World War II involved the very existence of this nation. The major responsibility for the care and rehabilitation of disabled veterans and the responsibility for making available educational opportunities designed to provide economic security for all veterans rests largely with the Federal Government.

South Carolina has provided no direct monetary benefits for its 200,000 veterans of World War II, but Acts passed by the General Assembly provide ways and means whereby veterans are given every assistance in obtaining any and all kinds of benefits to which they are entitled. Chief among these benefits are educational advantages leading to economic security commensurate with that enjoyed by those citizens who remained at home during the recent conflict.

Included among laws enacted in South Carolina which are designed to benefit and assist veterans are those which implement public law 346—the "GI Bill of Rights." Other laws deal with such questions as exemptions, privileges, employment preference, and education.

There has been established a division of veterans education within the State Department of Education. Its function is to examine and approve institutions and business establishments for education and on-the-job training for veterans. This division has worked in close harmony with the Veterans Administration, which is charged with administering the Federal Government's program.

The General Assembly also provided for year-round operation of state colleges so that veterans may expedite completion of their studies and embark upon their careers.

On March 22, 1945, the General Assembly approved an act which provided for the enlargement and expansion of the Veterans service bureau and for the integration of the bureau with a system of service officers in each of the State's 46 counties. Prior to enactment of this law, the state service bureau was a separate agency, whose function was to handle veterans' problems. County service officers, prior to 1945, had been provided in some counties, but not until the state service bureau and the county offices were integrated, were service officers placed in every county of the State. Now, veterans in every section of South
Carolina have easy access to expert advice on all problems confronting them. These county service officers and representatives of the State Veterans Service Bureau work in close cooperation with field offices of the Veterans Administration, located in strategic population centers of the State.

The Veterans Service Bureau and county service officers operate on a budget of approximately $200,000 per year. Its representatives have been especially trained so that they may give accurate and factual advice to veterans, assistance in the filing of claims, including all phases of rehabilitation, and, above all, faithful service. No state has gone further in providing these services.

South Carolina will not soon forget its obligations to its veterans. From Revolutionary war days, when the United States gained their freedom, South Carolinians have been in the battle lines. Of the 200,000 sons and daughters of the State who served in World War II, some 40,000 were volunteers.

As a veteran of the late war, it shall always be my privilege to safeguard the rights of the veterans and to do my utmost to see that they receive every benefit a grateful people can provide.