



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE OF DELEGATES

RICHMOND

WILLIAM J. HOWELL
SPEAKER

TWENTY-EIGHTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
RULES (CHAIRMAN)

THE HONORABLE WILLIAM J. HOWELL
SPEAKER, VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES

“VIRGINIANS AT WAR” (VOLUME II) FILM SERIES
LAUNCH NEWS CONFERENCE

VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

MARCH 22, 2010

Good morning. Thank you John [O’Bannon, Chairman of the Virginia War Memorial Board] for those kind words.

On this special occasion, it is a privilege for me to be in such good company with today’s distinguished guests, especially the veterans and all of these students and young people.

The presence of so many remarkable veterans honors our Commonwealth, and your stories captured on film are not only interesting but insightful.

May our actions now and always be worthy of those whose impassioned courage and valor – in life and in death – still abides with us and forever inspires us.

My friends, the blessings and responsibilities of liberty are our birthright as Virginians and Americans. So it is that we gather for today’s announcement to demonstrated our support of the important work of the Virginia War Memorial.

Preserving the memory of Virginia’s fallen heroes and honoring their sacrifice and service is the primary mission of the Virginia War Memorial.

Look around. Without brave men and women like you, the Declaration of Independence would mean nothing.

Without these veterans, we probably wouldn’t have freedom of speech, religious freedom, freedom of assembly, the rule of law as well as free enterprise or opportunity and prosperity.

And, without courageous men and women in uniform, who knows if any of us would be able to enjoy Christmas, share Thanksgiving or celebrate Independence Day on the Fourth of July.

Fortunately, for well over 230 years, America’s fighting men and women in uniform have known what they had to do and have gone out and accomplished what had to be done.

Today, we are proudly announcing the distribution to schools across the Commonwealth of Volume II of the Virginia War Memorial's award-winning "*Virginians at War*" film series.

Virginia is the only state in the country that has decided that the best way to honor its military heroes is to pass on their individual and unique stories of bravery and sacrifice to future generations through educational programs.

The Virginia War Memorial has interviewed hundreds of Virginia veterans to highlight and preserve their experiences and memories of major, history-making and history-changing events.

We are honored and delighted to have here today many of the participants in this latest round of documentaries. Indeed, each of you answered your Nation's call to duty in a time of great crisis. You fought and defended the democracy, rights and freedoms that have long been guaranteed by our Constitution and cherished by our citizens. For your remarkable service, we are all eternally grateful.

For those not familiar with this outstanding project, here's how it works:

The War Memorial produces 15-20 minute long films using these Virginians as the narrators.

Their remarks are then interwoven with archival film and photographs, animated maps, graphics and music.

The result is an emotionally powerful, "insider's view" of major events over the past 70 years.

But that's not all.

Each of the seven films in Volume II also is accompanied with an educational lesson plan that correlates those segments to Virginia's nationally recognized Standards of Learning.

Engaging young people and educating them about the reality of the dedication and perseverance needed to protect and secure our cherished freedoms is a noble undertaking.

The War Memorial's creativity and leadership through this series is unsurpassed. In fact, "seeing freedom speak" first hand makes class work real and more direct which, in turn, enlivens and enriches the student learning experience.

In this very challenging time of economic uncertainties and budget shortfalls, I am also struck by the fact that the War Memorial produced these moving films at no cost to Virginia taxpayers.

That says a lot about the generosity of private donors and the high regard in which partners of the Virginia War Memorial hold this fine institution.

Better still, the Memorial is sending copies of Volume II – free of charge – to every middle and high school in Virginia. That includes public, private and parochial schools as well as home school organizations.

By being focused, innovative and truly resourceful, I'm confident that the War Memorial's goal to give our Commonwealth's classroom educators a valuable tool that helps teach history and instill patriotism is being achieved.

Of course, we all know that successes like the one we're celebrating today don't just happen. Quite the opposite. Real progress in any endeavor – requires vision, planning, dedicated participants, strong partnerships and a drive to accomplish something larger than ourselves.

Accordingly, I congratulate Chairman O'Bannon and the entire Board of Trustees on ably pursuing your educational mission. It's because of the great work you do that the General Assembly has supported the War Memorial in building your new Education Center that is appropriately named for two great Virginia Heroes – Paul and Phyllis Galanti. You can see the ongoing construction outside.

For their life-long commitment to “leading by example” and their “legacy of giving back” to the country they love, it is fitting that their names grace the Memorial's new Galanti Education Center.

We also certainly recognize and profoundly thank Rear Admiral John Marocchi for everything he has done to make today and the entire “*Virginians at War*” series possible. Admiral Marocchi served in the United States Navy for 37 years. For the past 13 years, he's been a Board of Trustee member where he has advanced the Memorial's mission in countless ways, including participating in one of the films in Volume II and by sponsoring four film segments personally in Volume II and for the future Volume III.

Admiral Marocchi, we are all so grateful for all of your many contributions and admirable service.

Finally, we would be woefully remiss not to highlight the fantastic work of Tom Kennedy (of Kennedy & Green Communications) and Hal McArthur (of McArthur Communications). Their passion for this project shines brightly on the screen through their interviewing, editing and producing of the “*Virginians at War*” film series.

So, I will conclude by congratulating Executive Director Jon Hatfield, all of the hard-working staff and selfless volunteers, and all of the many friends and supporters of the Virginia War Memorial on this wonderful occasion.

May God continue to bless us, our families, our Commonwealth and Nation with men and women of such great character like you here, like those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and like everyone featured in the “*Virginians at War*” film series.

After all, as it has been said many times before but bears repeating always because it is true: America will only remain the land of the free so long as we are the home of the brave.

Thank you.