterans, 2.2 million servicemembers and their families. Advocacy issues include military and veterans' healthcare, benefits, and Quality of Life programs, as well as military readiness, national defense and homeland security.

Convention delegates will elect a new VFW national commander as well as recognize prominent individuals for their support of veterans and military personnel, to include presenting the VFW Citizenship Award to Judge Robert Russell, who started the nation's first veterans' court in Buffalo, N.Y.; the VFW Hall of Fame Award to former soldier turned country music star Keni Thomas; the VFW Armed Forces Award to Army Gen. Ann Dunwoody; and the VFW Americanism Award to the five top military service senior enlisted advisors.

The VFW's top award, the Dwight D. Eisenhower Award, will be presented in absentia to Army Gen. David Petraeus, who had accepted prior to being asked to assume command of all U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan.

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Also addressing the delegates will be Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels, Rep. Andre Carson (D-Ind.), and Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki.

The VFW National Convention is a closed event, but the public is invited to watch live streaming video of convention activities starting everyday at 8 a.m., EDT, Aug. 23-26. To view, go to www.vfw.org.