

honored this belief and has labored to achieve these high principles. You have loved the United States of America—as a duty, yes, but much more than that—you have cherished it in grateful appreciation of the many blessings you have received in its bosom. You have supported its Constitution and obeyed its laws, not as subjects of a superior power but as men sustaining a government which they themselves have created and for which they themselves are responsible. You have respected the flag, not in an empty prostration before a meaningless emblem but because the Star Spangled Banner is a symbol of your deep feeling for liberty, equality, justice and humanity. You have proved, not by vain words but by courageous deeds performed in time of war, your willingness to defend your country against all enemies.

I salute the American Legion for its unyielding and undeviating dedication to patriotism and true Americanism. I applaud the American Legion for the earnest concern it has demonstrated for the happiness and well-being of the men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of our country. I am grateful to the American Legion for its relentless advocacy of military preparedness—for arousing the citizenry as to the military dangers facing our nation.

All Americans, of course, owe a debt of everlasting gratitude to patriots, like yourselves in this Legion post, who fought in the great wars of our country to preserve and safeguard the freedoms we cherish. We are obligated, too, to organizations like the American Legion for keeping the people in this country constantly on the alert as to the dangers which threaten us. Your experience as *soldiers, sailors and marines* taught you the gravity of these dangers and endowed you with sharp faculties for the protection of yourselves, and your families and your friends, against these dangers. You have contributed immeasurably to the safety of our country, and consequently to the peace of the world, by the success you have had in warning our people of the perils they face and in pointing out the path by which they may escape these perils.

The American Legion, and the other great veterans organizations with which it has worked hand-in-hand through the years, have in large measure succeeded, sometimes against great odds, in convincing a majority of the people of our nation that we cannot deal with Communism and the other forces of darkness and aggression, in peace or in war, unless we remain strong. The father of our country—George Washington, who lived near here and who loved this part of our State—said in his first message to the Congress of the United States: