MADAM CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE:

My name is Thomas G. Dehne, I am an Assistant National Adjutant and Director of Administration for the more than one million members of the Disabled American Veterans.

Initially, Madam Chair, the DAV wishes to express our deep appreciation for the invitation to appear here today to discuss our views on legislation which proposes to erect a memorial to honor this nation's Korean War veterans.

As you are aware, Madam Chair, it has been more than 30 years since the signing of a truce at Panmunjom, Korea, which officially ended the fighting between the communists and the United Nation forces in Korea.

Although the fighting in Korea has been called a "police action" or "conflict," I can assure you that the more than 37 months of combat endured by American military forces in Korea was, indeed, a war.
It was a war in which nearly seven million Americans took up arms in a far away country to fight against communist aggression. It was a war in which American casualties totalled more than 54,000 dead, over 103,000 wounded, and 8,195 listed as missing-in-action.

Yet, Madam Chair, the sacrifices made by these men and women have not received the recognition they truly deserve.

Over the years, the United States has erected many monuments and memorials to honor those who have served our nation in time of need. Yet, the only recognition afforded our Korean War veterans is at the National Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii, which memorializes the sacrifices of American armed forces in the Pacific during World War II, Korea, and the missing-in-action of Vietnam.

While this memorial certainly does honor the sacrifices of those who served in the Korean War, we feel that by erecting a memorial in our nation's Capitol, Korean War veterans will finally take their place alongside veterans of other wars and receive the just recognition they deserve.

Given the recent recognition surrounding the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and when considering that the Korean War followed close on the heels of World War II, it is
understandable that Korean War veterans are now being referred to as the only remaining "forgotten warriors" and not without justification.

How many Americans remember names like "Pork Chop Hill," "Old Baldy," "Finger Ridge," "Triangle Hill," or the month long battle for "Heartbreak Ridge?"

How many remember the two agonizing years of truce talks during which American casualties were high and our fighting forces had to endure extreme weather conditions?

How many remember the many heroic acts of our fighting forces—especially those 131 men who received our nation’s highest award for heroism, the Congressional Medal of Honor?

Madam Chair, I certainly do remember the Korean War, as I was one of the participants in that war. While serving with the First Marine Division in August, 1952, somewhere on the Western Front, I received wounds that necessitated my evacuation to a hospital in the United States and subsequent honorable discharge from active military service.

I am not bitter, nor do I feel that my service was for naught. However, I do feel it is high time that our nation finally and officially recognizes the sacrifices made by those of us who took up arms in an effort to contain communist aggression in Korea and, indeed, the world.
Yes, Madam Chair, it is time to erect a memorial in the capitol of this great country to honor the service rendered by Korean War veterans.

In response to the strong desire of our membership to honor those veterans who served during the Korean War, the delegates to our most recent annual National Convention approved a resolution supporting the construction of a suitable memorial in Washington, D.C., to honor all veterans who served during the Korean War.

Madam Chair, the DAV believes H.R. 2205 will accomplish this goal.

As introduced, on April 24, 1985, by Mr. Florio (for himself, Mr. Montgomery, and Mr. Hammerschmidt), H.R. 2205 would direct the Secretary of the Interior to erect and maintain a memorial on federal land in the District of Columbia, or its environs, to honor members of the armed forces of the United States who served in the Korean War—particularly those who were killed-in-action, listed as missing-in-action or held as prisoners-of-war.

H.R. 2205 also directs the National Fine Arts Commission and the National Capitol Planning Commission to approve the site selection, design and plans for construction of this memorial and authorizes to be appropriated such funds (beginning on or after October 1, 1985) as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this act.
We therefore recommend that H.R. 2205 be favorably considered by the members of this distinguished Task Force.

This concludes my statement, Madam Chair, and I again would like to thank you and the members of this Task Force for allowing us to present our views on this most important legislation. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.