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ADDRESS OF WELCOME TO STATE COMMANDER
JACK BOORMAN, V.F.W. MISSOULA
10/20/39

It is with extreme pleasure that Ole Beck Post 202 greets its State Commander on his first official visit to Missoula. We members of the VFW have the privilege of belonging to an organization which is of special significance in these troublous times. We are fortunate in having as our leader Jack Boorman, a comrade we all know, admire and respect. Under his guidance we are going forward and with him to lead us we will accomplish much. The ideals of the VFW - Americanism, comradeship, and service will be strengthened and given added force because of the example and unselfish devotion to duty of our commander. I can assure him that we are behind him and his program 100% and that he can be assured of our support at all times.

America is facing a serious situation in this strife-torn world of today and we veterans because of our past experiences and continued services form a stabilizing factor which is of tremendous significance. We can, and will, be a unit in keeping this country strong and in maintaining its peace. We must have courage to carry on our fight and we must also furnish the leadership to carry on our democratic principles - those principles which we prize so highly and love so dearly.

The future of America is our future. We must safeguard the ideas for which our ancestors suffered and we must see to it that the ideals for which we fought are constantly kept before us. The fountainhead of American security is in good hands and we will never forget the obligations we owe to our country in return for the privileges bestowed.

Again I wish to state that the veterans have the utmost confidence in our present leader, Comrade Boorman, and to assure him that he need only ask of us and we will do our best. Together we will carry on the vital politics which the VFW have laid down as essential to the welfare of our country and together we will operate as a real force for the perpetuation of Liberty, equality, justice, and peace.

Address given
to Boorman
10/21/39

It is a real pleasure to meet with you this evening and to be, once again, among so many of my old friends. As members of the V. F. W. and the Auxiliary, ~~organizations~~ we belong to organizations which represents the highest ideals of the citizenry of our country.

We are referred to as ex-service men and women but what we really should be called are service men and women. Our service to our country is not limited to critical periods but is carried over into peace time activities as well. During all the years that our organization has existed we have been carrying on the policies which we consider essential to the welfare of our nation. Both the Veterans and the Auxiliary have cooperated in this respect and thru their united actions much has been accomplished. Together we have endeavoured to educate the youth of the land, we have tried to help our comrades on all possible occasions, we have joined in civic, state and national affairs, and we have always held steadfast to the ideals of democracy.

But, Democracy--as we know it, understand it, and love it--is today facing a challenge as to its continuance. This challenge must be met, met by all who believe fundamentally in the processes and love the freedom and the responsibilities of democracy. In the world today it has become dangerous to take democracy for granted. It is time for all of us, no matter what our field of endeavor may be, to evaluate our relationships to democratic operations and to clarify our thinking as to our responsibilities. Unless our daily lives proceed on a democratic basis we shall not long have democracy in government.

America is facing a serious situation in this strife-torn world of today and we because of our past experiences and continued services form a stabilizing factor which is of tremendous significance. We can, and will be, a unit in keeping this country strong and in maintaining its peace. We must have courage to carry on our fight and we must also furnish the leadership to carry on our democratic principles--those principles which we prize so highly and love so dearly.

The future of America is our future because we are America. We must never forget the obligations we owe to our country in return for the privileges our country has bestowed on us. We all realize that there is only one democracy left in the world and that one is our country. We want to keep that which our forefathers and we fought to obtain. We want to continue to have a type of government which allows us our freedom and liberty. We want to remain a friendly people. In other words, we want the continuation of Democracy, unlimited. Together we will carry on our patriotic and democratic activities and together we will operate as a vital, driving, living force for the perpetuation of the ideals of Americanism and peace.

Ronan - Oct. 1939

It is a real pleasure to participate in the dedication of this VFW clubhouse because it represents what the veterans of this county can do, once they set their shoulders to the wheel. As a group you typify all that is finest in American life and as individuals you have practiced Americanism as it should be practiced.

We are referred to as ex-service men but what we really should be called are service men. Just because we have served our country during critical periods and have received honorable discharges does not mean that our days of service are over. Far from it. During all the years since the World War ended we have been carrying on for the best interests of our country. We have endeavored to educate the youth of the land, we have tried to help our comrades on all occasions, we have joined in civic, state, and national affairs, and we have steadfastly held to the ideals of democracy.

But democracy - as we know it, live it, and understand it - is today facing a challenge as to its very existence. This challenge must be met, met by all who believe in its fundamental processes and who love the liberties and responsibilities of a democracy. It is dangerous in this world of today to take democracy for granted. It is up to us, all of us, to take cognizance of the dangers affecting our system and to clarify our thinking as to our responsibilities. Only as long as we have democracy in our daily lives will we continue to have democracy in government.

At the present time the world is engaged in another war and the people of all countries are apprehensive. Even we, in America, are affected by this struggle despite the fact that

we are not active participants. We veterans, we Americans, stand for peace because we know fully what the real horrors of war are. Those of us who participated in the last struggle realize that we are citizens in the only real democracy left in the world. Ours is the last outpost of representative government.

We are sincerely anxious for peace, all of us whether or not we be veterans, and our only desire is to promote the best interests of our country. Across the ocean decisions of life and death are being made by small groups of men but here we still have a real free forum - the only one still in existence - representing the people. May God grant to our Congress and to our President the privilege of guiding our nation safely through any storms which may be encountered in our national life.

War is hell because it tears down much that we have fought to achieve over a period of centuries. Standards of morality are lowered and religion is relegated to a position of secondary importance. All this, and much more, can be traced to the ravages of war and that is why we, the VFW, stand for peace. We are proud of the record of the VFW in this respect because we have been, still are, and will continue to be, consistent in our efforts for peace. These dangerous days demand cooperation between all of us and our energies will be used, without stint, to keep this country out of war. We can achieve our aim because we are one people, with one mind, and guided by one purpose - the welfare of our nation.

How different this spirit of democracy which characterizes us is from the spirit of hatred and distrust so prevalent throughout the world today. When I think of our Constitution and our Bill of Rights I thank God that He has seen fit to establish a country such as ours where one is neither superior nor ~~xxx~~ inferior, but just an American.

In other countries are people who live, yes, but under what circumstances. They are regimented and told what to do and what not to do. Freedom, equality, and justice are only words to them. They aren't smiling, or friendly but rather they are grim and fearful. The law under which they live is the law of the dictator not the law of the people. Free fatherings - such as this one - are practically unknown and massed assemblages - unless on order - are prohibited. Contrast that with this and you will realize - as I know you have - that there can be no compromise between the two. We are indeed fortunate to live under a flag and in a country such as ours where we can practice what we preach; where we can disagree but still remain friends; where we can laugh at anything and not be punished for it; and where we can live and enjoy life knowing full well that tomorrow the sun will shine and that all is well with America. American the country, Americanism the ideal, and American the people represents an actuality worth living for, fighting for, and if need by, dying for.

That's the really fine thing about the VFW - it is just American. There are no distinctions among our members because we practice equality as we preach it. There is no lack of harmony

because we believe in cooperation. This is necessary for any organization if it is to survive and grow. It was harmony, cooperation, and teamwork which brought into being this fine clubhouse which is symbolic of the united efforts put forth by the entire membership of the Bitter Root Post. It was a job you felt you had to perform. You were proud of your organization, you wanted to show your pride, and here is the result. May it continue to stand for many years as a mark of your comradeship and unselfish devotion to your post.

Personally, I consider it a great privilege to be a member of this organization. We have real comradeship and real responsibilities. As individuals, we belong to a group responsible in part, for the continued existence of our great country. Our organization is getting smaller as our comrades answer the final roll-call but the ideals which we fought for will continue to survive when there is no more VFW and our handiwork, the democratic United States of America, will be the never-to-be forgotten monument which we have helped to create.