

PATIENCE URGED FOR IRAQ PROGRESS REPORT
VFW Commander says 'A nation doesn't go to war to lose'

WASHINGTON (September 6, 2007) - The new national commander of America's oldest and largest organization of combat veterans is urging patience as the nation awaits the progress report next week by Army Gen. David Petraeus and U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker.

George Lisicki, who was elected last month to lead the 2.3 million-member Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. and its Auxiliaries, said the nation must carefully evaluate the report not so much for the accomplishments it will mention, but for the signs of progress and recommendations that the U.S. mission in Iraq can succeed with adequate time and resources.

"War is an ugly business that begins and ends in the political arena, but the bottom line is a nation doesn't go to war to lose," said Lisicki, a Vietnam combat veteran from Carteret, N.J.

"The critics and pundits say Iraqi politicians can't put their sectarian differences aside. I say a reliable security environment increases economic opportunities which forces politicians to work together," he explained. "That is exactly what is happening today in Iraq's largest province, Al Anbar, which a year ago was deemed a lost cause because of sectarian violence and foreign insurgents. Peace and stability breeds productivity and political reconciliation."

Lisicki said that America's veterans demand forward progress when the nation deploys its military into harm's way, and despite the mistakes that occurred in the overall prosecution of the war in Iraq, he said the new strategy is yielding positive results.

"Our troops trust their commanders, they believe in the plan, and they have faith in their ability to carry out their assigned missions," he said. "If the Iraq progress report asks for more time and patience, then we should give it - not because politicians at home are urging it, but because our troops and generals on the ground are asking for it."

"Our troops have hope and faith that they can win. Our job is to support them."