From: March, Joseph H. <jmarch@legion.org>
To: Public Relations Division <PR@legion.org>
Date: 2/22/2013 2:01:59 PM
Subject: News Release: The American Legion goes to Washington - Members of the country's largest wartime veterans organization head to Capitol Hill on the eve of sequestration

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The American Legion goes to Washington

Members of the country's largest wartime veterans organization head to Capitol Hill on the eve of sequestration

WASHINGTON (Feb. 22, 2013) -- American Legion delegations from across the country will visit the nation's capital next week to meet with members of Congress during the Legion's 53rd annual Washington Conference. The fiscal cliff facing America -- sequestration -- is bound to be part of most of their conversations on Capitol Hill.

The Legion is especially concerned that the automatic federal budget cuts, due to take effect March 1, will have a serious impact on the country's defense capabilities. At its October meeting last year, the Legion's National Executive Committee passed Resolution No. 55: "Protecting the Defense Budget."

Noting that $487 billion defense dollars will already be cut over the next decade, the resolution warns that a pending sequestration cut of another $500 billion will "pose a grave threat to military readiness and the security of the United States."

Featured speakers at the conference's "Commander's Call" event on Feb. 26 include Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., chair of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs; Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., chair of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs (HCVA); Rep. Tim Walz, D-Minn., HCVA member and retired Army veteran; Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki; Assistant Secretary of Labor Keith Kelly; Todd Veazie, White House executive director of Joining Forces.

This year's American Legion Distinguished Public Service Award will be presented to Senator Jim Webb: Vietnam War veteran, author, former Secretary of the Navy under President Reagan, and former senator from Virginia. For his Vietnam service, Webb received the Navy Cross, the Silver Star, two Bronze Stars and two Purple Hearts.

That evening, Legionnaires are invited to a preview screening at 7:30 p.m. of the feature film, "Emperor", set for national release on March 8. The film tells the story of how Gen. MacArthur and his aide, Brig. Gen. Bonner Fellers, grappled with the daunting task of determining the fate of Emperor Hirohito and rebuilding postwar Japan.

A panel discussion will follow the screening, moderated by American Legion Past National Commander William Detweiler, who is a consultant for the National World War II Museum in New Orleans.

Panelists include Legionnaire Bill Kristofferson, World War II veteran who fought in the Pacific under MacArthur's command; two of the film's producers, Gary Foster and Eugene Nomura, and Georgetown Professor Michael Green, who served as the film's historical consultant.

This year's National Commander's Public Relations Award will be given to veteran journalist Robert "Bob" Woodruff during a formal luncheon on Wednesday, Feb. 27. As an ABC News correspondent and broadcast anchorman, Woodruff was seriously injured by an IED explosion

on Jan. 29, 2006, near Taji, Iraq.

-30-

Contacts: Marty Callaghan (202) 263-5758/ (202) 515-8644; Joe March (317) 630-1253/ (317) 748-1926.