

**National Report
Disabled American Veterans
1996**

**New Orleans Hilton Riverside,
New Orleans, Louisiana
July 27-August 1, 1996**

1996—NATIONAL REPORT, DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS—1996

105th Congress, 1st Session - - - - - House Document 105-8

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
75TH NATIONAL CONVENTION**

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE NATIONAL ADJUTANT
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

TRANSMITTING

THE REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ORGANIZATION'S 75th
NATIONAL CONVENTION, INCLUDING THEIR ANNUAL AUDIT RE-
PORT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES AS OF DECEMBER 31,
1995—RECEIVED IN THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES NO-
VEMBER 14, 1996, PURSUANT TO 36 U.S.C. 90i AND 44 U.S.C. 1332



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**NATIONAL ENCAMPMENTS OF VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS;
PROCEEDINGS PRINTED ANNUALLY FOR CONGRESS**

The proceedings of the national encampments of the United Spanish War Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, The American Legion, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Veterans of World War I of the United States, Inc., the Disabled American Veterans, and the AMVETS (American Veterans of World War II), respectively, shall be printed annually with accompanying illustrations, as separate House documents of the session of the Congress to which they maybe submitted.

[Approved October 2, 1968.]

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS,
October 30, 1996.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: As business manager of the Disabled American Veterans, and as secretary of its National Convention, I hereby certify as to the authenticity of the reports and the proceedings of our National Convention, held in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 27–August 1, 1996, and submit them to you through the office of this organization located in Washington, DC, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 186 of the 72d Congress, as amended, to be printed as a House document in accordance with the authorization of section 1332 of title 44, United States Code.

The enclosed National Convention proceedings include an independent audit report of all receipts and expenditures as of December 31, 1995, as required by the provisions of section 3 of the Public Law 88–504, approved August 30, 1964.

Sincerely,

ARTHUR H. WILSON,
National Adjutant.

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Adopt Rules		Carried	
Amend		Carried	
Adopt Policy Statement		Carried	
Accept Adjutant's report		Carried	
Accept Membership report		Carried .....	.....
Accept Finance Committee report, etc		Carried .....	.....
Admit into record list of convention committees, etc.		Carried .....	.....
Adopt resolutions of Hospital and Voluntary Services Committee.		Carried .....	.....
Adopt report and resolutions from Employment Committee, etc.		Carried .....	.....
Adopt Rules as amended		Carried .....	.....
Adopt report of Committee on General Resolutions and Membership.		Carried .....	.....
Adopt Resolution 58		Lost .....	.....
Adopt Resolution 59		Lost .....	.....
Adopt Resolution 76		Lost .....	.....
Accept report of Vietnam Veterans Memorial		Carried .....	.....
Adopt report of Committee on Finance and Dues, etc.		Carried .....	.....
Accept Service Foundation report		Carried .....	.....
Adopt report of Committee on Legislation and Veterans' Rights.		Carried .....	.....
Adopt resolutions from Constitution and Bylaws Committee:			
Number 197		Carried .....	.....
Numbers 200 through 217		Carried .....	.....
Number 254		Carried .....	.....
Number 218		Carried .....	.....
Discharge committee with vote of thanks		Carried .....	.....
Adopt final credentials report		Carried .....	.....
Accept report of Committee on Nomination and Election of Officers, etc.		Carried .....	.....
Discharge Credentials Committee Adjourn		Carried .....	.....

NATIONAL OFFICERS 1996-97
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

National Commander

GREGORY C. REED, 6924 N. Fairfax Drive, #114, Arlington, VA 22213

Senior Vice Commander

HARRY R. McDONALD, Jr., 6161 North Highway 393, Crestview, FL 32539

First Junior Vice Commander

WILLIAM D. WIGGINS, 302 Starmont Drive, Danville, VA 24540

Second Junior Vice Commander

ANDREW A. KISTLER, 802 Grant Street, Franklin, PA 16323

Third Junior Vice Commander

MICHAEL E. DOBMEIER, P.O. Box 6811, Grand Forks, ND 58206-6188

Fourth Junior Vice Commander

RICHARD CHRISTOPHER, 6 Catalpa Street, Saugus, MA 01906-2931

National Judge Advocate

EDWARD G. GALIAN, 200 Atlantic Avenue, #1, LYNBROOK, NY 11563

National Chaplain

REV. CARL E. BERGSTROM, 17 Brookmoor Road, Dover, NH 03820-5303

Past National Commander

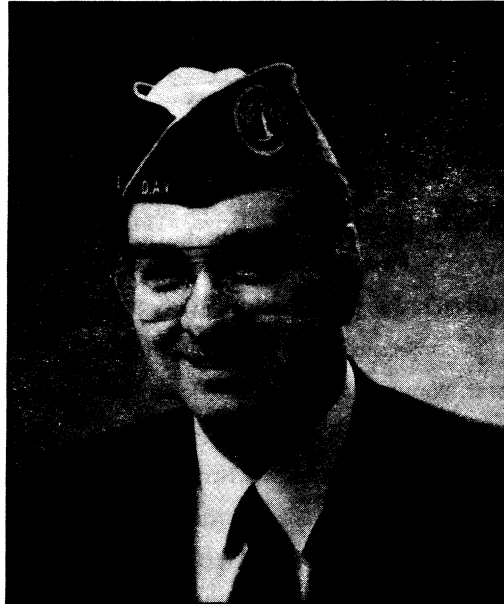
THOMAS A. McMASTERS III, 11965 Steven Drive, Sterling Hts., MI 48312

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

First district: Everett J. Nygard, Jr., 314 Otter River Road, Templeton, MA 01468
Second district: Sal R. Tornatore, 170 W. 22nd St., Huntington Station, NY 11746
Third district: David A. Schiapo, 65 Beacon Street, Cranston, RI 02910
Fourth district: Grover Don Penn, 2116 Elder Drive, Wilmington, DE 19808
Fifth district: Donald C. Graffius, 1606 Montier Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15221
Sixth district: Josue N. Saez, Guadalupe 26, El Almo, Guaynabo, PR 00969
Seventh district: Tommy R. Simms, 333 Hollywood Blvd. NW, Ft. Walton Bch., FL 32548
Eighth district: Charles W. Mills, 2241 Edinburgh Drive, Montgomery, AL 36116
Ninth district: Ronald L. Voegeli, 702 Battery Creek Road, Beaufort, SC 29902
Tenth district: Roger L. Jansen, 4925 Butternut Drive, Holland, MI 49424
Eleventh district: Nicholas J. Border, 7306 Kingsman-Nickerson Road, Kinsman, OH 44428
Twelfth district: Richard R. Harris, 40154 Lakeview Avenue, Antioch, IL 60002
Thirteenth district: Glen E. Vogel, Sr., P.O. Box 353, Wolcottville, IN 46795
Fourteenth district: Harry VandeMore, 48402 292nd Street, Hudson, SD 57034
Fifteenth district: Francis E. McLaskey, 3130 33rd Avenue SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404
Sixteenth district: Robert D. Salisbury, 2562 N. Courtland St., Orange, CA 92867
Seventeenth district: Stanley L. Miller, 1102 E. Wood, Carlsbad, NM 88220
Eighteenth district: Michael J. Smaydy, 321 S. Lynx Creek Road, Prescott, AZ 86303
Nineteenth district: Fred G. Ruppert, 2352 Broadmoor Avenue, Fairbanks, AK 99709
Twentieth district: William A. Bone, 205 Coventry Drive, Hewitt, TX 76643
Twenty-first district: Adrian H. Hunt, 123 Apache Drive, Searcy, AR 72143



Gregory C. Reed
National Commander
1996 - 1997
Disabled American Veterans



Thomas A. McMasters III
National Commander
1995 - 1996
Disabled American Veterans

NATIONAL OFFICERS 1995-96
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

National Commander

THOMAS A. McMASTERS III, 11965 Steven Drive, Sterling Hts., MI 48312

Senior Vice Commander

GREGORY C. REED, 6924 N. Fairfax Drive, #114, Arlington, VA 22213

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Fourth Junior Vice Commander

MICHAEL E. DOBMEIER, P.O. Box 6811, Grand Forks, ND 58206-6188

National Judge Advocate

EDWARD G. GALIAN, 200 Atlantic Avenue, #1, Lynbrook, NY 11563

National Chaplain

REV. OSCAR I. WILKIE, 518 Houston, Muskogee, OK 74403

Past National Commander

DONALD A. SIOSS, 11 Miller Woods Drive, Miller Place, NY 11764

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

First district: Everett J. Nygard, Jr., 314 Otter River Road,
Templeton, MA 01468
Second district: George R. LePorte, 72 Oswego Street,
Baldwinsville, NY 13027
Third district: David A. Schiapo, 65 Beacon Street, Cranston, RI
02910
Fourth district: Albert R. Fanslau, 26 E. Reading Avenue, Pleasantville, NJ 07232
Fifth district: Donald C. Graffius, 1606 Montier Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15221
Sixth district: Carl J. Carter, 5025 Illinois Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20011
Seventh district: Tommy R. Simms, 333 Hollywood Blvd. NW, Ft. Walton Bch., FL 32548
Eighth district: John A. Bell, 547 Spryfield Road, Jackson, MS 39212
Ninth district: Ronald L. Voegeli, 702 Battery Creek Road, Beaufort, SC 29902
Tenth district: Lowell G. McKeehan, 20360 Beatrice Street, Livonia, MI 48152
Eleventh district: Nicholas J. Border, 7306 Kingsman-Nickerson Road, Kinsman, OH 44428
Twelfth district: Dorothy R. Schilling 6205 Highway V, Caledonia, WI 53108
Thirteenth district: Glen E. Vogel, Sr., P.O. Box 353, Wolcottville, IN 46795
Fourteenth district: Victor C. Hass, P.O. Box 204, Bowbells, ND 48721
Fifteenth district: Francis E. McLaskey, 3130 33rd Avenue SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404
Sixteenth district: Charles H. Demele, 38 San Felipe Court, Salinas, CA 93901
Seventeenth district: Stanley L. Miller, 1102 E. Wood, Carlsbad, NM 88220
Eighteenth district: Edwin K. Wise, 85-128 E. Ala Walua Street, Waianae, HI 96792
Nineteenth district: Fred G. Ruppert, 2352 Broadmoor Avenue, Fairbanks, AK 99709
Twentieth district: Earl D. Walker, P.O. Box 1492, Kingsland, TX 78639
Twenty-first district: Adrian H. Hunt, 123 Apache Drive, Searcy, AR 72143

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDERS

- 1921–22: Robert S. Marx, Cincinnati, Ohio (deceased 1960)
- 1922–23: C. Hamilton Cook, Buffalo, New York (deceased 1935)
- 1923–24: James A. McFarland, Dalton, Georgia (deceased 1942)
- 1924–25: Frank J. Irwin, New York, New York (deceased 1942)
- 1925–26: John W. Mahan, Bozeman, Montana (deceased 1947)
- 1926–27: John V. Clinnin, Chicago, Illinois (deceased 1955)
- 1927–28: William E. Tate, Atlanta, Georgia (deceased 1949)
- 1928–29: Millard W. Rice, Minneapolis, Minnesota (deceased 1980)
- 1929–30: William J. Murphy, Santa Ana, California (deceased 1931)
- 1930–31: H.H. Weimer, Chicago, Illinois (deceased 1955)
- 1931–32: E. Claude Babcock, Washington, D.C. (deceased 1958)
- 1932–33: William Conley, Los Angeles, California (deceased 1941)
- 1933–34: Joe W. McQueen, Kansas City, Missouri (deceased 1969)
- 1934–35: Volney P. Mooney, Jr., Los Angeles, California (deceased 1945)
- 1935–36: Marvin A. Harlan, El Paso, Texas (deceased 1970)
- 1936–37: M. Froome Barbour, Cincinnati, Ohio (deceased 1985)
- 1937–38: Maple T. Harl, Denver, Colorado (deceased 1957)
- 1938–39: Owen Galvin, Minneapolis, Minnesota (deceased 1956)
- 1939–40: Lewis J. Murphy, South Bend, Indiana (deceased 1966)
- 1940–41: Vincent E. Schoeck, Detroit, Michigan (deceased 1966)
- August 16, 1941–August 15, 1943: Lawrence R. Melton, Dallas, Texas (deceased 1978)
- August 15, 1943–September 20, 1943: William J. Dodd, Jersey City, New Jersey (deceased 1957)
- 1943–44: James L. Monnahan, Minneapolis, Minnesota (deceased 1980)
- 1944–45: Milton D. Cohn, Buffalo, New York (deceased 1968)
- 1945–46: Dow V. Walker, Newport, Oregon (deceased 1957)
- 1946–47: Lloyd F. Oleson, Ventura, California (deceased 1982)
- 1947–48: John L. Golob, Hibbing, Minnesota (deceased 1976)
- 1948–49: Jonathon M. Wainwright, San Antonio, Texas (deceased 1953)
- 1949–50: David M. Brown, Akron, Ohio (deceased 1982)
- 1950–51: Boniface R. Maile, Grosse Pointe, Michigan
- 1951–52: Ewing W. Mays, Little Rock, Arkansas (deceased 1994)
- 1952–53: Floyd L. Ming, Bakersfield, California (deceased 1975)
- 1953–54: Howard W. Watts, Indianapolis, Indiana (deceased 1977)
- 1954–55: Alfred L. English, Shelbyville, Tennessee (deceased 1987)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDERS—Continued

- 1955–56: Melvin J. Maas, Chevy Chase, Maryland (deceased 1964)
- 1956–57: Joseph F. Burke, Bayonne, New Jersey (deceased 1970)
- 1957–58: Paul E. Frederick, Jr., Cincinnati, Ohio
- 1958–59: David B. Williams, Boston, Massachusetts (deceased 1994)
- 1959–60: Bill H. Fribley, Crestline, Kansas (deceased 1994)
- 1960–61: William O. Cooper, Dallas, Texas (deceased 1990)
- 1961–62: Francis R. Buono, Whitestone, New York, (deceased 1977)
- 1962–63: Peter L. Dye, Denver, Colorado
- 1963–64: Douglas H. McGarrity, Allen Park, Michigan (deceased 1986)
- 1964–65: William G. Dwyer, San Diego, California (deceased 1982)
- 1965–66: Claude L. Callegary, Baltimore, Maryland
- 1966–67: John W. Unger, Sr., Danville, Illinois (deceased 1970)
- 1967–68: Francis J. Beaton, Fargo, North Dakota (deceased 1969)
- 1968–69: Wayne L. Sheribon, Seattle, Washington
- 1969–70: Raymond P. Neal, Daly City, California
- 1970–71: Cecil W. Stevenson, Jonesboro, Arkansas
- 1971–72: Edward T. Conroy, Bowie, Maryland (deceased 1982)
- 1972–73: Jack O. Hicks, Larue, Ohio
- 1973–74: John T. Soave, Detroit, Michigan (deceased 1984)
- 1974–75: Walter T. Greaney, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts (deceased 1994)
- 1975–76: Lyle C. Pearson, North Mankato, Minnesota
- 1976–77: Frank J. Randazzo, East Meadow, New York
- 1977–78: Oliver E. Meadows, Godley, Texas
- 1978–79: Billy O. Hightower, Grand Junction, Colorado
- 1979–80: Paul L. Thompson, Baltimore, Maryland (deceased 1993)
- 1980–81: Stan Pealer, Holts Summit, Missouri
- 1981–82: Sherman E. Roodzant, Santa Ana, California
- 1982–83: Edward G. Galian, New York, New York
- 1983–84: Dennis A. Joyner, Apollo, Pennsylvania
- 1984–85: Chad Colley, Barling, Arkansas
- 1985–86: Albert H. Linden, Jr., Camp Springs, Maryland
- 1986–87: Kenneth G. Musslemann, Huntington Beach, California
- 1987–88: Gene A. Murphy, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
- 1988–89: Billy E. Kirby, Clifton, Texas
- 1989–90: Vernon V. Cardosi, Saugus, Massachusetts
- 1990–91: Joseph E. Andry, Westerville, Ohio
- 1991–92: Cleveland Jordan, Washington, D.C.
- 1992–93: Joseph C. Zengerle, Washington, D.C.
- 1993–94: Richard E. Marbes, Green Bay, Wisconsin
- 1994–95: Donald A. Sioss, Miller Place, New York
- 1995–96: Thomas A. McMasters III, Sterling Heights, Michigan

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 75TH NATIONAL CON-
VENTION OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VET-
ERANS HELD AT NEW ORLEANS, LA**

July 27–August 1, 1996

JOINT OPENING SESSION

July 28, 1996

The Joint Opening Session of the Disabled American Veterans and Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Grand Ballroom of the New Orleans Hilton Riverside, New Orleans, Louisiana, Sunday afternoon, July 28, 1996, and was called to order at 1 p.m. by Commander Thomas A. McMaster, III.

Commander THOMAS A. MCMASTER III. I now call to order the 75th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans.

Arthur H. Wilson, national adjutant, will read the call to convention.

Adjutant ARTHUR H. WILSON. The Constitution and Bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans state that the supreme legislative powers of this organization shall be vested in an annual national convention composed of national officers and representatives of state departments and chapters.

In accordance with these directives, I, Arthur H. Wilson, national adjutant, declare the 75th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans to be convened at New Orleans, Louisiana 1 p.m., July 28th 1996.

Consideration and disposition of business brought before this convention shall be conducted in accordance with the National Constitution and Bylaws now in force and such rules as this convention will adopt.

Commander MCMASTERS. Present Colors.

[Presentation of Colors.]

Commander MCMASTERS. Ladies and gentlemen, our National Anthem.

[Singing of National Anthem.]

Commander MCMASTERS. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in giving the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our country.

[Pledge of Allegiance. Musical tribute to flag by Bob and Becky Myers. Video presentation.]

Commander MCMASTERS. Color Guard dismissed.

[Dismissal of Color Guard.]

Commander MCMASTERS. I call on Reverend Oscar Wilkie, our national chaplain, for the invocation.

Chaplain OSCAR WILKIE. Comrades, will you join me in a moment of silence as we begin this national convention, in memory of all of those who perished on the TWA flight, the tragic death that

occurred in Atlanta in the bombing, and the senseless killings around the world.

Join me in a moment of remembrance for those who could not be here today, though they wish they could. They're somewhere, in the hospitals, at home, recuperating from injuries perhaps received in defense of this great country.

Join me, if you will, in remembrance of all those widows, the widowers and the children of those who remain to make life after the loved one has gone on the receive their just reward.

Join me for a moment in remembering all of those whose names are inscribed indelibly upon each one of our hearts, even though they may remain unspoken. May we have just a word of silence.

[Moment of silence.]

Chaplain WILKIE. It is indeed good, Father, that we can come and enjoy a moment of silence. Our lives are so lived with noise, and it seems that the onrush of sound sometimes obliterates. Your voice as it would speak to us in such times as these. But we know that voice is there, and it shrieks against the winds that may blow against us, and we hear that word of encouragement.

How we thank You today for this great nation that You have given to us, this nation that was carved out of a wilderness by so many illustrious people across our history and by so many whose aims never made the history book, and yet whose labor and whose toil is still remembered; for the faith that enabled those pioneers to go ahead and to push westward and upward, even remembering the great dream called America and what America stands for.

We do thank You for all of those, Father, who we remembered this morning in the memorial service for their families and for the leaders of this great nation.

O Lord, we thank You for our President and for our Congress. Even though we may disagree sometime, yet we know that they are performing the duties that You have called upon them to perform, and we pray that You would imbue them with the competency for Your Divine wisdom that the decisions that they make will be just in the eyes of God and in the eyes of man.

And now we thank You for this convention, for these people that have come to gather here to try to reason how that we can better serve those whom we are called to serve. We thank You for Your kindness and the good hand that has led us to this hour.

We lift up our commanders, Commander Tom and Commander Barbara, as they lead us in these deliberations. Also be with them, Father, in such a fine and magnificent way that they'll be able to lead with candor, and that they'll be able to help us to foresee all of those things which You would have done in these days.

Direct us, be near us, for we pray in Thy Great and Holy Name. Amen.

Commander McMASTERS. Will you please be seated?

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in thanking the Navy Band of New Orleans. [Applause.] I guess I paused too long. They're from the Naval Support Activities under the direction of Chief Musician Joe Oakes. [Applause.]

I would also like to thank the members of the Department of Massachusetts Color Guard for posting the Colors. [Applause.]

And special thanks to Bob and Becky Myers for their musical tribute. [Applause.]

A successful national convention hinges on the dedication of numerous men and women working cooperatively to make our annual gathering a special experience for all who attend. Commitment, experience, organization and limitless enthusiasm are the key elements to successfully planning and carrying out a tremendous national convention. Leading that work force is a monumental task.

This year we are blessed with a national convention chairman whose enthusiasm is contagious, whose organization is on target all the way, whose commitment is second to none, and whose experience as national convention chairman in 1991 was just outstanding. That's why we welcomed the opportunity to have him chair the 75th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans.

A life member of Central Louisiana Chapter Number 7 and a DAV leader in every way, he has served as secretary of the Hospital and Voluntary Services Committee, chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and the Transportation Committee, chairman of the Louisiana Veterans Memorial Committee, commander of the DAV Department of Louisiana, 8th District alternate National Executive Committee member, and DAV Department of Louisiana judge advocate for the past three years.

Please join me in welcoming a truly dedicated disabled American veteran, our national convention chairman, Paul Benoit. [Applause.]

Mr. PAUL BENOIT. Thank you. Mr. Commander, Madam Commander, national officers of the Disabled American Veterans and the Auxiliary: Welcome to New Orleans, Louisiana. [Applause.] On behalf of Commander Bob Quattlebaum and the membership of the Department of Louisiana, we sincerely wish that your stay here will be productive, and that you will enjoy some of New Orleans hospitality and tradition.

I would also like to add at this time a very sincere Cajun bien merci, than you, to President Bill Clinton for the giving of his time to come and speak to our organization and being here in my great state of Louisiana. [Applause.]

First, I mentioned that we should be here to be productive for our great organization. You would not think that we would need an organization such as ours to defend and protect the rights of our military personnel and their families who undergo tragedies like the one that occurred on the 25th of June, 1996 in Saudi Arabia. Nineteen U. S. servicemen, personnel, died, and 300 were injured. But we, the people here today, know how times go by and how some people forget.

I also know of many members that would love to be here today but are unable, due to their physical disability. As we have done in the past and will do in the future, those of us in New Orleans, Louisiana will do what we have to do to aid and assist worthy wartime disabled veterans, their widows, their orphans and their dependents. After all, we are the Disabled American Veterans organization doing what we do best. [Applause.]

The second reason you are here, hopefully, is to enjoy New Orleans hospitality and tradition. First, you must get the Cajun atti-

tude. After the work is done, laissez les bon temps roulez, let the good times roll. [Applause.]

Good times it can be, with good food, good music, riverboat ride, casino and French Quarter strolling.

Another thing we like here is Mardi Gras. We can't wait to have Mardi Gras here, to dress in costumes, throw beads and enjoy life. Mardi Gras means Fat Tuesday. It occurs the Tuesday prior to Ash Wednesday in February.

Now, some of you might not know that Art Wilson was once a national service officer in New Orleans, and he enjoys Mardi Gras. In fact, he enjoys Mardi Gras so much that he told us we couldn't wait till Tuesday, so we're going to have a Mardi Gras party Monday night. [Applause.]

So on Monday night, please be our guest for Mardi Gras in July. The band will provide all types of Louisiana music, Mardi Gras, blues, Cajun and swamp pop. The delegation will dress in costume, and we have plenty of beads for all.

As you walk around the hotel this week, you will notice some of our delegation wearing a green, orange or gold mask on their delegate's badge. The Louisiana delegation is using this method to identify themselves for all our out-of-state visitors. Should you have any questions or concerns, look around for these people, and maybe we can help.

However, don't ask us about how to win at the casino because we'll ask you the same thing. [Laughter.]

One last note. My wife made me wear this tie as a reminder to leave some wise words with all of you. For people who can't see the tie, it has a large bottle of Tabasco sauce and an alligator. The wise word is this: Have a hot time in Louisiana, but beware of the gators on Bourbon Street.

Thank you so much. [Applause.]

[Whereupon, Senior Vice-Commander Gregory C. Reed assumed the chair.]

Senior Vice-Commander GREGORY C. REED. Each year, it's the pleasure of the national senior vice-commander to introduce the national commander for the purpose of presenting his report to the convention. This year, it is truly my honor to introduce a man who embodies the finest traits of the DAV.

After his election to national commander, he embraced the inspiring mission of the DAV to build better lives for all of our nation's disabled veterans and their families. This was the task of his office, and he diligently dedicated himself to that mission.

Through his capable leadership, wise counsel and abundant compassion, the DAV has grown stronger as an organization. Yes, we are indeed fortunate to have a leader like National Commander Thomas A. McMasters III.

A Michigan native, Tom is a combat-disabled Vietnam veteran. He joined the U.S. Army in 1969 and served with the 14th Brigade's "Golden Dragons," and the 10th Cavalry's "Buffalo Soldiers." Tom was wounded while serving with the 14th Infantry Division in Vietnam. During a combat mission in the Central Highlands, while making his way through tall elephant grass, he stepped into a booby trap and was stabbed in the right leg by a punji stake.

Following his discharge in 1971, Tom attended Macomb County Community College, graduating with a degree in marketing in 1974. A successful entrepreneur, he operates a small business near Sterling Heights, Michigan.

Tom is a life member of DAV Chapter Number 129 in Utica, Michigan. Since he joined the DAV in 1972, he has held nearly every elected office in his chapter and department, including department commander in 1988. On the national level, he was elected 3rd junior vice-commander, 1st junior vice-commander and senior vice-commander before being elected our national commander in Las Vegas, Nevada, last year.

It has also been my pleasure to know the McMasters family. Tom's wife, Sandi, is a joy to know, as well as his children, Thomas IV, Krysten and Lauren.

I could spend many hours recounting all that is fine and honorable about Tom, but time is very short today. So let me leave you with this: Character and quality make the DAV a great organization. These same traits make Tom McMasters an exemplary DAV national commander. He is a warm and caring human being, and it has been my pleasure to serve with him.

I am honored today to ask everyone to please join me in welcoming a friend to all disabled veterans and their families, our friend, DAV National Commander Tom McMasters. [Rising applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you, Greg, for those very kind words of introduction, and thank you for the support that you and all of the other line officers have given me over the past year. My thanks as well to Auxiliary Commander Barb Hicks, the Auxiliary's line officers, National Adjutants Art Wilson and Maria Tedrow, their staffs at our headquarters facilities in Cincinnati, Washington and across the nation. My thanks to our chapter and department leaders, our HSCs, and most important of all, our DAV and Auxiliary members and our volunteers.

You've given me a great year, a really tremendous year, an incredible adventure, and I will never forget everything you've meant to me as we've traveled through this year together. Thank you. [Applause.]

Douglas MacArthur said, "In war, you win or lose, live or die, and the difference is just an eyelash." I'm grateful that I lived, I truly am. Maybe that's why I feel so strongly about those who died in my war, the war in Vietnam, or the wars that came before my time, the World Wars, Korea, or in all the military actions that came after my years in service, not only the Gulf War, but all the fire Americans have faced from Beirut to Bosnia.

Often I wonder, how do I keep faith with all those brave men and women who served and died? What can I do as one who was fortunate to come home to family and friends, even if wounded in body and soul? The answer is always the same, the great spiritual truth that lies at the heart of the DAV: We best honor by serving the living. This is what defines the DAV.

I happened to pick up some recruiting material from another veterans' organization and noticed that veterans' legislation was the last topic mentioned in the organization's recruiters' kit and the second-to-the-last thing mentioned in their membership recruiting brochure. I felt a little disconcerted, a little disappointed, but then

I realized that other organizations are free to define their mission any way it wishes. They aren't required to mirror the DAV. It's obvious the veterans' organization whose printed material I picked up sees itself as a vehicle through which veterans can serve their community in general, and that's okay.

However, this situation points out how much we need the DAV with its tightly focused mission, zeroing in on service to and representation of America's disabled veterans and their families. Our members and our volunteers are out there day after day helping their fellow veterans as their first priority. Our NSOs are representing those veterans as individuals before the VA as their first priority. Our Washington staff represents us before the government as their first priority.

In this, we are different from other veterans' groups, and in this we excel, providing the finest service and representation available to disabled veterans from any source anywhere in America. [Applause.]

We saw the results of DAV excellence during the past year. The thrill of victory will always run down my spine when I remember the way we absolutely crushed a congressional attempt to deny benefits to thousands of incompetent veterans. Not only that, we fended off a great deal of damage to veterans' programs in many other areas as well. And we may yet get a decent fiscal year 1997 budget for veterans out of Congress and across the desk of the President.

Dave Gorman, our executive director of the Washington Headquarters, will cover the highlights in his report tomorrow.

I just want to say at this juncture that I'm proud of the DAV. We've done some great work over the past 12 months, and it's been a joy to see. But we still have our problems, don't we? And if others don't have veterans' legislation right up there at the top of their agenda, we in the DAV must remain particularly vigilant.

An example of why I say this came up just a couple of weeks ago, as we prepared to come to this convention, an example I still find difficult to fathom. The rumor was out, and it had some pretty credible sources, that a group of United States senators were thinking of introducing legislation based on some ideas that surfaced in a computer game. The game was called "Reinventing America," and it was played on the Internet.

The folks who played the game came up with some stellar ideas, like legalizing drugs, killing Social Security, means testing Medicare. Some other ideas, much closer to home for us in the DAV, include abolishing the VA network of hospitals, privatizing the facilities where feasible and closing them where not feasible, means testing veterans' benefits and selling off the VA benefits program to the insurance industry.

A news release on the results of this childish exercise boldly proclaimed that the American people were telling Congress how to balance the budget. The American people my foot! [Applause.] This was the opinion of a few yuppies, sipping Scotch in their up-scale suburban dens, bored with "Seneca Hedgehog" and with nothing better to do than play with their computers. [Applause.]

We in the DAV know how the American people feel. In a recent survey cited in DAV Magazine, they stated their mind quite clear-

ly. Ninety-six percent say the government should continue providing disability and death benefits. Eighty-eight percent want the government to continue providing health care to veterans, and the only needed changes they mentioned were improvement in the care provided.

Three-fourths of them say veteran's program funding should be increased to keep pace with inflation, and they flatly reject cutting those programs in order to balance the budget. That's how the American people feel about our nation's obligations to its veterans. [Applause.]

And any legislator who wants to set public policy by computer games better pay attention. Our elected officials were sent to Washington by a nation of people who love their veterans, who want their veterans treated with dignity and respect. No congressman or senator was sent to Capitol Hill to walk on the men and women who fought America's wars and spit on the sacrifices they made. [Applause.]

That brings me back to something I've been saying all year. When we're dealing with our elected officials, our role is to educate, educate, educate. Now, let me repeat that. When we're dealing with our congressmen and our senators, our job is to educate, educate, educate. [Applause.]

Public policy by computer games. We do live in a mixed-up world, don't we? A world where it's okay for an art museum to force visitors to walk on the American flag, and it's okay to write off the nation's obligation to its veterans as if that were nothing but a bad debt.

As I think about the world we live in, it makes me realize once again the obligation we in the DAV have to the men and women who are serving in our armed forces today. Not too long ago, I read a newspaper article about a man and a woman who were both in the Reserves and both called up for active duty at the same time. They went. Of course they went. These were young people who believe in America, in duty and in honor, some think unusual traits in today's society.

But while they were gone, doing their country's bidding, their financial situation got very tight, making it tough to meet their mortgage payments. They had to ask Grandma to take care of the kids. The list of their sacrifices, what they paid out personally to do what they saw as their patriotic duty went on and on.

We owe these two people our allegiance. We owe this good and brave couple our loyalty. We owe them the benefit of our services when they come home from duty. And we owe them representation of their interests before their government. What I'm trying to say is this: There will be a demand for DAV service long into the future. We must build the foundation of that service today.

National Adjutant Art Wilson will talk to you tomorrow about one very important way in which the DAV is working to build a strong network of chapter and department services. I won't get into details right now. But I will take this opportunity to thank the Department of Colorado and the DAV National Service Foundation for their leadership and their foresight.

Another way in which we need to look toward the future is in the generational transition our organization faces today. Through-

out my term in office, I have stressed the need for my generation, those who served in the years of Vietnam, to get more deeply involved in their chapters. Over and over again, I've emphasized the need to activate those who served and became disabled during the Gulf War and other recent times of armed conflict.

That message was in my acceptance speech last summer when I was elected national commander. And I want to end my term with the same plea to our younger members. Can we get these younger veterans to take a greater role? I think we can. One Mid-western chapter elected a disabled Persian Gulf veteran as its commander during the past year. He got on the phone and started calling other members who were disabled in the post-Vietnam years, and there were two Gulf War veterans at the next meeting. Those two split the phone list, and they got a third post-Vietnam veteran to come to the following meeting.

Things like this are happening in some of your chapters where there are people willing to do the work. For example, my own chapter has had a Persian Gulf veteran as its chaplain. It goes to show, when a chapter is willing to show the interest in its members, its members are showing a greater interest in the DAV. Let's keep that going. [Applause.]

You can bet the national organization is moving heavily in that direction. What a pleasure it is to see all the younger veterans coming out of our NSO Training Academy in Denver. I congratulate Art Wilson and his staff for their foresight and their keen commitment to building the future leadership of the DAV.

In closing, I want to thank all of you for giving me this opportunity to serve you. This year has marked my life forever, and I hope you feel that my service to you has been worthy. You're the best people in the world. [Applause.] You're the best people in the world. You're the volunteers; you're the people who make the DAV work, and I'm so proud of you and the DAV. [Rising applause.]

Senior Vice-Commander REED. I need to entertain a motion to accept the commander's report.

[Motion made from the floor.]

Senior Vice-Commander REED. Do I have a second on the motion?

[Motion seconded from the floor.]

Senior Vice-Commander REED. You've heard it. All those in favor, say Aye. Motion carried.

[Whereupon, Commander McMasters resumed the chair.]

Commander McMASTERS. Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to introduce our next very special guest. Bill Clinton was sworn in as the 42nd President of the United States on January 20th, 1993.

Before being elected to the presidency, he served as governor of Arkansas for five terms, holding that position for longer than all but one of his predecessors. He also served as chairman of the Democratic Commission in 1990-91, the National Governors Association in 1987, the Education Commission of the States in 1986-87, and the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission in 1989-90.

A fifth-generation Arkansan, President Clinton was born in Hope, Arkansas on August 19th, 1946. He received a bachelor's de-

gree from Georgetown University in 1968 and a law degree from Yale University in 1973.

President Clinton began his political career in 1974 with an unsuccessful campaign for Congress. Two years later, he was elected Attorney General of Arkansas, a post he held for a single term before being elected Governor in 1978. He lost a reelection bid in 1980, but was returned to office in 1982 and served until his election to the presidency in 1992.

The President is married to Hillary Rodham Clinton, and they have a teenage daughter, Chelsea. [Applause] The President is an avid reader, enjoys golf and jogging, and plays the saxophone. [Applause.]

And now, ladies and gentlemen, it is indeed a great honor and a privilege to present the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the United States. [Rising applause.]

President WILLIAM J. CLINTON. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you for the exuberant welcome. I want to thank the ladies of the Auxiliary for leading the applause for Hillary. That was a nice thing to do. [Applause.] Thank you very much. That was a very nice thing.

I want to thank Commander McMasters for that introduction. It's been so long, I'd forgotten I'd done some of those things. [Laughter.] And he mentioned that I was a saxophone player. I think we have a Navy Band over there. I want to thank the Navy Band. Thank you for being here and for playing. [Applause.]

I'll always laugh any time someone says I'm a saxophone player now because a couple of weeks ago, Colonel John Bourgeois, the commander of the United States Marine Band, the President's own, retired as one of the longest serving conductors of the Marine Band.

And he did a television interview on national television in which he asked about my saxophone playing, and having sworn an oath to truth, he said that I was adequate. [Laughter.] And painfully I admit that that is about all he could say. And that's why I'm here today in this position rather than playing for you in your entertainment. [Laughter.]

I'm delighted to be here with Commander McMasters; with your senior vice-commander, Gregory Reed; Barbara Hicks, your Auxiliary national commander; Art Wilson, your national adjutant; the other officers of your distinguished organization, and with all of you.

I'm glad to be joined today by Secretary Jesse Brown. [Applause.] You know, the first time I realized that you would cheer like that—I love to kid Jesse, and I was kidding him on the way in, and I said, "You think they give that kind of reaction because they love you so much or because they're glad I took you off of their hands?" [Laughter.] I think it's the former, and I think you should.

I'm also delighted to be joined today by a number of state officials from the State of Louisiana, and by Congressman Bill Jefferson and Congressman Cleo Fields. I thank them for coming. [Applause.]

Ladies and gentlemen, as veterans who have given so much to defend our country, you know what it is personally to face an enemy. Today we have an enemy it is difficult to face, because the

enemy is so often hidden, killing at random, surfacing only to perform cowardly acts. Their aim is to demoralize us as a people and to spread fear into everyday life. We must not let them do that. As Americans, we can and must join together to defeat terrorism wherever it strikes and whoever practices it. [Applause.]

We all are outraged by what happened in the Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta. And we all admire the athletes, the thousands of volunteers, the tens of thousands of fans who made a strong statement to the world yesterday when they showed up and carried on the Olympics, saying that they would not be intimidated by terrorism, and that no terrorist could kill the Olympic spirit. [Applause.]

What we saw yesterday was a symbol of an emerging consensus among all responsible nations and freedom-loving people everywhere that we have to work closely together to stop the spread of terrorism. We know from the Tokyo Subway to the streets of Tel Aviv, to the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia where we lost 19 of our fine Air Force personnel, that terrorism is a problem that knows no boundaries.

We have learned here so painfully in America, from the World Trade Center to Oklahoma City, that attacks from terrorists can be homegrown or can be generated in other lands. We know that nations are beginning to understand that there is no place that is safe when any place is vulnerable to terrorists.

Not very long ago after the upsurge of terrorist attacks in Israel, we had a remarkable meeting of 29 nations at Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt where, for the first time, 13 Arab states condemned terrorism in Israel. It was the beginning of wisdom, because, as the Saudis have seen, there is no nation which can hide from terrorism unless we all recognize that the rules of civilized people do not permit it to be practices.

The recent meeting of the G-7 nations in France produced a significant increase in international measures to cooperate against terrorism. And this week, following up on that, we will have a very important conference in Paris, France, involving those nations with high-level representatives to deal with the questions that terrorism presents us.

Terrorists are often supported by states. And states that sponsor or permit terrorism, including Iraq, Iran, Libya and Sudan, and any others, must face strong sanctions. We all have to say we cannot live with this; it is wrong. People must seek to resolve their differences by ways other than killing innocent civilians. [Applause.]

This year I signed into law an anti-terrorism act which made terrorism a federal offense, expanded the role of the FBI in solving these crimes, and imposed the death penalty for terrorism. As strong as the bill was, it did not give our law enforcement officials some of the powerful tools I had recommended, because they wanted and needed them, including increased wiretap authority for terrorists who are moving from place to place. Where they are flexible, so must we be. And chemical markets, often called taggets, for the most common explosives, black and smokeless powder, so that we can track down those who make bombs that kill innocent people.

This morning I was very encouraged to hear the Speaker of the House, Mr. Gingrich, express a willingness to consider these tough-

er measures. I have asked the Speaker; Majority Leader, Senator Trent Lott; the leaders of the Democratic minority, Senator Daschle and Mr. Gephardt; and the FBI director, Louis Freeh, to come to the White House tomorrow to help to agree on a package that will provide these additional protections against terrorism and any other measures we need to take to increase the protection of the American people. [Applause.]

We will continue to do whatever is necessary to give law enforcement the tools they need to find terrorists before they strike and to bring them swiftly to justice when they do. This week I announced new measures aimed at increasing airport security, increasing baggage searches and screening, to tighten passenger checks, to plan the deployment of the latest x-ray technologies.

I said then and I will say again, I am well aware that these new security measures will increase inconvenience and may even carry a modest increased cost to the air-traveling public. But this inconvenience is a small price to pay for better peace of mind when our loved ones board a plane. These measures went into effect immediately.

And so, my fellow Americans, we have opened up three fronts against terrorism. We're increasing international efforts to ensure that terrorists will have no place to plan or hide their operations. We're making use of expanded anti-terrorism powers at home, including the death penalty. And we are tightening airport security. We will continue to expand our efforts on all three fronts against terrorism.

I want to remind you that we have had some results. We have seen a record number of terrorists captured and convicted. We have thwarted a number of planned terrorist attacks, including a serious one against the United Nations and one against the United States airlines flying out of the West Coast over the Pacific. We are keeping the heat on terrorist organizations and those who would support them.

But I would remind you that every death is one death too many. As we have seen now over many, many years, from the struggles of our allies, as well as from those we have faced recently, that this is a long, hard fight. But if we work together, this is challenge we can and will meet. It may well be the most significant security challenge of the 21st century to the people of the United States and to civilized people everywhere. And the veterans of the United States, I know, will support our country being as strong and tough and smart and steadfast as it takes to get the job done. [Applause.]

Now, let me continue by saying to you that when I ran for President, I promised the veterans of America I would appoint a true advocate as Secretary of Veterans Affairs. I found that person among your ranks. Jesse Brown honed his skills while serving as executive director of the DAV. He and his deputy, Hershel Gober, who is also here with me today, I believe, make up one of the finest leadership teams in the entire Federal Government. [Applause.]

I can tell you this: Not only in public but in private, in every meeting on any subject, they are consistently committed to a better life for all veterans. And I thank them for their service. [Applause.]

I'm also honored to join you in celebrating three-quarters of a century of service to your country. You are the best representatives

of what I'd like to talk about today: the duty we owe to our veterans, the duty we owe to each other and to our children, the duty we owe to the rest of the world and to our future. We owe a duty to all of you, of course, not only for your bravery and sacrifice, but for all you continue to do for each other, your families and our country.

Last year we celebrated the 50th anniversary of World War II. Many of you fought in that great struggle and put your lives on the line for freedom. Your country owes you a debt of gratitude we can never repay. Any I can honestly say one of the most humbling honors of my life was representing the United States at those ceremonies in 1994 and 1995.

But I want to say again to you, to every American who served in World War II, including the Republican candidate for President, Senator Bob Dole: Thank you for your service, thank you for your sacrifice, thank you for your courage. We're still around because of you. [Applause.]

And to all who have served since, in Korea and Vietnam, in the Persian Gulf, in Bosnia, in peacetime as well as wartime. America thanks you, too, and so do freedom-loving people all around the world.

Our tradition of service, of course, extends beyond the battlefield. This is also the 50th anniversary of the VA Voluntary Service Programs' involvement of the DAV. Last year you donated more volunteer hours at VA hospitals around the country than any other organization. [Applause.]

I want to congratulate your Volunteers of the Year, whom I had the privilege to meet just a moment ago, Tillman Rutledge and Dorothy Marie Waters. They are great examples of what you stand for. Thank you. Thank you. [Applause.]

You have done your duty to America, and America must do its duty to you. Secretary Brown and I recognize a simple truth: When men and women leave the service, we must not leave them. In keeping our veterans' commitments, our commitments to our veterans, to help them make the most of their own lives does not only help veterans and their families, it's made America a better and stronger place.

For education to employment, from buying a home to getting quality medical care, our veterans deserve our nation's support, and when we give it, our nation is better off. For the past three and a half years, that is what we have done.

Even as we cut government spending to reduce the deficit and move toward a balanced budget, I have asked for a billion-dollar increase in funding for the VA, more than half for medical care and discretionary programs, including funds for a new hospital and nursing home in Brevard County, Florida and a replacement hospital at Travis Air Force Base in California. [Applause.]

We are committed to keeping the VA health care system strong into the 21st century, and we know that requires us to carry out a dramatic restructuring that will improve the quality of care and make our hospitals more patient-centered and less bureaucratic. Last year I sent to Congress legislation that will allow us to simplify the complex and arcane eligibility rules and improve access to care at VA hospitals. [Applause.] I am pleased that Congress is be-

ginning to act on this important proposal, and I hope they will get a bill to me this year.

Very soon we will submit legislation for a pilot project to allow Medicare-eligible veterans to obtain treatment at a VA facility and to have the costs reimbursed by Medicare. [Applause.]

I also want to make special mention of the extraordinary care that is provided by our veterans facilities to people with spinal cord injuries, and my commitment to continue the work and research and care in this important area. Recently, after a visit with Christopher Reeve, I was pleased to announce that we are increasing our research commitment \$10 million a year in this year.

And I hope all of you noticed just a few days ago that we finally are beginning to show some incredible results, where nerve transplants from the ribs to the spinal cord of laboratory animals have succeeded in giving laboratory animals some mobility in their limbs again. We can do better on this, and we have to keep going until we have some real success. [Applause.]

We have also reached out to veterans service organizations, appointing veterans as delegates to the White House Conference on Aging and the Presidential Delegation to Vietnam. We established the first ever inter-agency veterans policy groups to coordinate and spur progress on issues of concern to veterans and military organizations.

One such issue for more than two decades has been the suffering of our nation's Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange. [Applause.] In May, I announced that Vietnam veterans with prostate cancer and peripheral neuropathy are entitled to disability payments based on their exposure to Agent Orange. Just this week I sent to Congress legislation to provide an appropriate remedy for children of Vietnam veterans who suffer from spina bifida. [Applause.]

We have also responded aggressively to Persian Gulf illnesses. [Applause.] As the First Lady was traveling around the country talking about health care to people all over America, she kept coming back to the White House with stories of people who had served in the Persian Gulf conflict who had difficulties that were otherwise inexplicable.

She got very involved, even emotionally involved, with some of the families, and she kept hammering on me that there had to be an explanation for this, and there was no other conceivable explanation for some of these instances of difficulties.

She encouraged me to appoint a Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War veterans illnesses. I did that and charged them to leave no stone unturned in finding the cause of the illnesses and improving care available to Persian Gulf veterans. Meanwhile, we have made available for the first time ever compensation to the victims of undiagnosed illnesses who served in the Gulf War. [Applause.] I think they did the right thing there.

One other area of endeavor is especially important to me, improving the contributions of all of our veterans to the maintenance of their own lives and their families and our communities. Today, as we celebrate the sixth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, I want to reiterate a pledge I made in 1992. Our dis-

ability policy should be based as a nation on three simple principles: inclusion, independence and empowerment. [Applause.]

I know how hard you fought, along with others in the disability community, for the passage of this important legislation. We've made vigorous laws protecting all people with disabilities a top priority. We'll continue to do so until all the barriers come down. Consistent with that commitment, my budget for 1997 proposes an increase in the resources available to enforce the Americans With Disabilities Act.

One of the main objectives of the act is to improve employment possibilities for people with disabilities. Unemployment among disabled veterans in particular is still too high. I am pleased that Ron Drach, DAV's employment director, is serving as vice-chair of the President's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities. I thank him for his hard work to turn those employment numbers around. And we should all be grateful that he is on the job. [Applause.]

Beyond the duty we owe to our veterans, there are certain duties we all owe to each other and to our country if our children are to live in a 21st century that is full of peace and possibility. First, we have to give the American dream of opportunity to everyone who is willing to work for it. That means we have to have an economy that is strong and growing, that produces good jobs with growing incomes.

When I became President, I was worried about the drift in our economy and the increasing divisions within it. We've put in place an aggressive strategy: To reduce the deficit, because that would get interest rates down and spur private investment, and remove a burden from future generations; to increase trade so that we could sell more American products and services around the world in a global economy; and to invest in our people and their potential so that everyone could participate in this global economy in a positive way over the long run.

We invested in education, in how to protect the environment while growing the economy, in transportation, in research and technology, in defense conversion to help those communities that had helped us to win the Cold War so that they wouldn't be left out in the cold. We even lowered the average closing cost for first-time home buyers by a thousand dollars so young families could start getting in homes again instead of just having a distant dream. [Applause.]

It's been a remarkable turnaround in these last three and a half years. The deficit was lowered from \$290 billion a year when I became President. It will be \$117 billion this year, a 60 percent reduction. It's the first time since John Tyler was President in the 1840s that an administration has reduced the deficit four years in a row. And I'm proud of that. [Applause.]

I have to tell you, by the way, that my staff is pleading with me to stop using that statistic because John Tyler was not reelected. [Laughter.] But still it sounds great, because it's true and it's important.

Our economy has produced ten million new jobs, 3.7 million new home owners, eight million home owners who've refinanced their mortgages at lower interest rates. Home ownership is at a 15-year

high. Exports are at a record. For three years in a row, we've had a record number of new small businesses formed in America. And for the first time in a decade, incomes are actually going up for average American working people again. This is important. It matters. [Applause.]

Veterans' employment. Veterans' unemployment has dropped by nearly a third from 7.2 percent to 4.9 percent in January of 1996. Six million veterans have received training and job search assistance through the Department of Labor in the last three and a half years. Two million now have jobs. We are clearly moving in the right direction.

We have other responsibilities as well. I want to just mention a couple. One is heavily on my mind at this moment. We have a responsibility to make our streets and our schools and our neighborhoods safer. The United States cannot tolerate the rates of crime and violence which have come to be almost commonplace in our country in the last several years. We have to intensify our efforts to reduce crime.

The deaths of two police officers within a 24-hour period right here in New Orleans last week painfully drove that point home to everyone who knew about them. I had the opportunity to meet with their families just before coming in here, and I want to personally offer my condolences to the families of Officers Joey Thomas and Chris McCormick, who died while protecting the citizens of this city. They, too, were patriots who paid the ultimate price. And I know you join me in praying for their families. [Applause.]

In the past three and a half years, we have tried to change the nation's approach to crime from rhetoric to action. We've had a clear strategy: Look at what works and make it happen everywhere. When I became President, to be perfectly frank, even though we had a high crime rate, there were cities all over the country that had already begun to lower their crime rate. And I went to those places and asked them how they were doing it.

It was obvious to me what was going on. They were putting more police on the street, out from behind the cars, out from behind the desk, walking the streets, getting to know kids, getting to know neighbors, working with them, preventing crime as well as catching criminals more quickly.

I asked them what they needed, and they told me, and that became the Crime Bill that we passed in 1994: 100,000 police on the street, a ban on assault weapons, tougher punishment for people who are serious criminals, and prevention programs to help kids stay out of crime in the first place. We also passed the Brady Bill that kept 60,000 felons, fugitives and stalkers from buying handguns, and there wasn't a single hunter that lost his or her hunting weapons. So we did the right thing, and for four years in a row, crime has been coming down in the United States. We can be proud of that. [Applause.]

But it is not enough. We're now going around the country trying to explain to communities how they can, without fear of legal challenge, institute curfew policies, as New Orleans has, for juveniles in a way that has dramatically lowered the juvenile crime rate here, and in a positive way has helped a lot of juveniles to sort through their own problems and get back on the right track in life.

School uniform policies and tough truancy policies, like so many California communities I've seen have implemented in a way that has increased learning in the schools and diminished crime beyond the school yard. There are more things we can do in this way and we must all continue to do it. [Applause.]

We have a responsibility to reform the welfare system. I'm sure you've all seen the big debate about welfare in Washington. Let me just say that we have been working for three and a half years on that through a provision of existing law which allows the President to say to any state in the country that presents a plan to move people from welfare to work and to require them to move from welfare to work, you can get around all the federal rules and regulations if you're doing that.

But let me ask you as you see this debate unfold in the next few days, to think about your own family and ask yourself, well, what do I really want to change in the welfare system? And I think to answer the question, you have to say, what do I want for poor people in America? How would I like for them to be able to live?

And I think what we want for them is what we want for middle-class families and, indeed, for upper-income families in America. We want people to have strong families and successful work lives. We want them to succeed when they go to work and when they're working at raising their children. And we don't want them to have to choose; we want them to do both. And that's exactly what we want other families in America to do as well: Success at home and success at work. And if we have a system that undermines either one, America is weaker because of it.

So we have worked hard. We've got 75 percent of everybody on welfare now under welfare-to-work experiments in a way that enables them to continue to support their children when they leave the welfare rolls and go onto the work rolls. And that's what we ought to want for every American. There are 1.3 million fewer people on welfare today than there were the day I became President. This will work. We can move people from welfare to work if we do it in the right way. [Applause.]

The other big part of this is that people who owe it ought to pay their child support. [Applause.] When I became President, we were collecting \$8 billion a year in child year. Now we're collecting 11 billion, a 40 percent increase. But you need to know that if every person in this country who owes support for their own children, is legally obligated to pay it and is financially able to pay it, if they paid it all tomorrow, tomorrow morning there would be 800,000 fewer women and children on welfare in the United States. So that's a big part of this and a big part of why we need national legislation to reform the welfare laws. [Applause.]

So we're working hard with the Congress to try to get a welfare reform bill out so we can cover all the states, all the people and have even tougher child support enforcement, especially for the cases across state lines. But remember, when you hear this debate and you hear people propose certain things, ask yourself, what do I want for those families? And don't I want for them the same thing I want for the families in my neighborhood and the families of America, success at home and success at work? And I think if we think about it that way, we'll make the right decisions.

Finally, let me say we have a responsibility to finish the work of balancing the budget, but to do it in a way that is consistent with our values and our long-term interests, which is, in my view, taking care of the health care needs of seniors, people with disabilities, poor children, making sure that we continue to invest in education and protecting the environment and other things that are critical to our future, making sure we do not increase the burdens on the hardest pressed working families. But we can do that, and I am committed to it.

And lastly, we have a responsibility to maintain the national defense and to continue to be the world's strongest force for peace and freedom. [Applause.]

As we enter the—near the end of the most successful draw-down in our history, our military readiness has never been higher, we continue to have the best equipped, the best trained, the best prepared military in the world. And we must always have that. Whether we're standing down aggression in the Persian Gulf, restoring democracy in Haiti, safeguarding the peace in Bosnia, saving lives in Rwanda, working with NATO and our new allies from the former communist bloc in the Partnership for Peace, our service men and women have proven their abilities time and time again in the last three and a half years.

Our funding and support for them must not falter, first for military technology to meet any new challenges now or in the future, and, even more important, to support the men and women in uniform, for they are the most precious resource in our military arsenal, and we have to be there for them. [Applause.]

Last year we set aside funds to ensure that military personnel received the highest pay raise allowed by law through the end of the century. We are committed to maintain and improve the quality of life for service members and their families around the globe, including better housing, community support, youth programs and child care. They, too, have a right to know that if they're succeeding for us at their work, their homes are going to be successful, and their children and their spouses are going to be taken care of. And that is a very, very important part of defense spending in this world. [Applause.]

There are a lot of things that we have to do for the future. We're working in Washington now to raise the minimum wage; to pass the Kassebaum-Kennedy bill which will say you don't lose your health insurance if you change jobs or someone in your family gets sick. We're working hard on welfare reform.

I hope that we can strengthen the Family and Medical Leave Law, which has permitted 12 million working Americans to take some time off when they've had a baby born or sick parent without losing their jobs. And I'd like to see more done so that people could go to regular doctor's appointments with their parents or their kids, or got to a parent-teacher conference at school without losing their jobs. We've got to make it possible for working parents to succeed at work at home with their children and with their parents. [Applause.]

I want to make a college education available to every person in this country who's willing to work for it. I think we ought to—the most important tax cut we could pass in America today is to give

people a deduction for the cost of college education, their own or their kids. [Applause.] And I would like to see, I would very much like to see us make the two years of education after high school that most Americans now get in community college, I want that to become just as universal in the next couple of years as a high school education is today. So I propose a tax credit for the cost of community college for the next two years after high school. [Applause.] That'd be a good thing to do.

And finally, let me just mention this last duty. We have a duty to respect our differences and to learn to bridge the gaps between us. If you look around the world today, what's fueling a lot of this terrorism? What caused all the slaughter in Burundi and Rwanda? Why did people who lived for decades in peace in Bosnia all of a sudden become the sort of nagging agony of the entire world, slaughtering each other with reckless abandon after having lived in peace together for decades, neighbor against neighbor, killing each other?

Why can't we fix what's gone wrong in the Middle East? Why did Northern Ireland start violence again after 15 months of peace when they've got the lowest unemployment rate in 15 years? And when Hillary and I went there, we were mobbed by Catholic and Irish young people alike saying, "We love peace. We don't want to go back to war." What happened?

Because throughout history there has been an atrocious tendency among human beings to give in to racial, ethnic, religious and tribal hatred. [Applause.] And as your generation helped to ensure victory for us in the Cold War, so that billions of people every day didn't have to get up wondering about whether someone was going to drop a bomb on them from the communist or the noncommunist world, depending on what side of that Cold War they lived on, and people were able to relax, too many have fallen back into the old patterns of racial, religious, ethnic and tribal hatreds.

Why do people hate other people who are different from them? Either because they think they won't permit them to live as they want to live or, more likely, they really need somebody to look down on.

Your know, I guess nobody has a perfect family, but I'll go to my grave being grateful for my mother telling me, "Don't your ever, don't you ever feel better because of somebody else's misfortune. You should feel better because of what you are and what you do. Don't ever think you've got to put somebody else down because of that." [Applause.]

But all over the world there are people that will get up tomorrow morning and start out the new week defining themselves in terms of who they can hate, who they can look down on, who they can hurt. And it is a cancer of the modern world. We fight it on its most flagrant basis when we stand against terrorism. But we have to also recommit ourselves to purging every vestige of it in the United States.

The United States military has done a better job than any other organization in our society, I believe, in opening up opportunities for people based on merit: 250,000 new roles for women in the last three and a half years in the military. I'm proud of that. [Applause.]

We not only have in General Powell an African American who became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, we have a record number of officers now reaching the “general” rank who are African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, Arab American, Jewish American, coming from all kinds of backgrounds, in an organization that runs strictly on merit and depends upon performance for our very survival.

And yet even there, the other day at Fort Bragg, one of the centers of our patriotism, the home of the Special Forces, African American soldiers had swastikas painted on their doors. We have to work to purge this.

All of these church burnings—I just learned that over the weekend, a church in my home state was burned—African American churches, synagogues defaced, three Islamic centers burned. That is the opposite of what America is all about.

When Hillary and I visited our Olympic team and I looked at them, I can’t help telling you, first of all, I was just bursting with pride, and I told them. I said, “You know, just the fact that you made this team should give you great pride and great joy. And you should go out among the people of the world here and relish the spirit of peace and freedom and equality that exists here.”

And it was a magical moment. One of the young people said that they’d been to lunch the day before, and the athletes from South Korea and North Korea were sitting at tables next to each other and talking. And I thought, shoot, I’ve been trying for three and a half years to get them to talk, and I couldn’t do it. [Laughter and applause.] It was a magic moment. I couldn’t do it. [Applause.]

But what struck me about the American team was this: If the American team broke up and were just walking in the Olympic Village, you could see them and think, well, that athlete is from Africa; that athlete’s from Latin American; that athlete’s from the Caribbean; that athlete’s from Scandinavia; that athlete’s from the Middle East. But they could all be Americans, because we are bound together, not by our race, but by our fidelity to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence, and our belief that we can all live here in peace and harmony and mutual respect.

So I leave you with that thought. If we meet our responsibilities to each other and to our children and to our future, our responsibilities to the world, and if we meet our fundamental responsibility to go forward together in mutual respect, then our days are going to get better, and our best days are still to come.

You can have an enormous influence wherever you live and whatever you do because of your service to America in uniform and because of the sacrifice of that service, if you will remind your fellow Americans of those fundamental lessons.

Thank you and God bless you. [Rising applause.]

Commander MCMASTERS. Thank you, Mr. President, for being part of our convention.

We are indeed honored to have with us today our nation’s Number 1 veterans’ advocate. Shortly after he assumed this high office, Jesse Brown served notice that he would be Secretary for Veterans Affairs, not Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Those of use who know him, who are aware of his track record as an advocate with the DAV, know Jesse's self-designated title change signaled a new beginning, a new beginning that made the Department of Veterans Affairs accountable to its constituency, as captured in the new VA motto, "Putting Veterans First"; a new beginning for improving VA health care, and a new beginning that saw a genuine and caring concern for our women and homeless veterans; a new beginning that pushed to the forefront the needs of our Persian Gulf veterans and former POWs, and broadened benefits criteria for Vietnam veterans ravaged by Agent Orange.

It is a long road from the streets of Chicago, through the jungles of Vietnam to the halls of the White House and a seat at the Cabinet Room table. Jesse Brown has walked that road with one thing in mind: Serving the country he dearly loves.

The path of innovative change that Jesse Brown chose to walk for all of us has been littered with opposition. Jesse Brown has met these challenges with vigor and determination. For that, we are in his debt, and we will walk proudly with him as we join in confronting challenges on the horizon.

Jesse is an incredible man. In one person he combines not only the most knowledgeable person ever to head the VA, but the most compassionate as well. He is a man of great spirit, great courage and great strength.

The Marines looked for a good man in Jesse Brown. America found a great man.

Please extend a warm welcome to the Honorable Jesse Brown, the Secretary for Veterans Affairs. [Rising applause.]

Secretary for Veterans Affairs JESSE BROWN. Thank you. thank you very much, Commander, for that very kind and warm reception. I'm delighted to be here and to see my good friend, National Adjutant Wilson; our National Auxiliary Commander Hicks; our National Auxiliary Adjutant Tedrow; my good friend, Jack Feighner; distinguished guests; my fellow DAV members; ladies and gentlemen: I want you to know that again, I am really delighted to be here, and it is clear that I have a hard act to follow. [Laughter.]

But I can tell you—you know, they cut my travel. They got so mad at me there in Washington, D.C., because I've been running around the country telling the veterans what they were doing to them. But they cut my travel, but they don't know that I'm really glad to be out of Washington, D.C. [Laughter and applause.]

You know, it's like a soap opera there. Those new politicians came to Washington thinking they were the "Bold and the Beautiful." [Laughter.] And they are trying to turn this country into "Another World." [Laughter.] But in the eyes of America, they look more like "The Young and the Restless." [Laughter and applause.] Because we know that if they have their way, "All My Children" could be thrown out of the "General Hospital." [Laughter.] We just cannot allow them to interfere with the "Days of Our Lives." [Laughter.] But I'm here to tell you today that I've seen "The Guiding Light." [Laughter.] And if they do not change their ways by November, they just have "One Life to Live." [Laughter and Applause.]

Hey, please don't tell them I said that. They'll take the other 25 percent away from me. [Laughter.]

It's really kind of funny, but unfortunately it is true. They have turned the civil tides of politics to an atmosphere of hostility, and that is why we in the Veterans community must remain focused on the men and women who have borne the battle.

1996 is the year of the Olympics. The world is focused on the men and women overcoming challenges. The athletes are competing at the top of their form. And all of them are working hard, very hard, to get the gold. When the record books are closed, all athletes want to know that they have done their very best.

These past three and a half years seem like a marathon to me. I have run the best race that I know how, and it has not been easy. I have put my heart and soul into what I believe is right for veterans and their families.

When I became your Secretary for Veterans Affairs, I had a vision for change. The first step was to create an atmosphere where putting veterans first was our Number 1 priority. Putting veterans first became more than a slogan; it became our mission.

The system is not perfect. No system is. The race is not over, and we are still running hard. But veterans know that VA is more responsive to their needs than four years ago. And it is also no secret that historically veterans' organizations felt that they were outsiders. When I accepted this job, that was one of the first things that I changed.

Today, veterans and VA are partners. We make decisions together. During this administration, veterans have had a greater access to the VA and the White House, and it is making a difference.

In 1993, we inherited a huge backlog of claims, and it was getting worse. But we turned that around. The waiting time is down and getting better. That is putting veterans first.

The veterans we serve are getting older. Their health care needs are changing, and we are changing the way we deliver health care. We are creating more places for veterans to receive medical attention. We have reorganized our hospitals, clinics and nursing homes into 22 integrated networks. We're shifting our focus from in-patient to outpatient care. We have taken advantage of the economies of scale in many areas, such as pharmaceuticals and medical supplies.

And yes, we have sent Congress a plan for national eligibility reform. We need to get away from those old laws that prevent VA from providing full, comprehensive health care to our veterans. Veterans need a health care system that provides them with everything that they need in order to stay healthy, and anything less is unacceptable.

Our progress has not come easy. The past two years have been difficult. But we have survived. We have survived the challenge to end compensation to some incompetent veterans and two government shutdowns which delayed compensation and pension payments.

At the same time, we have made important advances on issues that are important to us, issues such as improving health care; Agent Orange; post-traumatic stress disorder; Persian Gulf illness;

improving services for women veterans; POWs; helping homeless veterans; and burying our veterans with dignity.

These are examples of what we can do if we work together. And yet I do not believe for one moment that we can let our guard down, because the threat to veterans' benefits will not go away. There will always be those who want veterans to share the pain of shrinking the costs of government.

But we must say to them loud and clear: Don't talk to veterans about sharing pain. We're no longer the young men and women we used to be. But we know pain very well: In World War II, 400,000 dead, 700,000 wounded; Korea, 54,000 dead, 100,000 wounded; Vietnam, 58,000 dead, over 300,000 wounded; and those brave warriors who died in Saudi Arabia, victims of a cowardly act. That is pain. Pain mingled with the wounded cries and the silence of the dead. And that is why we will never, never give up.

We in the veterans community show honor for our dead by responding to the needs of the living. Because, for the living, the cost of war continues after the guns fall silent. That is putting veterans first, and that is what the VA is all about.

It should be about change, change that responds to the needs of veterans and their families. But we cannot support and will not support the unreasonable changes that have been considered there in Washington, D.C., changes like taxing compensation and pensions; terminating compensation for veterans rated 10 and 20 percent disabled; means testing service-connected disability compensation; and redefining service connection.

And what stopped those attacks on our benefits from becoming law? Veterans, their families and our friends in Congress.

And what about the future? The President has promised to make sure that the nation honors its commitment to veterans. He promised to negotiate the budget for veterans every year, and he's done that. This year, President Clinton recommended a billion-dollar increase in discretionary spending for the VA, but Congress cut it by \$915 million. And I say to you that we needed that money for our hospitals.

And, as I have already said, Congress cut my travel money by 75 percent. That was an obvious attempt to keep me from speaking out against unfair cuts to veterans' programs. But the voice of veterans must be heard. This is not about Jesse Brown; this is about the voice of the veterans' community and their families. And that is the reason why I'm here. I'm here where I belong. I will not be shackled in Washington, D.C. And I pledge to you that I will continue to speak out. [Applause.]

Now, the President has submitted his budget for 1997. It includes a billion-dollar increase over what Congress approved for 1996. It provides nearly \$600 million more for health care and other discretionary spending; \$400 million more for benefits; and funding for badly needed hospitals in California and Florida. This is a good budget, and I hope Congress is kind to us this year.

But, my friends, that may not be the case. The President requested \$439 million for medical construction. It was cut by \$71 million. This means that we could not build the hospitals that we needed in Florida and California. But more importantly than that, this would deny reasonable access of care to over 700,000 veterans.

And also, it would not permit us to move forward on our plans to upgrade VA hospitals that are 40 to 100 years old.

And they have taken away \$26 million from BVA. This will increase our claims backlog and greatly reduce our ability to improve the quality and timeliness of services to veterans and their families.

As you can see, the race is not over. We need to get back to the three R's, and I'm not talking about "reading, 'writing and 'rithmetic." I'm talking about recognizing, respecting and remembering the needs of America's veterans. [Applause.]

Military service should not be rewarded with a bitter taste, a bitter taste served in the cup of champions. And in my view, and I believe in the view of the eyes of the world, that our veterans are champions. They are champions for democracy, champions for freedom.

And that is why it is so important for your work to continue. You must continue to carry the torch for all generations to come. You must push on to the next runner.

We cannot fail our veterans because we have a special bond with them. Many people will never understand that bond, but it is a bond forged in our common experience, tempered by hardship and pain, and moved forward by courage and determination.

I would like to leave you with a true story that eloquently describes this courage and determination. A few years ago, 17-year-old Michael Stone was competing as a pole vaulter in the National Junior Olympics. The competition was fierce. By the finals, another pole vaulter had cleared the bar one foot higher than Michael had ever done. Michael tried anyway, and he cleared the bar.

It was raised two more inches. Excitement built as both athletes cleared the bar again. Then they moved the bar up two more inches, one inch below the national record. The crowd went wild when both athletes made it. Finally, the bar was set at 17 feet, six and a half inches. This height would set a new national record.

The other jumper went first. Michael could not watch. The sound from the crowd told the story. The other jumper did not make it. And Michael lined up for his final try. His heart was pounding. The height was an unbelievable 18 and a half inches higher than his previous record.

And there was complete silence, much as there is here today. He sprinted toward the approach and vaulted into the air, and the crowd went wild, and he knew that he had made it. The new champion did not look up to see if the bar was still standing. He did not look to the bleachers to see his mother and father crying. For you see, Michael Stone is totally blind.

Now, that is a moving story, because it means something to us in the Disabled American Veterans, a tremendous story, because Michael had courage and determination.

For veterans, the competition is not over, and like Michael, we cannot see all of the obstacles ahead. But like him, veterans have courage and determination to keep the promise to those who ran the good race before us, and keep that promise we shall.

I love all of you, and thank you so very, very much. [Rising applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

I would not like to introduce your line officers, and I would ask that you hold your applause until I've introduced all of them. National Senior Vice-Commander Gregory C. Reed from Indiana; 1st Junior Vice-Commander Harry R. McDonald, Jr. from Florida; 2nd Junior Vice-Commander William D. Wiggins of Virginia; 3rd Junior Vice-Commander Andrew A. Kistler of Pennsylvania; 4th Junior Vice-Commander Michael E. Dobmeier of North Dakota; National Judge Advocate Edward G. Galian of New York; National Chaplain Reverend Oscar I. Wilkie of Oklahoma; and Past National Commander Donald A. Sioss of New York. [Applause.]

At this time, I'm going to introduce the National Executive Committee people. From the 1st District, Everett J. Nygard, Jr. of Massachusetts; George R. LePorte of New York from 2nd District; 3rd District, David A. Schiapo of Rhode Island; 4th District, Albert R. Fanslau of New Jersey; 5th District, Donald C. Graffius of Pennsylvania; 6th District, Carl J. Carter of Washington, D.C.; 7th District, Tommy R. Simms of Florida; 8th District, John A. Bell of Mississippi; 9th District, Ronald L. Voegeli of South Carolina; my district, the 10th District, Lowell G. McKeehan from Michigan; the 11th District, Nicholas J. Border of Ohio; 12th District, Dorothy R. Schilling of Wisconsin; the 13th District, Glen E. Vogel. Sr. of Indiana; 14th District, Victor C. Hass of North Dakota; 15th District, Francis E. McLaskey of Iowa; 16th District, Charles H. Demele of California; 17th District, Stanley L. Miller of New Mexico; 18th District, Edwin K. Wise of Hawaii; 19th District, Fred G. Rupert of Alaska; 20th District, Earl Dean Walker of Texas; and from the 21st District, Adrian H. Hunt of Arkansas. That's our National Executive Committee. [Applause.]

I'd also like to recognize a person who's been of great assistance to me this year, my National Chief of Staff, Leo J. LeRoux of Michigan, who had to leave because of his mother-in-law's passing. Also, my Officer of the Day from Michigan, Margherita Dupras; and my Sergeant-at-Arms, Clyde Couch of Texas.

And last, I want to express my sincere thanks to National Historian Jack Feighner of Ohio, to whom we owe a deep sense of gratitude. [Applause.]

It is now my pleasure and privilege to call to the podium a woman I am proud to know and even prouder to call my friend. Barb Hicks has led the Auxiliary with devoted leadership and love and warmth during the past year.

Barb has worked ceaselessly and diligently to lead the Auxiliary in helping the families of disabled veterans who sacrificed so much for their country. Wherever I journeyed during my time as national commander, I found Auxiliary members working alongside DAV members in our struggle to protect benefits and serves for disabled veterans and their families.

Barb has been a strong and compassionate voice on the behalf of families of disabled veterans. She has stood proudly on many occasions to represent the DAV and the Auxiliary. And from the joint hearing of the House and Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs to the commemorative events surrounding the 50th anniversary of V-J Day in Hawaii, she has personified the strength and solidarity that we admire and respect in the DAV Auxiliary.

Barb's deep awareness of the issues facing disabled veterans and their families is punctuated by 33 years of service as an Auxiliary member. Her dedication is without question, and her determination without equal.

Please join me in welcoming an admirable woman, an exceptional leader, and a devoted friend, my counterpart in the Auxiliary, Auxiliary National Commander Barb Hicks. [Rising applause.]

Auxiliary Commander BARBARA L. HICK. Thank you, Commander Tom, for your very kind introduction. I'm indeed honored to be here to share this historic convention.

Before I deliver my report to our members gathered here today, I want to personally and on behalf of the entire Auxiliary, honor a man whose devotion and leadership epitomizes all the DAV and Auxiliary stand for. It is my privilege to have met and served with Tom McMasters. It has been a true joy to know his wife, Sandi, and their lonely children.

Our Auxiliary has had the great good fortune of having a DAV national commander who enthusiastically praised, welcomed and sought our service to disabled veterans and their families. He took every opportunity to show love, respect and appreciation for the Auxiliary, and we are forever grateful for his comradeship.

Commander Tom, I am pleased to present this plaque to you, thanking you for making the Auxiliary such an important part of the DAV. It reads:

Presented to Thomas A. McMasters, III, National Commander, in appreciation for distinguished service given to Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary, 1995-1996.

Signed by National Adjutant Maria M. Tedrow and National Commander Barbara L. Hicks. [Applause.]

On behalf of myself and all Auxiliary members, thank you for sharing your year with us.

National Commander McMasters, National Adjutants Art Wilson and Maria Tedrow, convention delegates, honored guests, families and friends: It has been an honor to serve as your Auxiliary national commander. I am bursting with pride and enthusiasm at the accomplishments of the Auxiliary during the past year. I'm tremendously proud to report the Auxiliary met and it exceeded membership quota this year. [Applause.]

As I look around the room, I see familiar faces and new faces. I see determination and hope, compassion and strength, and concern and love. I see the DAV and Auxiliary at their best.

As Auxiliary members, we share the experience of a loved one disabled in service to this nation. You, the disabled veterans in our lives are constant reminders of blood spilled, bodies maimed and minds scarred in defense of this country. We are the ones who share your lives. We are your wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, grandmothers and granddaughters.

We are the Auxiliary. We stand beside the DAV in the battle to build better lives for our disabled veterans and their families. Our Auxiliary is there in spirit and force representing disabled veterans, their families, widows and orphans before all branches of government, from the White House to the courthouse.

From the 1996 Midwinter Conference in Washington, DC to the snow-covered slopes of Crested Butte, Colorado at the 10th Na-

tional Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, the Auxiliary was there with the DAV. When I saw determination turn into jubilation on the faces of the men and women attending the Winter Sports Clinic, my heart soared. It is something I believe every Auxiliary commander should experience.

The Auxiliary has come a long way since our founders established the DAV Auxiliary in 1922. But we have never wavered from our common goal of helping the families of veterans who sacrificed so much for our country in wars and conflicts throughout the world.

The women who built our Auxiliary were true champions who left a legacy of service and love to one and all gathered here today. They were the leaders and mentors always there to guide us and help us grow in this great organization.

Sadly, most of our early leaders are gone now. Death and the frailty of age have claimed them, but their spirit lives on in each of us and in our Auxiliary. We pursue their legacy as we face the challenging mission of ensuring that America remembers her disabled veterans.

The spirit of our founders was present at the Auxiliary Fall Conference in Dayton, Ohio last year. Members attending the conference had the opportunity to learn from the expertise of others and share their experience. It was exciting to see experienced Auxiliary leaders training the next generation of Auxiliary leaders. It was a fun and rewarding opportunity for all who attended.

I encourage all Auxiliary members to attend this year's exciting three-day event in Louisville, Kentucky. The 1996 Fall Conference will be held at the beautiful Galt House East in Louisville, September 26th through September 28th. Be sure to bring your husbands, too. Those who attended last year had a good time and learned a lot about our Auxiliary.

At the Fall Conference, Auxiliary members learn that it is up to the DAV and Auxiliary to see to it that those who seem bent on destroying our country's commitment to our disabled loved ones, and, yes, our families in the process, are stopped.

Every time our government considers measures that endanger the benefits, services and programs our families need and depend on, we must convince them otherwise. Working alongside DAV members, Auxiliary members shoulder the task of making sure our elected officials understand that disabled veterans and their families, our families, deserve only the best treatment a grateful nation can provide.

Regardless of how many letters and telegrams we must send, or how many phone calls we must make to our elected leaders to turn the tide, the Auxiliary stands at the forefront of battle with the DAV to protect the benefits disabled veterans have earned for themselves and our families.

We are not misled by the rhetoric of those so-called leaders. They speak of balancing the budget through shared sacrifices, while the VA's ability to provide timely, effective and compassionate benefits and services deteriorates. Some refer to veterans' programs as scared cows, yet veterans are dying waiting for help, because the VA is underfunded and insufficiently staffed.

What do these so-called leaders really know of shared sacrifice? Have they been awakened by a disabled loved one's nightmares? Have they watched the hurt in a father's eyes when he is unable to toss a baseball with his son because he lost an arm to an enemy's bullet? Have they lugged a wheelchair in and out of the trunk of a car time and time again for a son who lost his legs to an enemy mine in Vietnam? Have they watched tears roll down the face of a grandfather blinded in World War II as his fingers trace the outlines of his grandson's face?

After uttering those words at a recent department convention, a young man came up to me and thanked me. He was profoundly moved because his grandfather was blinded in World War II. That young man had never experienced war. He was not disabled. But he understood the pain and suffering that all of us gathered here know.

We live with the pain and suffering every day. We watch as the lives of our disabled loved ones are cut short due to their disabilities. Look around you, and you will quickly see that the number of widows among us grows us each year. These women need our support and compassion during their time of grief.

Many also need additional financial support. Thanks to the generosity of the Auxiliary state departments and units nationwide, we are able to provide the financial support to our Auxiliary members through the Auxiliary Service/Support Program. It is a program that exists thanks to Auxiliary members. Auxiliary and DAV members give generously to the Auxiliary Service/Support Program to provide assistance to women just like you who have fallen on hard times.

The generosity we put into this program makes a crucial difference in the lives of Auxiliary members. It helps put food on the table for a woman and her children and pays the utility bill for a widow with no one to turn to. It helps when a woman most needs our help.

The Auxiliary triumphs over challenge throughout the year. One has but to look at the array of projects and services Auxiliary members are involved in every day to see the monumental impact members have on the lives of our disabled loved ones, our families and communities.

Auxiliary members join DAV members to donate millions of hours of volunteer service to patients at VA medical centers, nursing homes, clinics, domiciliaries every year. Where there's a Voluntary Service Program you'll find Auxiliary members striving to help.

Helping veterans' widows and children, homeless veterans and older veterans extends far beyond the confines of VA facilities and into our communities. From delivering hot meals to providing respite care, Auxiliary members work to help disabled veterans and their families, in communities nationwide.

The combined strength of every woman who makes it her business to be a member of the DAV Auxiliary makes the good works of the Auxiliary possible.

Yet, it has been a great year. We are proud of the partnership between the Auxiliary and the Disabled American Veterans, and I can assure you it has grown stronger over the past year. With lead-

ers like Commander Tom who encourage our partnership, I have no doubt we will grow even stronger in the years to come.

Thank you very much and God bless. [Rising applause.]

Thank you. I, too, would like to introduce my line officers. Senior Vice-Commander Margaret Hass; 1st Junior Vice-Commander Evelynne Dunn; 2nd Junior Vice-Commander Evelyn Dorsey; 3rd Junior Vice-Commander Paula Raymond; 4th Junior Vice-Commander Phyllis Novak; National Judge Advocate Past National Commander Sheila Allred; National Chaplain Carol Gray; Past National Commander Jane Troutman; National Adjutant Past National Commander Maria Tedrow; Assistant National Adjutant Judy Hezlep; our National Convention Chairman Elaine Majors. [Applause.]

And I would like to introduce my National Executive Committee-women, and would you please hold your applause until I have introduced them. District 1, Jackie Fossiano, Massachusetts; District 2, Betty Nelson, New York; District 3, Grace Boland, Rhode Island; District 4, Arline Phillips, Delaware; District 5, E. Jimi Hayes, Pennsylvania; the alternate NEC, District 6, Mildred Velazquez, Puerto Rico; alternate NEC District 7, Grace McLaughlin, Florida; District 8, Vernice Eunice, Alabama; District 9, Vicky Grier, Georgia; District 10, Zona McNeal, Michigan; District 11, Jane Wood, Ohio; District 12, Zona Schaol, Wisconsin; District 13, Esther Houston, Indiana; District 14, Annette Bain-Wilson, Montana; District 15, Dee Staples, Kansas; District 16, Vera Flatow, California; District 17, Dorothy Dudoich, New Mexico; District 18, Janet Bennett, Nevada; District 19, Esther Westlake, Washington; District 20, Ann Hester, Texas; District 21, Gertrude Tidwell, Oklahoma.

Please give them applause. [Applause.]

At this time, I would like to introduce Past National Commander Nelda Wilson from Illinois for a presentation.

Mrs. NELDA WILSON. National Commander McMasters, National Commander Hicks, national officers, honored guests and delegates: The purpose of the Past National Commander Award is to recognize the contributions and dedication of an outstanding member whose efforts have enhanced the goals of the Auxiliary and the parent organization and has been active in her community for the past calendar year.

To each of the members whose names were submitted for this award, we say thank you and congratulations. You are truly examples of Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary members at work, caring and sharing, helping our disabled members and members of our community.

The recipient of this award this year is Mary Lou Webber, Unit 24, Valley City, North Dakota. Mary Lou has worked in all phases of our community and the Auxiliary programs and has been an active member in her church. Within the community, Mrs. Webber supports the Champion for Children's Program, donates to and is an active member of an abused outreach center. She's also involved in assisting a local support group for persons living with cancer and provides transportation for patients to and from medical appointments and treatments.

Mary Lou's sponsor's words really say it best, quote: "The DAVA is so lucky to have Mary Lou as a member. Mary Lou is a most

dedicated member that any organization could hope to have. She actually schedules the rest of her life around all of the DAVA activities."

Mary Lou is eligible through her husband, Rheinhold, a POW during World War II. I'm sure he's here today, along with her son and daughter-in-law.

So would you now please help me welcome Mary Lou Webber. [Rising applause.]

Mary Lou, it's an honor for me to present this award to you on behalf of the past national commanders, the DAV Past National Commander Award to Mary Lou Webber, Outstanding Member of the Year 1995. Congratulations. [Applause.]

Mrs. MARY LOU WEBBER. I would like to thank the past national commanders for this award. I would also like to thank my unit, Valley City, North Dakota, Number 4, for nominating me. I belong to a small unit in a small state, but in North Dakota we have big hearts for our veterans.

Thank you again. [Applause.]

Commander MCMASTERS. Commander Barbara, thank you very much for fulfilling your pledge that you made in Dayton when you said you'd stand shoulder to shoulder with us.

Each year, the DAV selects an Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year. The award is presented to an individual who has overcome personal, social and physical barriers to excel in life, an individual who serves as a mentor to all disabled veterans.

The Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year inspires courage in the face of fear, strength in the face of hardship and achievement in the face of defeat. Ned Clapp is such a man.

Ned always wanted to fly. As a boy, he was fascinated with planes and flying. He dreamed of one day being a pilot and set out to make his dream come true. He followed in his father's footsteps to West Point to pursue a career as an Army pilot. But after graduating and receiving his commission to 2nd lieutenant in 1970, he wound up in Vietnam with the 101st Airmobile Division as an artillery forward observer.

While serving with an infantry company during a battalion sweep to locate a North Vietnamese Army base camp near Phu Bai, Vietnam, Ned stepped on a booby trap. It was the same day the company platoon leader had told him a helicopter was on its way to take him back for his promotion to 1st lieutenant.

The incoming helicopter rushed him to a hospital for lifesaving, emergency surgery, where he suffered the loss of his right leg below the knee and half of his left foot. He hopes for a career as an Army pilot changed forever, but not his dream to fly.

While an outpatient at Fitzsimmons Army Medical Center in Denver, Ned obtained his private pilot license in 1972. He went on to earn a commercial pilot license, commercial instrument rating, sailplane rating and multi-engine rating, using his GI Bill.

He returned to active duty in 1973 and served as a mechanized infantry and field artillery officer. But increasing physical difficulty for the young captain led Ned to accept a medical discharge in 1975.

Ned left the military and went to work for Denver Avionics to learn the aircraft electronics business under the VA's Vocational

Rehab Program. He eventually purchased a business offering flight training, aircraft charter, maintenance and aircraft sales. Before selling the business in 1981, he amassed 5,123 hours of flying time.

Ned also started a computer business offering bookkeeping and accounting services to small businesses, which he continues to operate on a small scale. He has used his computer expertise to help all veterans organizations in the Fargo area set up their computer systems, including the Fargo DAV National Service Office.

In September 1985, Ned joined the Department of Veterans Affairs as a prosthetic representative trainee. Today he is the chief of Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service at the Fargo VA Medical Center, where he strives to ensure that veterans received all the services they need to function outside the hospital setting. During his tenure, the service has grown from serving 2,200 disabled veterans per year to more than 8,000 per year. Under Ned's supervision, the Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service has become one of the most highly regarded services at that medical center.

A life member of DAV Chapter Number 1 in Fargo, North Dakota, Ned is also a dedicated family man. He and his wife, Deborah, are the proud parents of three sons: Griffin, Jim and Adam. All of the boys play baseball, a Clapp family passion.

Last year, Ned and Debbie took in 130 games coaching, observing and score-keeping with the boys. Ned is in his fourth year of coaching Babe Ruth baseball. He is also a member of the Fargo Babe Ruth Baseball League Board of Directors and has also coached youth soccer and youth football.

In 1991, Ned attended his first National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic at Snowmass in Aspen, Colorado. He returned to clinics at Crested Butte, Colorado in 1992 and 1993. He now owns his own mono-ski and skis in Minnesota and Montana with his sons and their friends.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming a man who has overcome all obstacles to follow his dreams, a man who strives to live each day to its fullest and helps those around him live theirs fully as well: DAV's 1996 Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year, Mr. Ned Clapp. I'm going to present this plaque to you, Ned. It says:

For conspicuous and meritorious effort in overcoming a severe service-connected disability to the end that you have achieved success and a high order of accomplishment in your vocational effort of choice. Further, that such consistent and noteworthy accomplishment will ever serve as an inspiration and challenge to your comrades.

It's signed Thomas A. McMasters, National Commander, and Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant. Congratulations. [Applause.]

Mr. NED CLAPP. Thank you very much. I'm blown away. I remember thinking when I was 2nd lieutenant in Vietnam that I would much rather be dead than messed up, because once you're messed up, there is no future. And through a lot of other people's efforts I'm where I am today. The VA and the DAV have been my safety net. It's always nice to have somebody to go to when you need help, and both of these people or these groups of people have been a tremendous help to me and to my family. It really is truly unbelievable.

This is what the DAV and the VA are all about. It's helping guys like me who have suffered an injury or some other disability as a result of serving their country in a military capacity to return to a normal, or as normal a life as they can. And I hope—I like to think that my life has just been normal. I don't think of myself as an outstanding person or have done outstanding things. I just think of myself as normal, but it's nice to have help of the people like the DAV and the VA to do it.

Thank you. I am so humbled by this, it's unbelievable. Thank you, thank you, thank you. [Rising applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. Each year, thousands of DAV and Auxiliary members dedicate countless hours of volunteer work as part of the VA Voluntary Services or VAVS Program. And each year, it is with great pleasure and pride that the national commander recognizes one DAV and one Auxiliary member for their outstanding volunteer efforts through the George H. Seal Memorial Award.

Many of us knew and loved George Seal, and we will always remember him. For more than ten years, George served as the DAV's National VAVS representative. He was also a member of the National VAVS Advisory Committee for many years. For George, the VAVS Program was a passion from the time he became involved with the program in 1952 until his death in 1977.

Therefore, it is only fitting that his name graces this award, presented each year to honor one DAV and one Auxiliary member for their outstanding volunteer efforts on behalf of hospitalized veterans and their families.

This year's recipients are testimony of the spirit, dedication and love that our organization's volunteers demonstrate through their work with hospitalized veterans nationwide.

The 1996 George H. Seal Memorial Award goes to DAV member Tillman Rutledge of DAV Chapter Number 5, San Antonio, Texas. [Applause.] We also present the George H. Seal Memorial Award to Auxiliary member Dorothy Marie Waters of Auxiliary Unit Number 83, Round Lake, Illinois. [Applause.]

Mr. Rutledge has been a VAVS volunteer for more than 20 years at the Audie L. Murphy VA Medical Center in San Antonio. He has donated more than 25,000 hours of service to improve the quality of life for hospitalized veterans. What does Mr. Rutledge do? Anything that needs doing. He can be found working at any number of tasks for the Voluntary Service Office, the Chaplain's Service and Recreation Service. In addition, Mr. Rutledge is the State VAVS chairman.

Though he suffers from the effects of being a former prisoner of war, which included poor nutrition and physical abuse, Mr. Rutledge never lets up on his volunteer efforts to help his fellow veterans. He is not only a great volunteer, he is a true inspiration for the entire VAVS Program.

Please join me in welcoming outstanding VAVS volunteer Tillman Rutledge. [Rising applause.]

The inscription is: "George H. Seal Memorial Award Winner 1996, DAV, Tillman J. Rutledge, San Antonio Medical Center, Texas."

Mr. TILLMAN J. RUTLEDGE. Thank you. Is anybody left out there? I can't see anything. [Laughter.] Anyway, good afternoon, if you're

still there. Thank you, Commander McMasters, for those very nice remarks. I'm not sure I deserve them, but I do appreciate them.

Before my remarks, I'd like to introduce two outstanding ladies, one of the sweetest, nicest and strongest persons I've ever known, my wife and best friend, Joyce, without whose support and patience I'd probably be lost. And she was also one of the first volunteers at Audie Murphy, but after 50-plus surgeries, she's down to one day a week, and that's Sunday with her TV crew. She's sitting down there somewhere. [Applause.]

And Miss Donna Charles, chief of Volunteer Service, South Texas Veterans Health Care System—that's part of this reorganization title—who thought me worthy of nomination and nominated me for this most prestigious award, and who is also a dear friend. She's sitting down there with Joyce. [Applause.] Thank you. Thank you, Joyce and DJ.

When Tom and I finally made connections on 29 April, 1996, Joyce and I had just returned from a VAVS BPP trip, Benefit for Texas Program Trip, to West Texas and the Panhandle, and that's a long ways in Texas, further from San Antonio to where we were there to here. When Tom told me what he wanted to talk to me about, that the committee had called or faxed him that I was the selectee for the 19th Annual George H. Seal Memorial Award, as I recall, I was quiet, and Tom asked if I was still there.

I told him I was, but I was tired and flabbergasted, shocked, delighted and at a loss for words. And he replied, "Well, you have about three months to come up with something." So I've got a few.

I told Tom and Bruce Nitsche, my boss here in Washington—here in Washington, how about that?—when he called me later to also congratulate me, that I do not do what I do for awards and I would not take on all that I have for awards. That wasn't and is not my commitment. But I most certainly would accept this great honor and recognition award and what it meant with gratitude and honor.

They both replied that they knew that and both were very happy and glad for me that I had received it. I truly appreciated that also.

I love doing what I do. Some good close friends tell me I don't know how to say No. I've never been nominated for this award before. This was my first. I did receive Secretary Brown's Exceptional Volunteer Award with diamonds in 1994. After talking to Tom, though, it suddenly dawned on me, I'm only the 19th recipient. If the procedure was such that—and it would be wrong to do it this way, of course—that a volunteer at every VAMC was to receive this award, and Audie Murphy's lot came up last, it would be the year 2149 before Audie Murphy received it. Wow!

Another thought. Can being a DAV volunteer get any better than this? I don't think so.

And speaking of VAVS and BPP: Get involved. DAV is still Number 1, in VAVS, but you're needed in both of these programs. Remember, we slipped a little bit last year in volunteers and hours.

I want to thank the committee for considering me worthy of this great honor. I'm also grateful to Audie Murphy for feeling so honored, Mr. Coronado, our outstanding director, and all the staff at Audie Murphy. Thank you. It's great. And Don is absolutely thrilled.

Also, to receive this honor on the 50th anniversary of VAVS is particularly significant, at least to me.

One last comment: I could not do all that I do on my own. I would not even try. I am loaded with responsibilities and duties. Any abilities I have, any strengths that I possess come from a Higher Being. I will humbly accept this recognition in great honor, but to Him goes all the praise and the glory.

God bless America, America's veterans, the DAV, our dedicated VA health care givers, and our DAV and DAVA volunteers who honestly give of their time and talents. Thank you so very, very much. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. Our next George H. Seal Memorial Award recipient has been a volunteer at the North Chicago VA Medical Center for—are you ready for this?—43 years. Dorothy Marie Waters has donated more than 32,000 hours of her time to make a difference in veterans' lives.

Volunteering is a love affair for Dorothy. She brings a bright smile and a warm touch into the lives of hospitalized veterans every day.

This tremendous woman travels 40 miles round trip to and from the medical center to do her volunteer work. She begins her day as a volunteer at 4:30 each morning, preparing coffee and refreshments for other volunteers, where her cheerful nature starts everyone's day off right. That's just the beginning. Ms. Waters' volunteer duties include community affairs, media support and information services, which she carries out with the same great enthusiasm.

Ms. Waters' dedication and commitment to her volunteer work with hospitalized veterans at the medical center have brought quality and integrity to the meaning of volunteer services. It's volunteers like Ms. Waters who make DAV volunteers the best in the world.

Please join me in welcoming outstanding Auxiliary VAVS volunteer Dorothy Marie Waters. [Rising applause.]

I'm also going to read the inscription: "The George H. Seal Memorial Award winner, 1996, DAVA, Dorothy Marie Waters, North Chicago VA Medical Center, Illinois."

You know, when I called Dorothy, she was on vacation. I think it was the first vacation that she had taken—well, according to her 43 years of volunteer work and the number of hours that she has, it might be the first one ever. But she had such a good strong voice, it was something that made me step back a little bit and say I hope I'm like this when I'm this age. [Laughter and applause.]

Ms. DOROTHY MARIE WATERS. Now, I'm not a big speaker like the rest of these people, but all I have to say, I thank you very much for the gift, and I thank my chief, Lisa Howard, who is out in the audience, who sent my name in for the award. And I love my volunteering. And as I say, I go there five days a week, and that's what keeps me young. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. We all know how lucky we are to be members of a great organization like the DAV, but what does it feel like to be the luckiest member of the DAV? The person I'm about to introduce can tell you. He was the luckiest of 104 DAV members who shared in this year's DAV \$250,000 Sweepstakes. He won the \$100,000 Grand Prize Award.

Not only is he the luckiest person I know, he's also retired and lives in Pensacola, Florida, with his lovely wife, Mavis. That means he has the time to enjoy his grand prize and someone to help spend it.

Please join me in welcoming the man who says he'll certainly believe in miracles from now on, DAV member Robert Kilpatrick. It's pay day, Robert! [Rising applause.]

Mr. ROBERT KILPATRICK. I know you don't have to be known to win now, but you do have to have a ticket. And I thank all of you, and God bless all of you. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. We're all certainly happy for Mr. Kilpatrick and wish him the very best with his grand prize check. Robert, several members have volunteered to help you carry that check to the bank for a small fee, if you're interested. [Laughter.]

On a more serious note, I want to thank everyone who made the sweepstakes such a success. It's great to award so many prizes to our members, but the biggest winners of all are our DAV state department service programs. Every DAV state department shares in the proceeds of donations from the DAV \$250,000 Sweepstakes. Thanks to the sweepstakes, departments can finance and expand state-level services to care for more disabled veterans and their families than ever before. That's the greatest prize of all.

The adjutant will now read the names of the convention committee advisors that I have appointed and who received the approval of the National Executive Committee at its most recent meeting. Mr. Adjutant.

Adjutant WILSON. Credentials, Charles D. Luttjohann; General Resolutions and Membership, Jerry P. Steelman, Rick Surratt; Legislation and Veterans Rights, Thomas L. Tomlinson, Richard F. Schultz; Constitution and Bylaws, Fred R. Bristol and Edward G. Galian; Finance and Dues, Earl D. Walker, Richard E. Patterson; Employment, Michael Godich, Jr., Ronald W. Drach; Hospital and Voluntary Services, Henry A. Veillette, Norman B. Hartnett; Nomination of National Officers, Gene A. Murphy, William E. Leach. Thank you.

Commander McMASTERS. Ladies and gentlemen, if you will please rise, I will ask the chaplain to lead us in a closing prayer.

Chaplain WILKIE. Let us pray. Father, we've heard a lot of words today, a lot of rhetoric, a lot of promises of help, but we raise our eyes and know that our help truly comes from God. Therefore, Father, help us that we may build upon the foundations that have been laid, that we might be able to construct a facility that truly will bring service and assistance to those to whom we are dedicated to serve.

Take us now to our places of refreshment and rest that we may arrive back at this place in the morning ready to build that building, that house of service. Amen.

Commander McMASTERS. The convention is in recess until 10:00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

[Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 3:55 o'clock p.m., July 28, 1996.]

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION

July 29, 1996

The First Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans 75th National Convention convened in the Grand Ballroom of the New Orleans Hilton Riverside, New Orleans, Louisiana, Monday morning, July 29, 1996, and was called to order at 10:00 o'clock a.m. by Commander Thomas McMaster III.

Commander THOMAS A. McMASTERS III. The convention will come to order.

In opening the First Business Session of the 75th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans, it is fitting and proper that we render the respect due to the flag. Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

[Pledge of Allegiance.]

Commander McMASTERS. We will now be led in prayer by our national chaplain, the Reverend Oscar Wilkie.

Chaplain WILKIE. Again, as we begin another day of business and consideration, let us take a moment of silence to ask God to remember and to bless those who are ill. We have some of our people that are in the hospital, that have been taken since we have been here, I understand are doing well.

Let us remember all of those who are in need or distress, either physically or emotionally, in a moment of silence.

[Moment of silence.]

Chaplain WILKIE. Once again, we pause to bring praise to You, Father, that You have given to us a good night of rest, that you have brought us again to this happy hour that we might be able now to consider the business affairs of the Disabled American Veterans.

Again I ask Your blessings upon our commander, Tom McMasters, upon our adjutant, Art Wilson, and all of those who lead us, that we might indeed be able to consider the matters before us and do those things which are pleasing in Thy sight. Amen.

Commander McMASTERS. Please be seated.

In order for a delegate to be heard at this convention, he must be recognized by the Chair. Only those delegates at a microphone will be recognized. The delegate must state his name, chapter number, chapter number and the state he represents.

I call on the Credentials Committee for their first report.

Mr. VIRGIL A. BARNETT. Good morning. Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Credentials was called to order for the First Business Session by the advisor, Charles Luttjohann. The first order of business was the election of Credentials Committee chairman. Virgil Barnett was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, Virgil Barnett was elected chairman.

The next order of business was the nomination and election of the secretary. Jerry Worthington was nominated and elected as secretary.

The Credentials Committee met this morning in the Jasperwood Room at 7:00 o'clock at the New Orleans Hilton Riverside Hotel. Roll call showed 1,291 delegates; 50 alternates. This is a partial report for informational purposes only and reflects the registration at the close of registration at 4:00 o'clock on July 28th. At the present time, we have 471 chapters, 49 departments, 27 national officers, 10 past national commanders, for a total of 1,291 delegates, 50 alternates, and a total vote of 10,540.

This completes the partial report of the Credentials Committee, Commander. Thank you.

Commander McMASTERS. The first order of business of this convention is the adoption of the Rules. Printed copies of the Rules have been furnished to each registered delegate. The Chair will entertain a motion for the adoption of the Rules.

[Motion made from the floor.]

MEMBER. Comrade Commander, Massachusetts, Joseph R. Harold Chapter Number 10, seconds that motion.

Mr. ANTHONY FUSCO. Comrade Commander, Anthony Fusco, Brooklyn Chapter 28, New York.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay, Mr. Fusco, I'll recognize you.

Mr. FUSCO. I move to amend the Rules to incorporate the change which has been placed on the delegates' chairs this morning.

Commander McMASTERS. Would you please read that change so we all know what it is?

Mr. FUSCO. Yes, Mr. Commander. The following rule was discussed by the Convention Committee on Employment, and it is recommended to the national convention for adoption.

RESOLVED to amend:

Section 3.10, Rule 21(f), Committee on Employment. This committee shall consider all matters concerning all forms of employment of disabled veterans, as well as the preference rights and examination, appointments, retention, promotions or employment or reemployment rights in Federal Civil Service and in state, county and city governments. This committee will also consider matters relating to vocational rehabilitation, education and training, except provided by Title 38 in U.S. Code.

The new reading will only be the last sentence, which will read: "This committee will consider matters relating to vocational rehabilitation and training" period.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you, Mr. Fusco. Is there support? Mike 3.

Mr. RICHARD CHRISTOPHER. Richard Christopher, past department commander, Massachusetts, Chapter 115, so seconds the motion.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. We have the motion and support. Are you ready for the question? Are you ready for the question? Ready for the question. All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. It's carried.

I will now ask the national adjutant to read the Statement of Policy.

Adjutant WILSON. The Disabled American Veterans was founded on the principle that this nation's first duty to veterans is the rehabilitation of its wartime disabled. This principle envisions:

1. High quality hospital and medical care administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs for veterans with disabilities incurred or aggravated by service in America's armed forces.

2. Adequate compensation for the loss resulting from such service-connected disabilities.

3. Vocational rehabilitation and/or education to help the disabled veteran prepare for and obtain gainful employment.

4. Enhanced opportunities for employment and preferential job placement so that the remaining ability of the disabled veteran is used productively.

5. Adequate compensation to the widows and survivors of veterans whose deaths are held to be service-connected under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. It therefore follows that we will not take action on any resolution that proposes legislation designed to provide benefits for other than wartime, service-connected disability. We shall not oppose legislation beneficial to those veterans not classified as service-connected disabled, except when it is evident that such legislation will jeopardize benefits for service-connected disabled veterans.

While our first duty as an organization is to assist the service-connected disabled, their dependents and survivors, we will, within the limits of our resources, assist others in filing, perfecting and prosecuting their claims for benefits.

Since this represents the principle upon which our organization was founded, and since it is as sound at this time as it was in 1920, we hereby reaffirm this principle as the policy for the Disabled American Veterans.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you. The Chair will entertain a motion to adopt the Policy Statement. Mike 3.

Mr. FUSCO. Anthony Fusco, Brooklyn 28, New York, makes the motion to adopt.

Commander McMASTERS. Mike 1.

Mr. JAMES McCORMICK. Comrade Commander, McCormick, Chapter 46, State of Washington, second the motion.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. The motion has been made and supported. Are we all ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. It's carried.

On July 11th, 141 new Ford vans left DAV National Headquarters for VA medical centers in 35 states and Puerto Rico. Today, those vans, purchased in partnership between the national organization and the departments and chapters nationwide, are serving veterans. As I speak, volunteers are using the new vans to transport sick and disabled veterans to and from VA medical centers for needed medical care.

We can all be proud of this accomplishment, and I thank each and every one of you who worked so hard to make it happen.

I wish everyone could have been present for the tremendous drive-away ceremony on July 11th. It was a truly impressive sight to see.

Since I know many of you couldn't be there, we have a special treat for you. We brought along a video of the event. And after viewing this video, I believe you will agree with me when I say money spent to serve disabled veterans is money well spent.

[Video presentation.]

Commander McMASTERS. The film was quite a tribute to the DAV Transportation Network, wasn't it? Quite a tribute to all the DAV and Auxiliary members who make that program one of the greatest successes ever mounted by the volunteers of any organization bar none.

It's also a tribute to a man of quiet strength, a man who understands the dedicated spirit of our members, a man whose great dream is to help those members achieve their own dreams of service to their fellow veterans and their families.

An Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, this man dedicated many years to our National Service Program. He knows service. He knows the deepest meaning of the word, whether that service is provided by a DAV NSO in a big city or a DAV member in a small rural town. He is a man who worked hard over the past three years to help rebuild the once shattered financial base of the Disabled American Veterans, and, more importantly, to rebuild the many services our employees and our members provide to those whose own service has kept America free and prosperous.

I know the many long hours that one quiet, earnest man devoted to the success we saw in that film about our vans, and many other DAV successes as well. I remember the steady hand of his leadership. I remember his compassionate heart, a heart that beats in unison with the compassionate hearts of our rank and file members, his personal warmth, his intelligence, his kindness, his inner strength. These are the gifts he brings to life and these are the gifts he brings to the DAV.

Ladies and gentlemen, here for this report to the national convention is our national adjutant, Art Wilson. [Applause]

Adjutant WILSON. Thank you, Commander. I'm humbled by that introduction. Thank you, sir.

With your permission, before I get started, I'd like to report to you a little bit on some of the activities of yesterday, and it's kind of a postscript to the great opening that we had. Before two hours had passed following the conclusion of our opening session, I was in my room and the phone rang, and it was Secretary Brown. And he was in his car in Washington. He'd flown back with the President on Air Force One.

And I want to let you know, and he asked me to tell you that he apologizes for not staying last night as he usually does, to greet so many of you. He had a death in his immediate family, which he was aware of when he was here, but it was post-haste that he retreat to Washington soon.

But he also wanted to tell me that he flew back to Washington with the President, and the President was emotionally moved by the reception and the warmth that you extended to him in his visit here yesterday, and that's a tribute to you. [Applause.]

Thank you again, Tom, for that nice introduction, and let me take this opportunity to express to you my gratitude for the kind remarks you made about our DAV staff in your report yesterday.

Make no doubt about it, you were right on the mark when you described the past year as one of extraordinary success. Each member at this convention has now received a copy of DAV's annual report, and I say to you the proof is in the pudding. But those on the

national staff know that we're not alone in the responsibility for that success, not by a long shot.

Tom, your support has been and remains tremendous and is very much appreciated.

We'd also like to thank all of your national officers; our National Executive, Finance and Interim Committees; the great team of our national, department and chapter service officers; our hospital service coordinators; all of the selfless people who gave so generously of their time as volunteers in our VAVS, Transportation and other programs; everyone who takes part in our Benefits Protection Team initiative; all of our chapter and department leaders; and, of course, all of our wonderful DAV And Auxiliary members throughout this great country.

What a team we are in the Disabled American Veterans! What an incredible team! You know, we're a remarkable organization, making remarkable contributions to the lives of disabled veterans and their families. You just saw dramatic evidence of that contribution in the film that we showed. What an achievement, sending 141 Transportation Network vans on the road in one single day.

Just think about what that means to the thousands upon thousands who count on the DAV for a ride to that all-important VA medical treatment. Yes, our organization, and your work in our organization, have a deeply meaningful impact on the lives of individual veterans in our society as a whole.

And I'd like to say a word of particular thanks to those chapters and departments that raise the funds and spent so generously from their accumulated assets in order to participate in the purchase of those vans. This is exactly the purpose for which DAV units raise money in the first place.

As we all know, this isn't an achievement of any single part of the Disabled American Veterans. This great work grows out of a lively, thriving partnership that includes each and every one of us: Our national organization, our departments and our chapters; both the DAV and its Auxiliary; our HSCs; our volunteers; and our service officers, national, department and chapter.

Take away any gear in that mighty engine of service, particularly our service officers and those individual members who supply nearly all of our volunteer force, and we're left with an engine that will not run. But our engine of service is running, it's running fast and it's running smoothly, because we work together.

Our unity is the fuel for DAV's engine of service, our source of power as we live up to our purpose as it is laid out in the DAV Mission Statement, and I quote, "building better lives for all of our nation's disabled veterans and their families."

You know, now I have something really great to tell you about, and you can't miss it. I didn't realize it was going to be that big. Commander McMasters and I and the Department of Colorado, and several other DAV leaders throughout the country, thought we should reinforce that unity wherever possible, and to do so in such a way that provides greater responsibility in the stewardship of DAV resources.

To get that job done, we turned to a group of DAV leaders who offer a deep and thorough understanding of what stewardship means, the DAV National Service Foundation. You know, the DAV

was built on a simple but powerful concept: the idea of one disabled veteran extending the hand of help to another. And what the Department of Colorado and the National Service Foundation are doing is extending that philosophy to a new level.

We envision a vehicle by which DAV chapters and departments can help other chapters and departments as we strive to provide that promised DAV service. It's a means by which those who have been blessed can be of greater help to those who have not.

There are some important factors driving the need to develop a greater equity in the way DAV resources are used to serve veterans, factors that are external to DAV. First, there's the National Charities Information Bureau, the NCIB, the most vigilant agency keeping an eye on our nation's nonprofit organizations. Though NCIB is not a government agency, it does not have plenty of clout. And their standards call for charities to have net assets available for the following fiscal year, usually not more than twice the current year's expenses.

Now, I don't need to tell you that the DAV national organization, with only eight months of operating expenses in reserve, is well within the NCIB guidelines, but we all know that some chapters and a few departments and some Auxiliary units are not.

Is this matter of serious concern? You can bet on it! The Internal Revenue Service is turning an ever sharper eye on the nonprofit community. They're taking about regulation far stricter than what we face today, and one of those very high-profile targets is the accumulation of excess resources.

Why did the National Executive Committee promulgate Regulation Number 9, which mirrors the NCIB's standard nearly word for word? You don't have to look any further than what I just shared with you about NCIB and IRS. The NEC didn't want the reputation of the entire DAV soiled because some in the DAV are hiding large sums of money. We don't need that type of coverage on the network news.

Sure, these are three big sticks prompting the DAV to make sure that all chapters and departments do what darn near all chapters and departments are doing already, using their resources responsibly to meet the needs of their nation's veterans. If we have a stick, though, we should have a carrot, and that's the thought behind the new Colorado Trust, which will be a function of the DAV National Service Foundation.

The sweet thing about this carrot is the way it doubles the money that chapters and departments invest in it. Every dollar a chapter or department puts in the Colorado Trust will be matched dollar for dollar by the national organization for up to \$3 million a year.

The program was named the Colorado Trust because the leaders of the Department of Colorado come forward looking for ways to help as many disabled veterans as possible. They, along with the National Service Foundation, are providing the seed money to get this project off the ground. And the Colorado Trust name will remain the same until someone else matches the generosity of the Department of Colorado.

This program will pinpoint monetary aid where it's most needed to support the services of our chapters and departments that they

provide for disabled veterans and their families. The fact is, this is a designated fund. Its monies can only be used for service projects, and that policy will govern all grants. But it will do much more than simply enhance the work of our chapters and departments. I believe this new program will reinvigorate the service posture of the entire DAV.

Because of its promise, we will move deeper into the communities we serve and deeper into the lives of disabled veterans and their families. And we'll do so in such a way that is directed not so much by the national organization as by our chapters and our departments.

And this is where the DAV National Service Foundation comes into the picture. As you may know, the Foundation is a separate nonprofit organization. It's not part of the DAV national organization. The Colorado Trust will be a separate fund within and administered by the Foundation, not the national organization of DAV. The fund will not be mixed with the other Service Foundation existing funds to which you have been donating for years and will make further contributions tomorrow.

The new program does not change or interfere with the Foundation's current program in any way, nor will it affect the way contributions are made to the Foundation's standard programs. Rather, the Colorado Trust will be a separate designated account. Grants from the Trust will be made to chapters and departments upon the advice and recommendations of a special Advisory Committee made up of representatives from each of DAV's 21 national districts.

And you'll find the details of how the Colorado Trust will work in a booklet that'll be distributed to you as you leave the hall this morning. But let me emphasize one point right now. There is a tremendous need out there among the veterans our organization was created to serve, and all of us, every one of us should keep in mind that thought today as we celebrate our diamond anniversary 75th National Convention.

You know, the strings of the government's safety nets are coming unraveled under the weight of federal spending cuts. The support structures that disabled veterans have counted on for years are being slowly whittled away. Not only are the various components of the DAV family under pressure to spend down excess financial resources. At the same time, the veterans we serve are facing ever greater pressures in their daily lives.

So much needs to be done for veterans on the wards of our hospitals. Needy veterans being cared for in their homes are waiting for our knock on their door. The psychiatrically disabled veteran who is living under America's bridges requires something more from us than just a hand-out. And the need goes on and on and on. We cannot, in good conscience, sit on our resources while these veterans are waiting for our help, some of them waiting in desperation. We cannot and must not deprive these veterans when we have on hand the resources to help them.

You know, the national organization has made steady financial progress since 1993. However, our financial status is not as yet as strong as it should be. As I mentioned before, the national organization ended 1995 with barely eight months' reserve on hand. Well,

I can tell you, if the NCIB or IRS are going to look at the DAV reserves with a jaundiced eye, it won't be the reserves of the national organization; it'll be those of our chapters and our departments.

Yet facing the tremendous need that exists, the national organization is ready to take a risk. We're ready to spend up to \$3 million annually from our reserves in order to set an example to those chapters and departments whose large reserves could bring embarrassment to the entire organization.

But let's concentrate on the position side of what we're doing here. In the film that you just saw, the drive-away, we saw a terrific example of what can happen when the national and the department organizations and chapters work as a team. Together, as a team, we put \$3 million out there to do something truly meaningful for disabled veterans who need VA medical treatment. And that, my friends, is what I call service. And together, as a team, we can also accomplish great things well into the future through the Colorado Trust, and doing so in such a way that's guided by our chapters and our departments.

Following this convention, an announcement of this program will go to all chapters and departments, and the grants program will officially begin just as soon as possible. The promise of the Colorado Trust is really, really exciting, and that's why I'm excited now to invite to the podium the Department of Colorado leadership. Department Commander Jimmie Snider, Department Adjutant Mike Terry, Rudy Vargas, who's chairman of the Board of Directors for the department, and Sam Vigil from Chapter 7, would you please step forward, please. [Applause.]

Mr. SAMUEL VIGIL. I'm Vigil from Murphy Borelli, Chapter Number 7, Denver, Colorado. Given this golden opportunity at the 75th Annual Convention, National Convention, I'm making a donation to the National Service Foundation of Colorado Trust from the chapter in Murphy Borelli, a small chapter with a big heart, come up with enough money for \$50,000 for the good cause.

Thank you, Commander. [Applause.]

Adjutant WILSON. Department Commander Jimmie Snider.

Mr. JIMMIE SNIDER. Art, at this time, I'd like to present you with a check from the Department of Colorado Disabled American Veterans also with the DAV eagle on it for you, a check for \$500,000. [Applause.]

Adjutant WILSON. For those of you in Chapter 7, they just said they didn't know the department was going to beat them on their amount. [Laughter.]

Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you so much. You have now made the Colorado Trust a reality. Every member of the Department of Colorado can take pride that their organization was the first to step up to the challenge, and every single DAV member will be in your debt.

Well, you know, Commander McMasters reminded me this morning that I owe you a report on more than one project. I'm going to keep this part of my remarks as brief as possible, asking each one of you to take time to read the 1995 annual report that was in your registration packet, and once you've done so, I know that you'll be pleased with your national organization.

You'll see that we've made mighty strides in rebuilding the financial stability required for a sound DAV future. In that respect, I can't say enough about the help I receive from our entire staff, including Rick Patterson, executive director of National Headquarters, and I also offer my congratulations and gratitude to his staff: Inspector General Bob Gushee; Communications Director Tom Keller; fund-raising directors Max Hart and Jerry Lape; Comptroller Anita Blum; Charlie Luttjohann, assistant executive director for purchasing and membership; Greg Jackson, assistant executive director for administration and personnel; Charitable Programs Director Nancy O'Brien; Computer Service Center Manager, Dennis Painter; and all of our employees at Cold Spring Headquarters in Cold Spring, Kentucky.

You know, the 1995 annual report also spells out the progress we made in service to disabled veterans and their families, and for that I want to personally thank Washington Headquarters Executive Director Dave Gorman; Service Director Ken Wolfe and his staff, Jerry Steelman, Tony Baskerville and Mike Walsh, and recently retired Darrel Babcock; Legislative Director Rick Schultz and his staff, Rick Surratt and Joe Violante and Len Gilmer, who now works in our Court of Veterans Appeals staff; and, of course, National Employment Director Ron Drach and Voluntary Services Director Bruce Nitsche.

It's a huge team effort, and they do wonderful, wonderful work.

And all of our staffs, you know, are fortunate to have great support teams, and these are the folks that make sure that we get it right the first time. And my personal thanks go to each and every one of those support personnel for everything that they do. Our employees in Cincinnati and Washington are doing a tremendous job, and they're doing it just for you.

And what can I say about our national service officers and their staffs cross the country? What a dedicated group! These are the men and women who represent the DAV where the rubber meets the road in individual contacts with disabled veterans and their families every day. And last year they secured benefits for well in excess of 200,000 veterans, their dependents and survivors, and yes, they did that in just one single year. Our NSOs are the backbone of DAV's national organization, make no mistake about it, and I thank each and every one of them, as well as their clerical staffs.

And now another important announcement, and this one might interest you even more. And I'm pleased to report to you that the National Headquarters Fund-Raising Program for departments is having another tremendous year. It's a little too early to say, but I suspect we'll see an additional distribution from this program at the end of this year, just like we did last December, and I'm sure that's good news for sure.

Please encourage your members and your chapters to support this program. It's a winner across the board. It's a winner for all of us, particularly our departments, a winner for the hundreds of thousands of veterans who count on the services provided by those DAV departments.

You know, I had a chance to visit several of our State organizations this spring as we progressed through our department conven-

tion season. And that's an odyssey I always enjoy, but this year the experience was particularly rewarding. I see a great deal of unity growing inside the DAV, and I don't mean to say that our departments and chapters are without problems, but I do see us pulling together quite nicely under the banner of a common purpose. And that's exciting, and I urge every one of you to keep the momentum going, for we in the national organization will keep that momentum going as well.

We had a great membership year, but we're not about to slow down, because we can't. And the past year showed us that hard work is needed, and what hard work can really do. But you know and I know it's going to get tougher in the world of veterans' affairs. We need to involve everyone and keep everyone involved, and that's particularly true of the younger veterans who are now coming into our organization from the Gulf War and the other relatively recent conflicts.

Finally, I can't sit down till I mention the issue of voting one more time. If there's one message that I want to share with you between now and November, it's this: Vote! Vote! If there's one message that I hope that you'll share with the members of your chapters and departments when you go home from this national convention it's vote! Vote!

On a more personal note, the cause of our organization, its many programs and its voice before our government give real meaning to my life. Of the many things that I have in common with you, that commitment and the sense of fulfillment are the most special to me. Next to the joy I derive from the life of my own family, I take my greatest joy from sharing my life with you, the leaders and the members of the Disabled American Veterans.

Thank you so much, and thank you for your attention to my message about the Colorado Trust, and thank for you for allowing me to serve as your national adjutant. Thank you. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you very much, Mr. Wilson, for that incredible report.

The Chair recognizes Mike 3.

Mrs. LEE BORGES. Delegate Lee Borgen, commander of Prescott Chapter 16 in Arizona. As a proud member of District 18, Chapter 16 wishes to donate at this time \$100 to the Colorado Trust. Permission to approach the podium.

Commander McMASTERS. We'll make a note of that.

At this time, the Chair will entertain a motion to accept the adjutant's report.

Mr. FUSCO. Comrade Commander, Anthony Fusco, Chapter 28, Brooklyn, New York. I'd like to make a motion that we accept Art's fine report and the hard work that Art does for this department.

Commander McMASTERS. I recognize Mike 3 and accept the motion. Is there support? Mike 1.

Mr. FRANK WEBB. Frank Webb, Chapter Number 9, Houston, Texas, seconds the motion.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you. We have a motion and support. Are we ready for the question? Ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. It's carried. [Applause.]

I would like to call on Charles D. Luttjohann, the membership director, for his report.

Mr. CHARLES D. LUTTJOHANN. Thank you. Thank you. Nice to see you all today. You know, just two short years ago, the DAV National Constitution and Bylaws were unanimously changed by the delegates at the Chicago national convention, transforming the DAV exclusively into a life membership organization. Already our members have taken full advantage of that program and have built the life membership count to 853,362 members, full paid life members, I might add, by the end of the last membership year. In addition, we have 229,076 members who are in the process of paying their full paid life membership. That comes to a total of 1,082,438 members, which is certainly a very staggering number.

I think that's an exciting number, and it's exciting to me. But what's really exciting is last year, when you consider only 27 departments made their national goal for membership, and then this year every single department in the entire country made their goal. Now, that's interesting to me. That's incredible! [Applause.]

You know, when you look back at a few short years ago when people were struggling just to get annual members to make their goals, and now we're getting full paid life members, and we're still making our goals. In addition to every single department making goal, ten departments had every single chapter in their entire department make goal, which is also incredible.

And I tell you what's neat about that. Let me give you three of them here: California, Florida and New York—which are the three largest departments in the country—every single one of their chapters made goal. So let's hear it for them. [Applause.]

I think that's clearly an example of what can happen when Team DAV takes the field to play an essential role in securing better lives for America's disabled veterans.

This is always the time each year when I have the opportunity to announce the winners of the individual division awards for overall membership recruitment, and if I could enlist the commander's assistance on this, I'd appreciate it.

First I'd like to announce the winner of our Annual Wainwright Award, and that particular award is one that recognizes the department with the largest overall numeric gain in members, and the winner this year was the Department of California, and Larry Polzin is here to accept that award. [Applause.] That increase was 5,914 over last year's membership. By the way, the award recipients are eligible to say something, if you'd like. I don't want to run them off.

Our next award is the Marx Award, which each year is given to the department with the highest percentage over their goal, and the recipient of that award this year is Alaska, and Jimmey Mayo, the department commander, will pick up that award. [Applause.]

I'm not going to have Jimmey move here very far, because I don't want to wear him out today. The Department of Alaska has gotten to be pretty much a regular up here over the last four years, and the Division V winner this year for the highest percentage over their goal within that division was obviously Alaska, since they were the largest one in the entire country. So in addition to the plaque, Jimmey Mayo, as the department commander, wins the patented Master's membership jacket. We even went to green this year to signify the Master's in Membership. [Applause.]

Now, that's enough. He's sticking around wanting to get more. That's enough.

The Division IV winner this year was the Department of Iowa at 104.94 percent, and the recipient of that award will be Robert Wonderlich, the department commander. Robert, could you come up? [Applause.]

The Department of Iowa also had all their chapters make goal, as did Alaska.

Division III, the Department of Maryland with 101.98 percent, and the recipient is Ray Chatary, department commander. Let's hear it for them. [Applause.] It's amazing how these fit every year, isn't it? [Laughter.] They're having to turn in their old ones. [Laughter.]

Division II. Division II, the Department of Indiana. The Department of Indiana, as many of you will know that follow population summaries, didn't take a whole lot of time to make their hundred percent. They were on it about the time we got back from convention last year. The Department of Indiana has dedicated themselves to being a leader in membership, and they don't plan on giving up that leadership role.

This year they won the Division II, and it wasn't anything real easy, because Arizona was right on their tail all the way and did a great job. But Indiana finished with 102.88 percent, and Ken Kersey is here, the department commander, to pick up the jacket. [Applause.]

From Division I—Division I's always a battle. You've got the largest departments in the country, and they take a great deal of pride in who the winner is. And this year an old winner came back, and we're real proud of that. The Department of Florida, with 102.82 percent nudged out New York, and Harry Warburton is here to pick up the award, the department commander. [Applause.]

Mr. HARRY WARBURTON. I will thank the Department of Florida for the outstanding job. Thank you. [Applause.]

Mr. LUTTJOHANN. All right. That concludes the division winners.

The only award that we have to present here today goes out to the top membership recruiter in the country. Anybody know who that might be? This year I didn't even write him a letter. I figured he'd show up here. He always does. For the last four years, he just shows up on stage about this time. This year, with kind of an astounding number of 1,195, my dear friend, Prospero Sodano from New York, is again our top membership recruiter. [Applause.]

We've just about concluded his wardrobe here. He's got every color we can come up with. We're going to start going to pants next year.

He doesn't want to say anything, but I'm telling you, that guy is a dynamo. He works membership, he lives membership. There was an article we did on him a while back, and his recommendation to anybody who wants to recruit members is follow up, follow up. And believe me, he does that. He's on people, and he's a dynamo, and we really appreciate him. Appreciate everything he does.

At this time, I want to finish this off, and I wouldn't typically do this, but in my estimation, anybody that recruits over a hundred members has really done a lot of work. And I know we're on strict

time schedule here today, and this takes a little time, but it takes an awful lot of time to get a hundred members, too.

So I want to recognize these individuals, and we can kind of hold off until—yell if you want to, when I mention their names. But these people, I believe, surely deserve some recognition. First of all, Michael Mastrean, with 104 members; Stan Lore with 104. Go ahead and yell. Just because I'm talking, don't think you don't have to yell. Roger Bourgerly with 104; Clyde Dartey, 105; Don Cox, 108; Stan Hoy, 108; Emmett Gore, 109; Bruce Kaplan, 112; Paul Newman, 114, makes movies, recruits. The guy's incredible!

William Coley, 114; Ken Kursey, 127; Ray Chatary, 127; Billy Braswell, 129; Robert Sinclair, 131; Kenny Kooyman, 147; Gary Burns, 151; John Parker, 152; Larry Jatho, 167; Bob Winterstien, 207; Raymond Hemple, 220; Dennis Gooden, 226; Coy Hennis, 316. I always like to mention Coy. He's one of our primary volunteers, one of the top volunteer recruiters throughout the country, always does a great job.

Jim Perciavalle with 392; and Richard Ladnier at 410, who was the runner up to Prospero this year.

So let's hear it for all them, and thank you all and keep up the great work. And that concludes my report. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you, Charlie, for that report.

I will now entertain a motion to accept the membership report. Mike 3.

Mr. RICHARD CHRISTOPHER. Richard Christopher, past department commander, Massachusetts, accepts the report.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. Is there support? Mike 1.

Mr. MANUEL F. LOZANO. Manny Lozano, Chapter 195, Pearland, Texas. I second that motion.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. We have the motion and the second. Are your ready for the question? Ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. That's carried.

At this time, I'll call on the National Finance Committee chairman, Earl D. Walker, for his report. Dean.

NEC 20th District EARL D. WALKER. National Commander McMasters, national officers, distinguished guests and fellow members of the Disabled American Veterans: Let me begin my report by recognizing my fellow members of the National Finance Committee: National Commander Tom McMasters; 12th District NEC Dorothy Schilling of Wisconsin; 13th District NEC Glen Vogel of Indiana; and 15th District NEC Francis McLaskey of Iowa.

As chairman of the National Finance Committee, I'm very pleased to deliver my report regarding the financial position of the national organization through the first six months of 1996. During the first six months of 1996, the DAV sent out 32.3 million pieces of fund-raising mail, and we expect to mail 61.2 million by the end of the year.

These mailings produced \$40.2 million in gross revenue as of 30 June. We believe gross revenues will reach \$85.1 million by year's end. That's a \$2 million increase over 1995.

Our 1996 mailings included 4.3 million pieces sent to DAV members under the Department Fund-Raising Program. The national organization expects to raise sufficient funds to meet the \$3.1 million distribution it is committed to make.

And though it is too early for promises, National expects to net more than \$3 per member that is promised to departments. If this hope is realized, departments will see an additional distribution this November, as they did at the end of last year.

The success of the Department Fund-Raising Program reflects very favorably upon our management and professional staff, our rank-and-file employees, the National Finance Committee and, most importantly, our members who give generously to the success of this program and the services we provide.

Over the past three years, the management and volunteer leadership of the DAV has been watching the Life Membership Fund with an eye toward ensuring its long-term viability. As of 30 June, 1996, the Life Fund had a net reserve of \$75 million. This compares to \$78.3 million at the same time last year. On July 1, 1996, the Fund distributed \$12.3 million to the national organization, chapters and departments.

The robust performance of the stock market over the last year and a half has strengthened the Fund's financial position. Two years of decreased distributions from the Fund have also lessened the burden on the Fund.

However, despite the Fund's excellent performance over the past 18 months, it must still be closely monitored. Based on reasonable projections and economic assumptions, we will still have 385,000 members by the end of 2009, when the Fund's balance will be depleted.

This is an improvement over what we heard in the Finance Committee's report a year ago, but the situation still clearly bears watching.

Before closing, let me thank the other NFC members, National Adjutant Art Wilson, DAV's professional staff, and you, Commander McMasters. I am grateful for the support you've given me in my role as Finance Committee chairman. It has been an honor to serve on this important committee, but it has been an even greater pleasure to watch the DAV rebuild the financial strength it needs as it marches forward in the future.

All of us understand that we are still traveling along the road toward the level of financial stability we believe our organization should enjoy. But the dark years are clearly in our past. Today we can take comfort and courage from the rapid progress we have made.

Commander McMasters, this concludes my report.

Commander MCMASTERS. Thank you, Dean. Thank you for all the hard work this year.

Mike 1.

Mr. FRANK WEBB. Commander, Frank Webb, delegate from Chapter Number 9, Houston, Texas, makes a motion to accept his report with gratitude and thanks.

Commander MCMASTERS. There's a motion on the floor. Is there support? Mike 3.

Mr. CHRISTOPHER. Richard Christopher, past department commander, Massachusetts, so seconds the motion.

Commander MCMASTERS. Okay. The motion has been made and supported. Are you ready for the question? Ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. It's carried. [Applause.]



**DISABLED AMERICAN
VETERANS**

Financial Statements for the Year Ended
December 31, 1995 and Independent Auditors'
Report

**Deloitte Touche
Tomasetti
International**

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

National Finance Committee
 Disabled American Veterans:

We have audited the accompanying statement of financial position of Disabled American Veterans (DAV) as of December 31, 1995, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of DAV's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, such financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of DAV at December 31, 1995 and the results of its operations and cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

As discussed in Note 2 to the financial statements, DAV changed its method of accounting for contributions received to conform with Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 116 and has changed its financial statement presentation to conform with Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 117.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

March 20, 1996

**Deloitte Touche
 Tomatsu
 International**

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION DECEMBER 31, 1995

ASSETS		LIABILITIES AND UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	
ASSETS:		LIABILITIES:	
Cash.....	\$ 2,887,417	Accounts payable.....	\$ 3,211,577
Accounts receivable.....	1,862,182	Accrued expenses:	
Solicitation materials.....	3,051,572	Salaries.....	766,344
Prepaid expenses.....	3,258,089	Sick leave.....	6,984,031
Investments, (Note 2).....	75,774,699	Pension (Note 5).....	3,057,150
Property & equipment, net (Note 2).....	8,788,990	Postretirement benefits (Note 6).....	8,894,000
Life Membership:		Deferred dues and service fees collected in advance (Note 4).....	3,705,137
Cash.....	266,471	Other.....	333,196
Investments (Note 2).....	69,981,499	Life Membership:	
		Accounts payable.....	115,768
		Reserve for future distribution of life membership dues (Note 4).....	70,132,202
		Total liabilities.....	97,199,405
		UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS:	
		General.....	68,229,486
		Net assets designated by the National Finance Committee (Note 3).....	442,028
		Total unrestricted net assets.....	68,671,514
TOTAL	\$165,870,919	TOTAL	\$165,870,919

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1995****SUPPORT AND REVENUE:**

Support:	
Contributions received primarily from direct mail solicitations (Note 2)	\$ 83,447,955
Contributed services and facilities, primarily services (Note 2)	13,863,739
List royalties	2,040,139
Bequests	1,381,758
Total support	<u>100,733,591</u>
Revenue:	
Membership dues and fees (Note 4)	8,325,760
Income from investments (principally dividends and interest)	3,028,518
Gain on sale of investments	1,843,475
Miscellaneous	423,601
Total revenue	<u>13,621,354</u>
Total support and revenue	<u>114,354,945</u>

EXPENSES:

Program Services:	
National Service Program	29,534,187
Legislative Service	639,400
Voluntary Service Program	14,066,296
National Employment Program	250,388
State Services, Relief Programs, and Memorials	3,981,489
Publications and Other Communications	2,632,528
Membership Services	4,563,329
Public Awareness	11,245,776
Total Program Services	<u>66,913,393</u>
Supporting Services:	
Fund Raising Costs	28,699,689
Administrative and General Expenses	2,899,917
Total Supporting Services	<u>31,599,606</u>
Total Expenses	<u>98,512,999</u>

INCREASE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	15,841,946
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UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS, Beginning of year	<u>52,829,568</u>
--	-------------------

UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS, End of year	<u>\$ 68,671,514</u>
--------------------------------------	----------------------

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1985

	National Service Program	Legislative Service	Voluntary Service Program	National Employment Program	Services, Raided Programs and Memorials	Publications and Other Communications	Membership Services	Public Awareness	Total Program Services	Fund Raising Costs	Administrative and General Expenses	Total Supporting Services	Total Expenses
Salaries (Note 2)	\$14,980,864	\$307,014	\$ 292,050	\$139,614		\$ 379,654	\$ 969,159		\$17,048,355	\$ 3,195,111	\$2,506,120	\$ 5,701,231	\$22,769,586
Employee benefits (Notes 5,6)	7,461,616	176,817	134,440	49,720		181,560	470,132		8,474,095	2,134,851	1,431,620	3,566,471	12,040,565
Payroll taxes	1,253,301	22,796	24,999	9,567		33,098	87,280		1,468,041	438,128	251,363	689,491	2,147,522
DAV transportation network - volunteers			12,284,493						12,284,493				12,284,493
DAV transportation network - grants			14,651,525						14,651,525				14,651,525
Other transportation costs			91,889						91,889				91,889
Other support costs			142,599						142,599				142,599
State Service Program	31,694				\$ 20,738				31,694				31,694
Memorials					3,632,083				3,632,083				3,632,083
Scholarship					275,668				275,668				275,668
Expenses of national convention													
Expenses of national commander and committees													
Travel and relocation													
Facilities	1,059,563	40,893	95,867	32,328		20,052	436,813		1,245,613				1,245,613
Postage	1,585,466						392,708		1,585,466				1,585,466
Freight	284,263	21,146	30,272	199		825,617	89,601		1,235,246				1,235,246
Equipment shipping	180,873	269	3,305			264	185,339		1,216,836				1,216,836
Equipment rental and maintenance	450,975	45,051	68,054	1,063		93,697	4,360		1,091,071				1,091,071
Supplies	101,038	648	156	324		480	252,000		910,840				910,840
Insurance	62,291		465			2,324	4,698		103,146				103,146
Telephone	29,795	7,534				33,151	489		69,778				69,778
Outside service		10,070	40,893			51,380			70,969				70,969
Project costs						973,801			102,443				102,443
Printing of magazine									973,801				973,801
Cost of solicitation mailings - materials	94,496								94,496				94,496
Heat, light, water and power	71,755								71,755				71,755
Supplies	355,475	82	11,404			13,788	16,022		394,771				394,771
Depreciation of fixed assets (Note 2)	151,999								246,828				246,828
Legal fees	95,966						39,819		135,785				135,785
Professional fees	1,187,643						1,512,762		13,946,181				13,946,181
Allocations (to) from other departments									(10,501,390)				(10,501,390)
Other	124,314	7,080	885	17,563		23,662	6,838		180,342	(20,440)	173,985	153,545	333,187
TOTAL	\$29,534,187	\$639,400	\$14,066,296	\$250,318	\$3,981,489	\$2,632,528	\$4,583,329	\$11,245,776	\$66,913,393	\$ 28,099,489	\$2,899,917	\$ 31,999,406	\$98,512,999

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1995**

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:	
Increase in unrestricted net assets	\$ 15,841,946
Adjustments to reconcile increase in unrestricted net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:	
Depreciation expense	1,042,423
Amortization expense	40,739
Loss on disposal of property and equipment	22,191
Investment gains	(1,843,475)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:	
Accounts and interest/dividends receivable	(177,757)
Solicitation materials	(1,894,821)
Prepaid expenses	(302,361)
Accounts payable	(197,420)
Accrued expenses	1,793,782
Deferred dues and service fees and other	(709,907)
Reserve for future distribution of life membership dues	(2,925,598)
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>10,689,742</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:	
Purchases of investments	(28,091,050)
Proceeds from maturity and sales of investments	16,642,523
Payments for property and equipment	(853,750)
Proceeds from sales of property and equipment	10,997
Decrease in life membership investments	<u>2,503,583</u>
Net cash used by investing activities	<u>(9,787,697)</u>
NET INCREASE IN CASH	902,045
CASH, Beginning of year	<u>2,251,843</u>
CASH, End of year	<u>\$ 3,153,888</u>

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1995

1. ORGANIZATION

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) is a Congressionally chartered, not-for-profit service organization. Made up of over one million men and women disabled in our nation's defense; DAV is dedicated to one, single purpose: building better lives for all of our nation's disabled veterans and their families. This mission is carried forward by:

- providing free, professional assistance to veterans and their families in obtaining benefits and services earned through military service and provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other agencies of government;
- representing the interests of disabled veterans, their families, their widowed spouses and their orphans before Congress, the White House, and the Judicial Branch, as well as state and local government;
- extending DAV's mission of hope into the communities where these veterans and their families live through a network of state-level departments and 2,423 local chapters; and
- providing a structure through which disabled veterans can express their compassion for their fellow veterans through a variety of volunteer programs.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Financial Statements - The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis.

Financial Statements Presentation - In 1995, DAV adopted Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 117, *Financial Statements of Not-for-Profit Organizations*. Under SFAS 117, DAV is required to report information regarding its financial position and activities according to three classes of net assets: unrestricted net assets, temporarily restricted net assets, and permanently restricted net assets. In addition, DAV is required to present a statement of cash flows. As required by this new statement, DAV has reclassified its financial statements to present the classes of net assets required. Other than presentation, this reclassification has no significant effect on the financial statements.

Investments in Securities - Investments in securities, are recorded at amortized cost unless management judges that there has been a permanent impairment in value. The cost of securities sold is based on specific identification of each security at the time of sale.

The amortized cost and market value of investments in securities and the net unrealized gain at December 31, 1995 are summarized below:

General	Cost	Market Value	Unrealized Net Gain
Cash equivalents	\$ 6,665,425	\$ 6,665,425	
Corporate bonds	11,757,965	12,184,416	\$ 426,451
Treasuries	18,899,198	19,643,962	744,764
Common stocks	32,991,934	39,230,305	6,238,371
Common stock funds	<u>4,910,719</u>	<u>5,482,392</u>	<u>571,673</u>
Subtotal	75,225,241	<u>\$83,206,500</u>	<u>\$7,981,259</u>
Interest and dividends receivable	<u>549,458</u>		
Total	<u>\$75,774,699</u>		
Life Membership			
Cash equivalents	\$ 2,677,759	\$ 2,677,759	
Corporate bonds	10,645,166	11,152,327	\$ 507,161
Treasuries	24,036,688	25,554,103	1,517,415
Common stocks	27,287,691	33,430,473	6,142,782
Common stock funds	<u>4,500,000</u>	<u>5,067,863</u>	<u>567,863</u>
Subtotal	69,147,304	<u>\$77,882,525</u>	<u>\$8,735,221</u>
Interest and dividends receivable	<u>834,195</u>		
Total	<u>\$69,981,499</u>		

Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 124, *Accounting for Certain Investments Held by Not-for-Profit Organizations* has been issued and must be adopted by DAV in the year ended December 31, 1996. The statement requires that marketable debt and equity securities be carried at their fair value.

Property and Equipment - Property and equipment are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation, and are composed of the following at December 31, 1995:

	Cost	Accumulated Depreciation	Net Book Value
Land and improvements	\$ 894,682	\$ 348,664	\$ 546,018
Buildings and improvements	8,663,434	3,634,239	5,029,195
Machinery and other equipment	<u>8,398,174</u>	<u>5,184,397</u>	<u>3,213,777</u>
Total	<u>\$17,956,290</u>	<u>\$9,167,300</u>	<u>\$8,788,990</u>

Depreciation is computed generally on the straight-line method over the estimated useful lives of assets which range from 3 to 50 years.

Contributions - In 1995, DAV adopted SFAS No. 116, *Accounting for Contributions Received and Contributions Made*. In accordance with SFAS No. 116, contributions received are recorded as unrestricted, temporarily restricted or permanently restricted support depending on the existence and nature of any donor restrictions. The adoption of SFAS No. 116 resulted in the recognition of support and expenses for contributed services and facilities in 1995 as discussed below.

Contributed Services and Facilities - DAV operates extensive programs through which volunteers contribute many hours of service to veterans; however, only a portion of those hours, those donated to veterans at medical facilities of the VA are tabulated. Of the 2,280,104 hours accounted for in 1995 -- 986,385 are for the DAV's Nationwide Transportation Network. Using a formula developed by Independent Sector, an organization that provides oversight to nonprofit organizations in America, the value of these hours contributed to the DAV Transportation Network is \$12,280,493. This value, together with the value of certain contributed facilities, is recorded as Support and Expenses on the accompanying Statement of Activities and Statement of Functional Expenses as they meet the criteria for recognition under SFAS No. 116. The remaining 1,293,719 hours -- valued at \$16,106,802 are contributed to the DAV VA Voluntary Service Program. This amount and any other volunteer time has not been recorded on the accompanying Statement of Activities and Statement of Functional Expenses.

Recognition of Donor Restricted Contributions - All contributions are considered available for unrestricted use unless specifically restricted by the donor. Support that is restricted by the donor is reported as an increase in unrestricted net assets if the restriction expires in the reporting period in which the support is recognized.

Salaries Expense - The salaries expense in the accompanying financial statements includes the cost of all national service officers and their support staff who work directly with veterans and their dependents in providing counseling and representation in obtaining benefits and services. This expense also includes DAV's administrative and support staffs.

Income Taxes - As a not-for-profit service organization, DAV is exempt from Federal income tax as a 501(C)(4) organization. Contributions made to DAV are tax deductible pursuant to Title 26 U.S.C., Section 170(C).

Use of Estimates - The preparation of the financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual amounts could differ from those estimates.

Allocation of Joint Costs - In 1995, DAV incurred joint costs of \$39,945,465 for informational materials and activities that included fund-raising appeals. Of those costs, \$11,245,776 was allocated to public awareness (program services) and \$28,699,689 was allocated to fund raising costs.

3. DESIGNATED NET ASSETS

Certain unrestricted net assets have been designated by DAV's National Finance Committee for scholarships and disaster relief. As of December 31, 1995, \$211,127 is designated for assistance to disabled veterans and their families who have suffered losses resulting from natural disasters. Another \$230,901 is designated for scholarships to children of disabled veterans who qualify scholastically and are in need of financial aid.

4. LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Under the bylaws of DAV, any person eligible for membership may become a member. Amounts paid for membership are placed in separate life membership accounts and invested; the only withdrawals permitted from these accounts are amounts required to pay chapter, departments and national (DAV) per capita dues for members. Generally, Life Membership assets for national per capita dues are transferred to the general assets of DAV at the beginning of the membership year, (July 1) and deferred and recognized as income in the statement of activities over the course of the membership year. The per capita dues are distributed to chapters and departments at the beginning of the membership year.

The following summary represents the changes during 1995 in the reserve for future distribution of membership dues:

Balance, January 1, 1995	<u>\$73,057,800</u>
Additions:	
Membership dues received	3,537,001
Earnings on invested fund assets	3,714,276
Gain on sale of investments	2,669,952
Total	<u>9,921,229</u>
Distribution of membership dues:	
National Headquarters	7,550,616
Local Chapters	2,942,655
State Departments	2,353,556
Total	<u>12,846,827</u>
Balance, December 31, 1995	<u>\$70,132,202</u>

5. PENSION PLAN

DAV has a defined benefit pension plan covering substantially all of its employees. Benefits are based on years of service and employees' compensation. Contributions are intended to provide not only for benefits attributed to service to date but also for those expected in the future.

At December 31, 1995 the plan's accumulated benefit obligation, including vested benefits of \$60,404,879, was \$62,180,396.

The following table sets forth the plan's funded status and amounts recognized in DAV's Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 1995:

Actuarial present value of projected benefit obligation	\$ 82,527,101
Plan assets at fair value, principally immediate participation guarantee contracts and pooled separate accounts	<u>70,302,659</u>
Projected benefit obligation in excess of plan assets	(12,224,442)
Unrecognized prior service cost	3,433,602
Unrecognized transition obligation	79,768
Unrecognized net loss	<u>5,653,922</u>
Pension liability	<u>\$ (3,057,150)</u>

Net pension cost for 1995, included in employee benefits expense in the accompanying statement of functional expenses, included the following components:

Service cost	\$ 3,911,294
Interest cost	6,054,629
Actual return on plan assets	(12,619,550)
Net amortization and deferral	<u>7,760,747</u>
Net periodic pension cost	<u>\$ 5,107,120</u>

The discount rate used in determining the actuarial present value of the benefit obligations for 1995 was 7.5%. The rate of increase in future compensation levels was assumed to be 4.5%. The expected long-term rate of return on assets was assumed to be 8.75%.

The discount rate decreased from 8.5% in 1994 to 7.50% in 1995 resulting in an increase in the projected benefit obligation of approximately \$7,400,000. An additional increase of approximately \$6,500,000 resulted from revisions in the payout calculation assumptions.

DAV also maintains a defined contribution Salary Savings and Investment Plan for its employees. For qualified employees electing to participate in the Plan, DAV contributes 3% of the employees' base salary. DAV's contributions in 1995 were \$535,800 and are included in employee benefits expense in the accompanying statement of functional expenses.

6. POSTRETIREMENT BENEFITS

DAV provides certain health care and life insurance benefits for its retired employees and their spouses. Substantially all of DAV's employees may become eligible for these benefits if they reach normal retirement age while working for DAV.

As of December 31, 1995, DAV has \$556,000 set aside in a reserve established for the sole purpose of meeting the cost of postretirement group term life insurance. DAV does not intend to set aside additional funds to settle the postretirement benefit obligation. These benefits will continue to be funded as incurred.

The following table sets forth the components of the net periodic postretirement benefit cost for 1995 and a reconciliation of the funded status of the postretirement benefit plan as of December 31, 1995:

Net periodic postretirement benefit cost, included in employee benefits expense in the accompanying statement of functional expense, included the following components:

Service cost	\$ 930,000
Interest cost	2,221,000
Actual return on plan assets	(43,000)
Net amortization and deferral	<u>1,392,000</u>
Net periodic postretirement benefit cost	<u>\$4,500,000</u>

Reconciliation of the funded status of the postretirement benefits to amounts recognized in the accompanying Statement of Financial Position:

Actuarial present value of accumulated postretirement benefit obligation:	
Retirees	\$ 17,460,000
Fully eligible active plan participants	492,000
Other active plan participants	<u>15,308,000</u>
Total	33,260,000
Fair value of plan assets	<u>556,000</u>
Accumulated postretirement benefit obligation in excess of plan assets	(32,704,000)
Unrecognized prior service cost	5,522,000
Unrecognized transition obligation	16,302,000
Unrecognized net loss	<u>1,986,000</u>
Accrued postretirement benefit obligation	<u>\$ (8,894,000)</u>

The accumulated postretirement benefit obligation (APBO) and related benefit cost are determined through the application of relevant actuarial assumptions. DAV anticipates the increase in its health care cost trend rate to slow from 10.5% in 1996 to 5.5% in 2019, after which the trend rate is expected to stabilize. The effect of a one percentage point increase in the assumed health care cost trend rate for each future year would increase the benefit obligation by \$5,562,000 and the current year benefit expense by \$328,000. Other actuarial assumptions include an expected long term rate of return on plan assets of 7.75% and a discount rate of 7.5%.

The APBO increased by a net \$7,552,000 from December 31, 1994 to December 31, 1995. The discount rate decreased from 8.5% in 1994 to 7.5% in 1995 resulting in an increase in the APBO of \$4,500,000.

7. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Disabled American Veterans National Service Foundation - The Statement of Financial Position does not include the net assets of the Disabled American Veterans National Service Foundation ("Foundation") which are held in trust by the Foundation and available to DAV only through appropriation by the Foundation's Board of Directors or dissolution of the Foundation. The National Service Foundation is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. Based upon audited financial statements at December 31, 1995, net assets of the Foundation were \$11,026,207. During 1995, DAV provided the Foundation with the use of DAV personnel, facilities and equipment. For the personnel services, DAV charged the Foundation \$84,743. Facilities and equipment are provided by DAV at no charge.

DAV Vietnam Veterans National Memorial, Inc. - The DAV Vietnam Veterans National Memorial, Inc. ("Memorial") was organized to maintain a national memorial to veterans of the Vietnam war. The Memorial is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. DAV has paid certain costs and expenditures for the Memorial for which the Memorial is to reimburse DAV. In 1995, DAV agreed to contribute \$50,000 to the Memorial, thereby, reducing DAV's receivable from the Memorial. The remaining balance of \$177,532 is recorded as accounts receivable in the accompanying statement of financial position. DAV also provided the Memorial with certain personnel and administrative services and the use of its facilities and equipment for which no compensation was received.

Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust - Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust ("Trust") was established in 1986. The Trust is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt entity which receives most of its contributions from the Combined Federal Campaign. The Trust is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. During 1995, DAV provided the Trust with the use of DAV personnel, facilities and equipment. For the personnel services, DAV charged the Trust \$28,240. Facilities and equipment are provided by DAV at no charge.

* * * * *

**Deloitte &
Touche LLP**



**DISABLED AMERICAN
VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

**Financial Statements for the Year Ended
December 31, 1995 and Independent Auditors'
Report**

**Deloitte Touche
Tomasetti
International**

**Deloitte &
Touche LLP**



250 East Fifth Street
P.O. Box 5340
Cincinnati, Ohio 45201-5340

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INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

National Finance Committee,
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary National Headquarters:

We have audited the accompanying statement of financial position of Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary National Headquarters (the Auxiliary) as of December 31, 1995 and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Auxiliary's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, such financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Auxiliary as of December 31, 1995 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

As discussed in Note 2 to the financial statements, the Auxiliary changed its method of accounting for contributions received to conform with Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 116 and changed its financial statement presentation to conform with Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 117.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

April 1, 1996

**Deloitte Touche
Tomatsu
International**

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF DECEMBER 31, 1995

ASSETS		LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
GENERAL ASSETS:		LIABILITIES:	
Cash and cash equivalents (Notes 2, 4, 5):	\$ 3,149,909	Accounts payable - DAV National Headquarters	\$ 138,736
Materials and supplies	108,193	Contributions distributable to state departments	86,713
Prepaid expenses	27,279	Accrued vacation and sick leave pay	118,143
Other assets	10,238	Deferred membership fees (Note 2)	560,282
		Other	4,603
SERVICE PROGRAM ASSETS - Cash and cash equivalents (Notes 2, 4, 5)	116,603	Reserve for future distribution of Life Membership dues (Note 4)	<u>8,398,503</u>
		Total liabilities	<u>9,306,980</u>
EDUCATION LOAN PROGRAM ASSETS:		NET ASSETS:	
Cash and cash equivalents (Notes 2, 4, 5)	693,337	Unrestricted - General (Note 3)	2,387,142
Notes receivable (less allowance of \$2,850) (Note 5)	191,595	Temporarily restricted - Services Program (Note 5)	116,603
		Permanently restricted - Education Loan Program (Note 5)	884,932
LIFE MEMBERSHIP ASSETS:		Total net assets	<u>3,388,677</u>
Cash and cash equivalents (Notes 2, 4, 5)	967,897		
Accrued interest receivable	134,303		
Investments at cost with a market value of \$7,619,946 (Notes 2, 4)	<u>7,296,303</u>		
TOTAL	\$12,695,657	TOTAL	\$12,695,657

See notes to financial statements.

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1996**

	Unrestricted General	Temporarily Restricted - Service Program	Permanently Restricted - Education Loan Program	Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:				
Membership fees and mandates	\$ 474,817	\$ 8,783	\$ 9,924	\$ 493,524
Life Membership dues (Note 4)	654,774			654,774
Contributions (Note 2)	134,410	16,999	9,242	180,651
Contributed facilities (Notes 2,7)	25,296			25,296
Sale of membership items, less related direct costs of \$47,234	(3,882)			(3,882)
Conference and meetings	11,370			11,370
National convention	23,005			23,005
Interest income	187,075	1,418	22,526	211,019
Other	23,301		(2,365)	20,936
Net assets released from restriction	4,646	(4,646)		
Total revenues	<u>1,554,812</u>	<u>22,554</u>	<u>39,327</u>	<u>1,616,693</u>
EXPENSES:				
Salaries and wages	353,011			353,011
Employee benefits (Note 6)	111,265			111,265
Distributions to state departments	86,713			86,713
Fundraising expenses	67,697			67,697
Payroll taxes	30,801			30,801
Conferences and meetings	53,365			53,365
Expenses of National Convention	71,876			71,876
Printing, stationery and office supplies	24,361			24,361
Expenses of National Commander and officers	19,754			19,754
Contributed facilities (Notes 2,7)	25,296			25,296
Postage	58,990			58,990
Travel	44,222			44,222
Professional fees	12,500			12,500
Service program benefits	4,502			4,502
VAVS, memberships and other awards	19,100			19,100
Other	34,660			34,660
Total expenses	<u>1,018,113</u>			<u>1,018,113</u>
CHANGES IN NET ASSETS				
NET ASSETS, Beginning of year	536,699	22,554	39,327	598,580
TRANSFER OF NET ASSETS	1,878,724	65,768	845,605	2,790,097
NET ASSETS, End of year	<u>(28,281)</u>	<u>28,281</u>		
	<u>\$ 2,387,142</u>	<u>\$ 116,603</u>	<u>\$ 884,932</u>	<u>\$ 3,388,677</u>

See notes to financial statements.

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1995**

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:	
Change in net assets	<u>\$ 598,580</u>
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to cash provided by operating activities:	
Permanently restricted contributions and interest income	(39,327)
Change in assets and liabilities:	
Accrued interest receivable	(13,086)
Prepaid expenses and other assets	(17,826)
Materials and supplies	(6,850)
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	(263,909)
Deferred membership fees	(64,854)
Reserve for life membership dues	33,370
Contributions distributable to state departments	86,713
Other liabilities	(16,587)
Total adjustments	<u>(302,356)</u>
Net cash provided by operations	<u>296,224</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:	
Increase in Life Membership investments	(461,704)
Education loans	(6,500)
Collections from repayment of education loans	16,705
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>(451,499)</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES - Permanently restricted contributions and interest income	<u>39,327</u>
NET DECREASE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	<u>(115,948)</u>
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS:	
Beginning of year	<u>5,043,694</u>
End of year	<u>\$4,927,746</u>

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1995

1. ORGANIZATION

The Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary National Headquarters (DAV Auxiliary) is a not-for-profit membership and service organization organized under the provisions of the National Constitution of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV). The DAV Auxiliary and its membership are organized for the betterment and improvement of the nation's disabled veterans and their families and for cooperation with all patriotic organizations and public agencies devoted to this purpose through volunteer work at veterans' hospitals, community service, educational assistance, legislative action, and encouraging good citizenship and patriotism.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Financial Statements - The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting.

Financial Statements Presentation - In 1995, the DAV Auxiliary adopted Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 117, *Financial Statements of Not-for-Profit Organizations*. Under SFAS 117, the DAV Auxiliary is required to report information regarding its financial position and activities according to three classes of net assets: unrestricted net assets, temporarily restricted net assets, and permanently restricted net assets. In addition, the DAV Auxiliary is required to present a statement of cash flows. As required by this new statement, the DAV Auxiliary has reclassified its financial statements to present the classes of net assets required. Other than presentation, this reclassification has no significant effect on the financial statements.

Contributions - The DAV Auxiliary adopted SFAS No. 116, *Accounting for Contributions Received and Contributions Made*, in 1995. In accordance with SFAS No. 116, contributions received are recorded at their fair value and are classified as unrestricted, temporarily restricted, or permanently restricted support depending on the existence and nature of any donor restrictions. The adoption of SFAS No. 116 resulted in the recognition of revenue and expenses for contributed services and benefits (see Note 7).

Recognition of Donor Restricted Contributions - All contributions are considered available for unrestricted use unless specifically restricted by the donor. Support that is restricted by the donor is reported as an increase in unrestricted net assets if the restriction expires in the reporting period in which the support is recognized.

Cash and Cash Equivalents - For the purpose of reporting cash flows, the DAV Auxiliary considers all highly liquid debt instruments purchased with a maturity of three months or less to be cash and cash equivalents.

Investments - Investments in securities, primarily corporate bonds and U.S. Government Securities, are recorded at cost unless management judges that there has been a permanent impairment in value. Gains

and losses resulting from the sale of securities are recognized at the time of disposition and are computed using the specific identification method.

Deferred Membership Fees - The DAV Auxiliary accounts for membership fees by deferring fees received in advance of the membership year (July 1 to June 30) and amortizing them to income ratably during the membership year for which they are paid.

Use of Estimates - The preparation of the financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual amounts could differ from those estimates.

3. FREEDOM FOUNDATION

The DAV Auxiliary has designated \$5,764 of unrestricted funds for the purpose of providing financial aid to elementary and secondary school teachers attending annual summer teaching seminars held at the Freedom Foundation, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.

4. RESERVE FOR FUTURE DISTRIBUTION OF LIFE MEMBERSHIP DUES

Under its by-laws life membership in the DAV Auxiliary is available to any person eligible for senior membership. Amounts so paid are placed in separate life membership accounts and invested; the only withdrawals permitted from these accounts are amounts required to pay local units, state departments and national headquarters (DAV Auxiliary) per capita dues for life members. Generally, Life Membership assets for national per capita dues are transferred to the general assets of the DAV Auxiliary at the beginning of the membership year (July 1), and deferred and recognized as income in the statement of activities over the course of the membership year. The per capita dues are distributed to units and departments at the beginning of the membership year.

The following summary represents the changes during 1995 in the reserve for future distribution of dues:

Balance, January 1, 1995	\$8,365,133
Additions:	
Membership dues received	409,199
Earnings on invested fund assets	481,725
Total	<u>890,924</u>
Distributions of dues:	
National Headquarters	654,774
Local units	92,554
State Departments	93,014
Investment fee	17,212
Total	<u>857,554</u>
Balance, December 31, 1995	<u>\$8,398,503</u>

5. DONOR RESTRICTED NET ASSETS

Education Loan Program - Donations from individuals and amounts received from each unit (local chapters) as a mandate for educational loans are recorded in permanently restricted assets from which

loans are made to students in accordance with the by-laws of the DAV Auxiliary. The maximum amount of an education loan is \$1,000 per year for a maximum of 4 years per student; the loan bears no interest and is to be repaid in seven years beginning 90 days after the student's graduation or withdrawal from school.

Service Program - Donations from individuals and amounts received from each unit as a mandate for the Service Program are recorded as temporarily restricted net assets which are used for persons eligible for the DAV Auxiliary who are in need of temporary financial assistance in accordance with the by-laws of the DAV Auxiliary. The total amount of assistance is limited to \$500 per individual and in the aggregate is limited to total temporarily restricted net assets. Benefits are paid directly to the service provider and not to the individual.

6. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

All employees of the DAV Auxiliary are covered by Disabled American Veterans Retirement Plan, a defined benefit pension plan. The benefits are based on years of service and the employee's compensation during the last three years of service. Contributions are intended to provide not only for benefits attributed to service to date, but also for those expected in the future. In 1995, DAV charged the DAV Auxiliary \$71,849 for its share of the retirement plan cost.

DAV provides certain health care and life insurance benefits for its retired employees and their spouses. All employees of the DAV Auxiliary may become eligible for these benefits if they reach normal retirement age while working for the DAV Auxiliary. In 1995, DAV did not charge the DAV Auxiliary for these benefits.

7. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The DAV Auxiliary occupies space in the DAV National Headquarter's building and also uses certain office equipment owned by the DAV. No fees are charged for such usage. The value of these contributed facilities is estimated to be \$25,296 in 1995 and is included as revenue and expense on the accompanying statement of activities.

Certain costs are paid by DAV National Headquarters on behalf of the DAV Auxiliary. Such costs are reimbursed by the DAV Auxiliary.

* * * * *

Commander McMASTERS. At this time, the Chair will entertain a motion that the lists of delegates and alternates selected by the 21 national districts and the Blind Veterans Chapter to serve on convention committees be admitted into the record of the proceedings of the convention. Is there someone to offer that motion? Mike 3.

Mr. ALAN W. BOWERS. Alan Bowers, department commander, moves action on that motion.

Commander McMASTERS. Mr. Bowers, could you please——

Mr. BOWERS. Massachusetts Department commander.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you. We have the motion. Is there support? Mike 1.

Mr. CECIL STEVENSON. Stevenson, past national commander, seconds the motion.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. We have the motion and support that the lists of delegates and alternates selected by the 21 national districts and the Blind Veterans Chapter to serve on convention committees be admitted into the record of the proceedings of this convention. Ready for the question? Ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. It's carried.

[Whereupon, the following are DAV National Convention Committees:]

1996 NATIONAL CONVENTION, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS		
01	Frank J. Drogo	NEC Del District 56
(Alt)	Joseph A. Cosa	Massachusetts 056
02	Sal R. Tornatore	NEC DEL District 60
(Alt)	Donald R. Warren	New York 060
03	Stanley J. Hoy	New Hampshire 001
(Alt)	Gordon J. Forrett	Vermont 015
04	Michael A. Christie	New Jersey 025
(Alt)	Joseph S. Wingate	New Jersey 041
05	Harding Byrd	Pennsylvania 015
(Alt)	Neno Peconi	Pennsylvania 053
06	Raymond Chatary	Maryland 007
(Alt)	None	
07	Carolyn Virgil	Florida 029
(Alt)	Michael Sorrentino	Florida 135
08	Jerry Worthington	Tennessee 003
(Alt)	Billy R. Johnson	Tennessee 116
09	Richard P. Geary	North Carolina 016
(Alt)	Jimmie Fraizer	Georgia 000
10	Russell Spalding	Michigan 020
(Alt)	Frank C. Krolczyk	Michigan 127
11	William L. Moseley	Ohio 057
(Alt)	Raymond H. Hutchinson	Ohio 063
12	Rosemarie R. Pitz	Wisconsin 017
(Alt)	Robert Jansky	Illinois 022
13	Jesse L. Wright	Kentucky 000
(Alt)	Harry S. Gaylord	Kentucky 149
14	Alice J. Faulstich	Minnesota 001
(Alt)	William L. Faulstich	Minnesota 001
15	Shirley R. Turner	Missouri 002
(Alt)	Colon J. Busby	Iowa 060
16	Patrick J. Carroll	California 012
(Alt)	Donald W. Stephen	California 144
17	Kenneth D. Harden	New Mexico 003
(Alt)	John L. Richard	New Mexico 003

1996 NATIONAL CONVENTION, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA—Continued

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
18	Robert C. Freitas	Hawaii 000
(Alt)	Daniel R. Frias	Hawaii 006
19	Virgil A. Barnett	Idaho 022
(Alt)	Robert W. Vietz	Washington 000
20	Roland A. Paquette	Texas 057
(Alt)	Derrell G. Neal	Texas 175
21	Robert D. Cohoon	Oklahoma 074
(Alt)	Thomas J. Davis, Jr	Oklahoma 000
Blind Vets Chapter	Robert H. Dawson	National Blind
	Jarrett C. Quigley	National Blind

Advisor: Charles D. Lutjohann.

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

01	James H. Tanner	Massachusetts 010
(Alt)	Edward R. Finn	Massachusetts 010
02	Vincent A. Chiovarelli	New York 027
(Alt)	Ronald D. Tears	New York 015
03	Raymond V. Ritchotte	New Hampshire 000
(Alt)	Ronald Nowe	New Hampshire 003
04	Kenneth A. Grunewald	New Jersey 042
(Alt)	Redell G. Lewis	Connecticut 009
05	Wilbert O'Neill	Pennsylvania 061
(Alt)	Constance R. Manocha	Pennsylvania 057
06	Ronald L. Smith	Maryland 023
(Alt)	Robert V. Richard	District of Columbia
07	James E. Sursely	Florida 016
(Alt)	David Clayman	Florida 152
08	Jack W. Redell	Louisiana 020
(Alt)	Charles Beaton	Louisiana 020
09	Barry I. Souders	North Carolina 005
(Alt)	Coy W. Hennis	North Carolina 020
10	John F. McCullough	Michigan 003
(Alt)	Billie-Nita Clark	Michigan 093
11	Thomas K. Keller	Ohio 103
(Alt)	David C. Uetterling	Ohio 036
12	Philip C. Kreisa	Wisconsin 019
(Alt)	Thomas Pappas	Illinois 042
13	Paul F. Wiggins	Kentucky 019
(Alt)	John F. Houston	Indiana 019
14	Harry F. Vandemore	South Dakota 001
(Alt)	Emmett P. Botten	Minnesota 001
15	Everett Wilson	Nebraska 000
(Alt)	Dennis L. Young	Kansas 001
16	George E. Morey	California 059
(Alt)	Howard Sites	California 007
17	Benjamin Palomino	Colorado 006
(Alt)	Paul W. Jackson	Colorado 007
18	Charles N. Baker	Nevada 011
(Alt)	Marco A. Espinosa	Arizona 016
19	David Reeves	Oregon 004
(Alt)	Guillermo J. Pajo	Washington 035
20	Billy E. Wright	Texas 219
(Alt)	Barie G. Poore	Texas 001
21	Harold D. Pinney	Oklahoma 003
(Alt)	Robert F. Klee	Arkansas 001
Blind Vets Chapter	Robert J. Burns	National Blind
	Buddy Spivey	National Blind

Advisors: Jerry P. Steelman and Rick Surratt.

COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION AND VETERANS RIGHTS

01	Robert C. Sinclair	Massachusetts 114
(Alt)	Michael M. Maloof	Massachusetts 002
02	Donald A. Sloss	Past Natl Commander
(Alt)	William Novak	New York 005
03	Harry Mannine	Vermont 000

1996 NATIONAL CONVENTION, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA—Continued

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
(Alt)	Gary P. Burns	Maine 001
04	Alfred Faticoni	Connecticut 008
(Alt)	Charles A. Kashner	Delaware 000
05	John E. Ogozaly	Pennsylvania 098
(Alt)	Calvin R. Hall	Pennsylvania 064
06	Hugh M. Ferguson	Maryland 000
(Alt)	None	
07	Richard E. Giese	Florida 028
(Alt)	Ernest H. Hartman	Florida 094
08	Lawrence L. Morris	Tennessee 003
(Alt)	Archbishop Forbes	Tennessee 003
09	Phillip J. Seep	North Carolina 016
(Alt)	Torrance L. Adcock	South Carolina 030
10	Harold W. La Ponsie	Michigan 045
(Alt)	Eric D. Berryman	Michigan 013
11	Eural E. Johnson	Ohio 035
(Alt)	Richard M. Stoughton	Ohio 098
12	Desmond Fortner	Illinois 024
(Alt)	Paul H. Marheine	Wisconsin 002
13	Joseph S. Carroll	Indiana 052
(Alt)	Harry G. Erway	Kentucky 155
14	Robert J. Connor	Minnesota 002
(Alt)	Henry H. Sadler	Minnesota 010
15	Prezell Frazier	Iowa 020
(Alt)	Roger B. Drucker	Nebraska 007
16	Don J. Pouliot	California 002
(Alt)	Astro A. Tortolano	California 011
17	William Karr	Colorado 007
(Alt)	Caroline D. Mason	Colorado 021
18	Sharon A. Borgen	Arizona 016
(Alt)	Fred F. Narcaroti	Arizona 016
19	Charles W. Chapin	Idaho 000
(Alt)	Dale P. Westlake	Washington 045
20	James T. Smith	Texas 009
(Alt)	Claude J. Boggs	Texas 128
21	Lloyd G. McCool	Arkansas 056
(Alt)	Bob Baley	Arkansas 000
Blind Vets Chapter		National Blind
Advisors: Thomas L. Tomlinson and Richard F. Schultz.		

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

01	Thomas J. Daley	Massachusetts 049
(Alt)	Francis J. Daly	Massachusetts 022
02	Sally Wilson	New York 126
(Alt)	Alfred W. Nowak	New York 120
03	Kenneth J. Kooyman	Rhode Island 012
(Alt)	Paul A. Wekenmann	Rhode Island 009
04	Charles A. Carroll	New Jersey 000
(Alt)	James H. Fox	New Jersey 024
05	Daniel R. Parker	Pennsylvania 058
(Alt)	Joseph H. Buhl	Pennsylvania 053
06	David L. Tannenbaum	Virginia 015
(Alt)	German Bravo-Perez	Puerto Rico 001
07	John C. McCarthy	Florida 004
(Alt)	Jimmy B. Meeks	Florida 028
08	Hollis O. Bridges	Alabama 026
(Alt)	Raymond E. Webb	Alabama 013
09	Wallace E. Tyson	North Carolina 046
(Alt)	David Nesbitt	South Carolina 013
10	Bonnie Maile	Michigan 001
(Alt)	Donald R. Crull	Michigan 001
11	Jack F. Feighner	Ohio 001
(Alt)	Paul A. Hughes	Ohio 117
12	Clyde E. Dartey	Wisconsin 019
(Alt)	James J. Ferrara	Illinois 055

1996 NATIONAL CONVENTION, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA—Continued

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
13	Kenneth C. Kersey	Indiana 000
(Alt)	Wallace E. Haskins	Kentucky 155
14	Wayne W. Blue	Minnesota 001
(Alt)	Jackie A. Owen	Minnesota 022
15	Jim Edge	Kansas 000
(Alt)	Jerry Bay	Missouri 067
16	Kenneth G. Musselmann	Past Natl Commander
(Alt)	Robert Salisbury	California 094
17	Leon J. Kerstner	Colorado 026
(Alt)	Dianah Nelson	Wyoming 000
18	Chas. D. Vincent	Arizona 001
(Alt)	Robert E. McCallum	Arizona 001
19	Anne M. Ruppert	Alaska 002
(Alt)	Jon C. Price	Washington 005
20	William A. Bone	NEC Del District 57
(Alt)	Harry I. Kabler	Texas 057
21	Donald M. Sampson	Oklahoma 005
(Alt)	Clark H. Rogers	Oklahoma 005
Blind Vets Chapter	David May	National Blind
	Dan Holden	National Blind

Advisors: Fred Bristol and Edward G. Galian.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND DUES

01	Arthur S. Cushing	Massachusetts 017
(Alt)	Arthur F. Kingsley	Massachusetts 115
02	David H. Wilson	New York 000
(Alt)	Michael R. Marrone	New York 082
03	Edward S. Lastowski	New Hampshire 001
(Alt)	Richard L. Decoteau	Vermont 000
04	Richard J. Hennesey	Connecticut 000
(Alt)	Herbert G. Henn	New Jersey 032
05	Charles M. Turik	Pennsylvania 067
(Alt)	Dwayne R. Deist	Pennsylvania 000
06	William D. Wiggins	National Officer
(Alt)	George W. Parrish	District of Columbia
07	Charles E. Heiney	Florida 125
(Alt)	Walter R. Baker	Florida 072
08	John A. Smith	Mississippi 011
(Alt)	James V. Mars	Mississippi 011
09	Gilbert Grier	Georgia 018
(Alt)	Billy J. Nix	Georgia 001
10	David E. Smith	Michigan 003
(Alt)	Dennis N. Emery	Michigan 129
11	Gary R. Akers	Ohio 000
(Alt)	Harlan F. Plummer	Ohio 071
12	George M. Isdale	Illinois 000
(Alt)	Werner J. Schalow	Wisconsin 005
13	Fred A. Sutton	Indiana 009
(Alt)	Glen E. Vogel	Indiana 045
14	Dick A. Haan	Minnesota 001
(Alt)	Jerome G. Krejci	North Dakota 002
15	Walter Head	Missouri 000
(Alt)	Tom Morrissey	Nebraska 007
16	Joel C. Devenish	California 043
(Alt)	Lewis D. Flanigan	California 085
17	Hector D. Salgado	New Mexico 033
(Alt)	Albert C. Derby	Colorado 001
18	William D. Brzezinski	Nevada 013
(Alt)	Henry A. Redding	Nevada 034
19	Irene L. Martin	Washington 045
(Alt)	Harold E. Wiley	Washington 046
20	Eugene T. Arrendale	Texas 012
(Alt)	Raymond A. Rapisand	Texas 010
21	Frank E. Nye	Oklahoma 049
(Alt)	Chesley Rutledge	Oklahoma 029

1996 NATIONAL CONVENTION, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA—Continued

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
Blind Vets Chapter .....	.....	National Blind
Advisors: E. Dean Walker and Richard E. Patterson.		
COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT		
01	Vincent P. Reed	Massachusetts 025
(Alt)	John P. Rogers	Massachusetts 115
02	Anthony Fusco	New York 000
(Alt)	Alvin L. Burks	New York 076
03	Ronald W. Reilly	New Hampshire 004
(Alt)	Roger A. Bourgerly	Vermont 003
04	Salvatore Lo Sauro	New Jersey
(Alt)	Justus Kehne	Delaware 008
05	M. Rae White	Pennsylvania 086
(Alt)	Joseph J. Baldwin	Pennsylvania 098
06	Juan Mandes-Pagan	Puerto Rico 001
(Alt)	Phillip W. Turpin	Virginia 003
07	Albert Sorrentino	Florida 030
(Alt)	Charles C. Perkins	Florida 040
08	James M. Cox	Louisiana 030
(Alt)	Louis R. Ketchum	Louisiana 030
09	Ernest H. Stroud	South Carolina 014
(Alt)	Hugh A. Mathis	South Carolina 005
10	John F. McComb	Michigan 013
(Alt)	Ben Benzing	Michigan 018
11	Joseph K. Shepherd	Ohio 131
(Alt)	David R. Helton	Ohio 115
12	James R. Harris	Illinois 047
(Alt)	Joseph F. Guido	Wisconsin 005
13	William A. Reinhart	Kentucky 019
(Alt)	Lowell H. Spalding	Indiana 019
14	Chester D. Hrdlicka	Minnesota 010
(Alt)	Richard D. Ryan	North Dakota 000
15	Clifford M. Piersee	Kansas 001
(Alt)	George Nickolas	Iowa 002
16	John F. McCoy	California 019
(Alt)	Ruben R. Trejo	California 039
17	Veda M. Jones	Utah 000
(Alt)	Donald C. Lougee	Colorado 022
18	Thomas Caenen	Nevada 000
(Alt)	David G. Rock	Arizona 025
19	Jon C. Price	Washington 005
(Alt)	Michael C. Kiser	Washington 005
20	Armando C. Albarran	Texas 014
(Alt)	Paul S. Hilliard	Texas 003
21	Jimmie S. Foster	Oklahoma 032
(Alt)	Donald R. Cox	Arkansas 057
Blind Vets Chapter .....	.....	National Blind
Advisors: Mike Godich, Jr. and Ronald W. Drach.		
COMMITTEE ON HOSPITAL AND VOLUNTARY SERVICES		
01	Richard Stentiford	Massachusetts 080
(Alt)	Edmund Corey	Massachusetts 032
02	Bernard L. Robidoux	New York 185
(Alt)	Claude A. Nelson	New York 047
03	Harold F. Smith	Maine 000
(Alt)	Bruce E. Kaplan	Maine 006
04	Maurice E. Aims	Connecticut 008
(Alt)	Louis B. Washington	New Jersey 003
05	George I. Ford	Pennsylvania 014
(Alt)	Eugene Davis	Pennsylvania 015
06	Thomas C. Johns	Maryland 007
(Alt)	Sloan H. Hoopes	Virginia 003
07	Robert F. Melville	Florida 085
(Alt)	Elmer L. West	Florida 091
08	Francis L. Weaver	Mississippi 011

1996 NATIONAL CONVENTION, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA—Continued

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
(Alt)	Gerald E. Humphries	Mississippi 011
09	William L. Coward	Georgia 027
(Alt)	Louis Bodgan	South Carolina 067
10	Margherita Dupras	Michigan 022
(Alt)	Roy A. Redmond	Michigan 002
11	Harry E. Duffala	Ohio 116
(Alt)	Jesse R. Stefanics	Ohio 009
12	Loran I. Bumpus	Illinois 028
(Alt)	Vernon E. Schilling	Wisconsin 001
13	Michael A. Whelihan	Indiana 052
(Alt)	Harold L. Soult	Indiana 052
14	Bruce T. Tuman	Minnesota 009
(Alt)	Delbert Nelson	Minnesota 001
15	Douglas E. Meeks	Nebraska 000
(Alt)	Albert E. Miller	Missouri 001
16	Henry A. Veillette	California 073
(Alt)	James C. Jenkins	California 036
17	John O. Ognie	Colorado 007
(Alt)	None	
18	Donald F. Schmitt	Arizona 016
(Alt)	William W. Wright	Arizona 020
19	Harold Stevens	Idaho 000
(Alt)	Mallory A. Hansen	Oregon 028
20	Samuel Berman	Texas 009
(Alt)	Frank L. Webb	Texas 009
21	Frances Liotta	Oklahoma 032
(Alt)	Robert W. Ellis	Arkansas 007
Blind Vets Chapter		National Blind
Advisors: Henry Veillette and Norman B. Hartnett.		

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATION OF NATIONAL OFFICERS

01	Alan W. Bowers	Massachusetts 000
(Alt)	Thomas J. Daley	Massachusetts 049
02	Anthony L. Mirando	New York 145
(Alt)	Prospero Sodano	New York 118
03	Joseph D. MacDonald	Maine 000
(Alt)	Burton E. Packard	New Hampshire 001
04	Joseph Trulio	New Jersey 000
(Alt)	John A. Higgins	New Jersey 073
05	Jim Wyatt	Pennsylvania 115
(Alt)	William J. Stockell	Pennsylvania 057
06	Joseph Reeves	Virginia 041
(Alt)	James Stewart	Maryland 007
07	Dennis A. Joyner	Florida 104
(Alt)	Albert H. Linden	Florida 090
08	Wendell Davis	Alabama
(Alt)	Thurston Mosely	Alabama 000
09	James R. Murray	North Carolina 012
(Alt)	Michael J. Truscello	South Carolina 051
10	Leo J. Le Roux	Michigan 114
(Alt)	Lowell G. McKeehan	NEC Alt District 10
11	Andrew J. Offutt	Ohio 103
(Alt)	Samuel E. Lanza	Ohio 011
12	Ken Kuehn	Wisconsin 000
(Alt)	Ted Buck	Illinois 000
13	Franklin D. Littleton	Indiana 027
(Alt)	James S. Powers	Indiana 000
14	Gene A. Murphy	Past Natl Commander
(Alt)	Joseph M. Litzinger	North Dakota 002
15	Francis E. McLaskey	NEC Del District 15
(Alt)	Franklin C. Bergquist	NEC Alt District 15
16	Michael W. Tempesta	California 001
(Alt)	Clyde Maddox	California 028
17	Rudolph R. Vargas	Colorado 022
(Alt)	Michael H. Terry	Colorado 007

1996 NATIONAL CONVENTION, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA—Continued

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
18	Lester L. Leichy	Arizona 018
(Alt)	Robert T. Fletcher	Arizona 020
19	Jimney W. Mayo	Alaska 000
(Alt)	Frank Puleo	Washington 045
20	Bruce W. Burgess	Texas 128
(Alt)	Andrew Flemming	Texas 009
21	Irvin D. Eddy	Oklahoma 032
(Alt)	Cecil Stevenson	Arkansas 026
Blind Vets Chapter	Floyd O. Britting	National Blind
Advisors: Gene A. Murphy and William E. Leach.		

Commander McMASTERS. I'm now going to call on the chairman of the Hospital and Voluntary Services Convention Committee for his report. Mr. Tom Johns.

Mr. THOMAS C. JOHNS. Thank you, Commander. Good morning. Thank you, Commander. Comrade Commander and delegates: The National Convention Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services was called to order for its first business session on July 29th, 1996 by the committee advisors, Norman B. Gabby Hartnett and Hank Veillette. The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. Thomas C. Johns was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed, and Thomas C. Johns was elected chairman.

The next order of business was the nomination and election of the secretary. Hank Veillette was nominated and elected as secretary of the committee.

The committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted, and I will now report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption by this national convention. For the purpose of saving time, I will read only the number and the RESOLVED portions of those resolutions.

Number 19, that the Disabled American Veterans in department convention assembled in Pierre, South Dakota, May 9 to 11, 1996, seek the enactment of adequate appropriations for the funding of the Department of Veterans Affairs medical care program and vigorously oppose any further reduction DVA health care personnel.

Number 61, that the national legislative director of the Disabled American Veterans oppose legislation that would require disabled retired veterans or their dependents to pay a user fee or charge to use military medical clinics and other outpatients facilities and to appear before the Armed Services Committees of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives or any committee which could implement a user's fee for the use of military or DVA outpatient medical clinics by disabled retired service personnel.

Number 94, that the Disabled American Veterans in District 4 convention assembled in Houston, Texas, March 9 and 10, 1996, seeks the enactment of legislation mandating the provisions of health care services, inclusive of gender-specific services by VA to eligible women veterans to the same degree and extent that services are provided to eligible male veterans, inclusive of counseling and/or psychological services incident to sexual violence; and be it further resolved that we urge VA to strictly adhere to stated policies regarding privacy issues relating to the treatment of women

veterans and to pro-actively seek innovative methods to ensure women veterans receive the treatment they so rightfully deserve.

Number 97. The regional VA hospital administrator issue a directive allowing patients to hand-carry their medical records in security bags which would allow the records to be at the scheduled clinics on time. The directive should also apply to any outpatient clinic that is located away from the main medical facility.

Number 111, that the Disabled American Veterans at National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 27 to August 1, vigorously support legislation that would require stricter adherence to the Department of Veterans Affairs in medical facilities to stated policies providing separate and distinct female in-patient rooms, bathroom facilities; to provide consistently adequate gender-appropriate treatment and facilities for the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system.

Number 168, that the Department of Massachusetts Disabled American Veterans assembled in state convention at Fitchburg, Massachusetts, June 1996, supports legislation to allow medical examinations and treatment for Persian Gulf veterans who are believed to be suffering from a disease which may be related to service in the Gulf War, and that such entitlement should be extended until definitive answers can be established concerning the Gulf War related illnesses.

Number 253, that the DAV National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana supports legislation in Congress that would authorize an increase in the charitable use standard mileage rate deduction to 16 cents per mile, which would reinstate the 1984 relationship with the business use standard mileage rate deduction; and be it further resolved that such legislation would authorize that the charitable use standard mileage rate deduction be permanently fixed to a fair percentage of the business use standard mileage rate deduction.

Number 266, that the DAV National Convention continue to support the established mission and objectives of the state veterans homes programs, and that the VA pay each state a per diem rate adequate for the continuum of providing quality care; and that it be further resolved that the program receives adequate funding for the construction, expansion, remodeling or acquisition of state veterans home facilities.

Number 267, that the DAV National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana vigorously opposes any national health insurance plan which proposes to incorporate the VA hospital system and has the effect the diminishing the VA's role of being the federal entity with primary responsibility for providing health care services to disabled veterans.

Number 268, DAV National Convention in New Orleans opposes any legislation that would require the VA to recover third-party payments for the care and treatment of veterans's service-connected disabilities.

Number 269. The convention supports the enactment of legislation which would promote a broader and greater degree of sharing between the health care systems of the Department of Veterans Affairs and of the Department of Defense.

Number 270, that the DAV Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana supports legislation guaranteeing access and a full continuum of care with guaranteed funding, maintaining VA as the primary responsible entity for the delivery of health care to eligible veterans and establishing an entitlement to VA health care services for a clearly defined category of veterans.

Number 271, that the convention in New Orleans, Louisiana vigorously oppose a co-payment for service-connected disabled veterans in order to receive VA medications.

Number 272, that the convention in New Orleans supports the enactment of legislation to amend Section 1728(a)(2) of Title 38, U.S. Code providing for the consideration of reimbursement of certain medical expenses incurred by former prisoners of war.

Number 273. The DAV Convention in New Orleans supports the enactment of legislation requiring VA to assume the total financial liability of such care for service-connected disabled veterans in the same manner and using the same criteria that outpatient services are furnished under Section 212, Title 38, U.S. Code.

And I know you're ready for this, the last one, Number 274. DAV Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana go on record strongly recommending that each facility, although integrated, be permitted to retain their separate local VAVS Committees and volunteers with separate records and award ceremonies as at present prior to the integration.

I would like to thank all the members of the committee for their hard work. We got through the meeting fairly well this morning, got a lot of work done.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services, and I move the adoption of these resolutions and that the committee be discharged with the thanks of the national convention.

[The above-mentioned resolutions follow:]

RESOLUTION NO. 019—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR THE VA HEALTH CARE PROGRAM INCLUDING STAFFING

WHEREAS, underfunding of the VA Medical Care Program continues to hamper the VA's ability to provide timely, complete and quality health care to veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Management and Budget continues to seek reductions in the number of VA health care personnel; and

WHEREAS, the results of fewer personnel equates to a reduced number of available and operating hospital beds for the treatment of eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, adequate funds should be provided to maintain and improve medical care for all of America's wartime disabled veterans in order to ensure that they will continue to receive medical care second to none; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, seeks the enactment of adequate appropriations for the funding of the VA Medical Care program and vigorously opposes any further reduction in VA health Care personnel.

RESOLUTION NO. 061—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING THE IMPOSITION OF USER FEES FOR OUTPATIENT MEDICAL CARE AT MILITARY MEDICAL FACILITIES

WHEREAS, military retirees have earned the right, by virtue of service to this Nation, to utilize military medical facilities to meet their medical care needs and those of their dependents; and

WHEREAS, this earned benefit has been established by the Congress through the enactment of legislation entitling military retirees and their dependents to utilize military medical facilities to meet their medical care needs; and

WHEREAS, the charging of a user's fee would adversely impact upon military retirees' financial and medical well-being; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, opposes any proposal that will require military retirees, or their dependents, to be charged a user's fee in order to obtain outpatient medical services at military medical facilities.

RESOLUTION NO. 094—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING ADEQUATE MEDICAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS FOR WOMEN VETERANS

WHEREAS, women veterans accounted for 4.3 percent of the total veteran population in 1990, by the year 2000 women will represent 5.3 percent of all veterans, and by 2040 they will make up about 11 percent of the total veteran population; and

WHEREAS, women have always provided meaningful contributions to our armed services over the course of our Nation's history, most recently exemplified by the 33,000 women who served honorably in Southwest Asia performing combat and combat support functions; and

WHEREAS, a recent General Accounting Office (GAO) report found that problems continue to confront women veterans when attempting to gain access to VA health care services, and VA remains unable to fully ensure privacy for women veterans; and

WHEREAS, many women seeking VA health care find services unavailable or personnel unprepared to understand or deal with their specific needs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, seeks enactment of legislation mandating the provision of health care services, inclusive of gender-specific services, by VA to eligible women veterans to the same degree and extent that services are provided to eligible male veterans, inclusive of counseling and/or psychological services incident to sexual violence, AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge VA to strictly adhere to stated policies regarding privacy issues relating to the treatment of women veterans and to proactively seek innovative methods to ensure women veterans receive the treatment they so rightly deserve.

RESOLUTION NO. 097—ADMINISTRATIVE

TO ALLOW VETERANS TO HAND CARRY THEIR MEDICAL RECORDS TO APPOINTMENTS

WHEREAS, veterans' medical records are presently transferred by the medical records section to clinics for veterans's appointments; and

WHEREAS, records may not be timely transferred between clinics in instances of multiple appointments; and

WHEREAS, this results in inefficiency and inconvenience for physicians; and

WHEREAS, the present procedure may cause delays for the veteran whose record is unavailable and subsequently scheduled veterans; and

WHEREAS, allowing veterans to transport their own medical files for appointments would alleviate many problems; NOW

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, urges the Veterans Health Administration of VA to issue a directive allowing patients to hand carry their medical records, appropriately secured, to clinic appointments.

RESOLUTION NO. 111—ADMINISTRATIVE

TO PROVIDE CONSISTENTLY ADEQUATE GENDER—APPROPRIATE TREATMENT AND FACILITIES BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, current Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policies requires gender-oriented facilities for inpatient and outpatient treatment at VA medical facilities; and

WHEREAS, many of these facilities do not, in fact, provide appropriate and distinct gender-specific inpatient rooms, bathroom, treatment rooms and outpatient chaperoning for the privacy and dignity of female veteran patients; and

WHEREAS, we believe the VA needs to provide consistent guidance and enforcement of their stated gender-sensitive policies; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, vigorously supports strict adherence by each VA medical facility to stated policies providing separate and distinct female inpatient rooms, bathroom facilities, adequate and gender-appropriate treatment room equipment, and inpatient/outpatient female attendants during examining procedures to assure privacy and dignity to female veteran patients.

RESOLUTION NO. 168—ADMINISTRATIVE

MEDICAL SCREENING AND TREATMENT FOR PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS

WHEREAS, American Armed Forces personnel were exposed to myriad environmental hazards in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, the full nature, extent, and consequences of this exposure is yet unknown; and

WHEREAS, many Persian Gulf War veterans suffer from poorly understood, undiagnosed illnesses with a wide array of symptoms, commonly referred to as Persian Gulf Syndrome; and

WHEREAS, the unique nature of these medical problems warrants special consideration and liberal authority for examinations, diagnoses, and treatment; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports the provision of continuing specialized examinations and medical treatment procedures for Persian Gulf War veterans.

RESOLUTION NO. 253—LEGISLATIVE

IN SUPPORT OF AN INCREASE IN THE STANDARD MILEAGE RATE DEDUCTION FOR USE OF PRIVATE AUTOMOBILE IN CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

WHEREAS, the DAV, on a national and local level, administers many worthwhile programs for veterans and their families utilizing volunteer services; and

WHEREAS, current law authorizes unreimbursed, out-of-pocket expenses incurred by volunteers who render services to certain charitable organizations, such as the DAV, to be deducted for federal income tax purposes; and

WHEREAS, when a volunteer operates an automobile in providing such services, the volunteer may deduct actual, out-of-pocket expenses (gas, oil, tolls, parking fees) or use a standard mileage rate deduction (plus tolls, parking fees); and

WHEREAS, the current charitable use standard mileage rate deduction, set in 1984, is fixed at \$0.12 per mile; and

WHEREAS, this rate has not kept pace with the increased costs of operating an automobile, nor has it maintained its 1984 relationship with the standard mileage rate deduction for business purposes; and

WHEREAS, an increase in the charitable standard mileage rate deduction is necessary in the interest of fairness and, more importantly, in the promotion of volunteerism and charitable services; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation in the Congress that would authorize an increase in the charitable use, standard mileage rate deduction to \$0.16 per mile, which would reinstate the 1984 relationship with the business use, standard mileage rate deduction; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such legislation would authorize that the charitable use, standard mileage rate deduction be permanently fixed to a fair percentage of the business use, standard mileage rate deduction.

RESOLUTION NO. 266—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING THE STATE VETERANS' HOME PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) projects the number of veterans over the age of 65 will increase dramatically, peaking at 8.9 million by the year 1999; and

WHEREAS, state veterans' homes are able to offer and provide quality nursing home, long-term, domiciliary, and hospital care to veterans in a cost-effective manner; and

WHEREAS, there will be an ever-increasing number of veterans seeking the type of assistance offered by state veterans' homes due to advancing age and associated medical conditions; and

WHEREAS, most planning, alterations and renovations for construction, expansion and/or modernization are predicated upon the availability of VA grant funds; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, continues to support the established mission and objectives of the State Veterans' Homes Program and that VA pay each state a per diem rate adequate for the continuation of providing quality care; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the program receive adequate funding for the construction, expansion, remodeling, or acquisition of state veteran's home facilities.

RESOLUTION NO. 267—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING THE INCLUSION OF THE VA HOSPITAL SYSTEM IN ANY NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN

WHEREAS, proposals to make the Department of Veterans Affairs hospital system part of a National Health Insurance plan have been suggested; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the Disabled American Veterans to preserve high quality VA hospital and medical care for veterans with disabilities incurred in or aggravated by service in America's Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, the inclusion of the VA hospital system in a national health insurance plan would eliminate VA's ability to continue its special medical care programs, specifically designed for the treatment of veterans whose disabilities are incident to military service; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, vigorously opposes any national health insurance plan which proposes to incorporate the VA hospital system, or has the effect of diminishing the VA's role of being the Federal entity with primary responsibility of providing health care services to disabled veterans.

RESOLUTION NO. 268—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSED THIRD—PARTY PAYMENTS FOR SERVICE—CONNECTED DISABILITY

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) mission is to provide high quality medical care to veterans eligible by reason of their service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, VA has the right to recover or collect the cost of care from third-party health insurers when insured veterans receive health care from VA for nonservice-connected conditions; and

WHEREAS, the collection of payments from third parties for the treatment of veterans' service-connected disabilities would abrogate VA's and Federal Government's responsibility to provide such care and may result in increased premium payments to veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, opposes any legislation that would require VA to recover third-party payments for the care and treatment of a veterans' service-connected disability(ies).

RESOLUTION NO. 269—LEGISLATIVE

IN SUPPORT OF INCREASED SHARING OF RESOURCES BETWEEN THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD) currently administer programs which provide a full range of medical care services to veterans, active duty personnel, military retirees and dependents; and

WHEREAS, due to years of inadequate funding and increasing needs on the part of beneficiaries, both the VA and DoD health care systems are experiencing a crisis which endangers their respective missions; and

WHEREAS, since 1982, the VA/DoD Health Resources Sharing and Emergency Operations Act has authorized sharing arrangements between these two systems for the purpose of minimizing duplication and under utilization of resources and promoting cost-effectiveness and improvement in the delivery of care; and

WHEREAS, many VA and DoD treatment facilities have entered into sharing agreements that have proven mutually beneficial and enhanced their ability to provide hospital and medical care services; and

WHEREAS, existing statutory constraints and less than concise and clear leadership directives from Washington, D.C., stand as a barrier to a full realization of this VA/DoD sharing potential; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports the enactment of legislation that would promote a broader and greater degree of sharing between the health care systems of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

RESOLUTION NO. 270—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING THE PROVISION OF COMPREHENSIVE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SERVICES TO ENTITLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, it is the position of the Disabled American Veterans that veterans should be afforded quality and timely health care services by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) because of their honorable service to our Nation; and

WHEREAS, for well over a decade VA has been faced with the dilemma of ever-increasing demand for medical care and perennially inadequate, decremental budgets; and

WHEREAS, because of various statutory and administrative barriers, veterans are denied adequate health care implicitly promised in connection with their military service; and

WHEREAS, there is a critical need to clearly define eligibility for VA care, the services that will be provided, and how the system will be funded; and

WHEREAS, any reform of VA must encompass, as a minimum, the following:

Entitlement to care guaranteeing access to a full continuum of care from preventive through hospice;

Guaranteed funding through adequate appropriations, third party reimbursements and “start-up” transition funding;

Preserving VA’s mission and role as a provider of special services in areas such as blindness, amputation, aging, mental health, and long-term care;

Reduced centralized bureaucracy, permitting local medical facility directors to utilize resources in the most efficient and economical manner; and

Maintaining the integrity of an independent VA health care delivery system as representing the primary responsible entity for the delivery of health care services to entitled veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation following the concepts and principles embodied above—establishing an entitlement to VA health care services for a clearly defined category of veterans.

RESOLUTION NO. 271—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING COPAYMENTS BY SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS TO RECEIVE VA
PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

WHEREAS, the “Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990,” (Public Law 101–508) imposes a \$2.00 copayment for certain service-connected disabled veterans in order to receive VA prescription medications; and

WHEREAS, the payment of copayment, for each 30-day supply of a prescribed medication causes financial hardships on veterans required to take multiple medications; and

WHEREAS, the creation of such copayments was intended purely for the purpose of overall Federal budget reductions; and

WHEREAS, service-connected disabled veterans have done more than their fair share and have already paid the price for earned entitlement to VA medical services; and

WHEREAS, the imposition of prescription copayments is another earned benefit being denied service-connected disabled veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, vigorously opposes a copayment for service-connected disabled veterans to receive VA medications.

RESOLUTION NO. 272—LEGISLATIVE

PROVIDE FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF CERTAIN MEDICAL EXPENSES FOR FORMER
PRISONERS OF WAR

WHEREAS, current law extends eligibility to former prisoners of war for hospital care, as well as outpatient treatment for any disability; and

WHEREAS, former prisoners of war have endured numerous hardships and dietary deficiencies as a result of their internment; and

WHEREAS, former prisoners of war may require medical treatment of an emergent nature to a degree that any delay could be hazardous to their health or life; and

WHEREAS, a Department of Veterans Affairs health care facility may not be feasibly available to provide the necessary emergency medical care; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports the enactment of legislation to amend section 1728(a)(2) of title 38 U.S.C., providing for the consideration of reimbursement of certain medical expenses incurred by former prisoners of war.

RESOLUTION NO. 273—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING THE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL CARE AS A RESPONSIBILITY
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has the authority—section 1730, title 38 U.S.C.—and utilizes such authority to assist veterans for placement in a community residential-care facility; and

WHEREAS, VA’s authority to assist veterans is limited to suitable placement in and approval of such facility after an appropriate inspection to determine compliance with certain established and defined health and safety standards; and

WHEREAS, VA is not responsible for, nor assumes any financial liability for veterans residing in such facilities, receiving room and board, personal care and supervision, as an integral, necessary component of their overall treatment regime; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports the enactment of legislation requiring VA to assume the total financial liability of such care for service-connected disabled veterans, in the same manner and using the same criteria that outpatient services are furnished under section 1712, title 38 U.S.C.

RESOLUTION NO. 274—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING RETENTION OF LOCAL VAVS COMMITTEES

WHEREAS, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Jesse Brown, recently directed the integration of the sixteen VA Medical Centers into seven medical centers; and,

WHEREAS, each of these VA medical centers have their own corps of volunteers and local VAVS Committees, with their own distinctive identity and pride; and

WHEREAS, to combine them into groups identified with only the lead medical center would cause a loss of individual identity and pride in the several facilities they now serve and possibly lead to decreased support of volunteers and donations; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, go on record strongly recommending that each facility, although integrated, be permitted to retain their separate local VAVS Committees and volunteers, with separate records and award ceremonies as at present (prior to integration).

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you, Mr. Johns. Is there support for his motion. Mike 2.

Mr. CHAD VALE. Chad Vale, Chapter 16, Illinois, makes a motion to accept these resolutions as read.

Commander McMASTERS. We have the motion already on the floor. Would you like to support that motion? Mike 2, the motion has been made. Would you like to support that motion?

Mr. VALE. Yes.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. Thank you. We have the motion on the floor. The motion's been made and supported. Ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. It's carried.

Congressman Steve Buyer was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1992. He is in his second term representing Indiana's Fifth Congressional District, which includes 20 counties in North Central Indiana.

He is a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and is chairman of the Education, Training, Employment and Housing Subcommittee. He has been a pioneer on health issues affecting active duty personnel and veterans and their families.

During his first term in Congress, he co-authored legislation that provides health care and other aid to Persian Gulf veterans who suffer from as-yet undiagnosed illnesses known as Gulf War Syndrome.

Congressman Buyer received his bachelor's degree in business administration from the Citadel and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. He received his law degree from Valparaiso University School of Law in 1984. Following law school, he returned to active duty for three years with the United States Army as a member of the Judge Advocate General's Corps, where he was assigned as a special assistant to the U.S. Attorney in Virginia.

In the fall of 1990, he was called to serve in the Persian Gulf War. Currently he serves as a member of the Army Reserve, where he holds the rank for major.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Congressman Steve Buyer. [Applause.]

Congressman STEVE BUYER. Thank you very much, Commander McMasters, and Senior Vice-Commander Greg Reed of Indiana. I know the Auxiliary national president is not in the room, but I pay

respects to Barbara Hicks, and also to Indiana State Commander Ken Kersey is here, and the rest of my Indiana comrades who hopefully are setting over here. All right, guys.

I also want to open up by sharing an insight with you, and the insight is that as I've served now for four years on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have enjoyed a working relationship with two individuals who are serving you and your organization very, very well. I don't believe there's anyone that is more sincere than these two gentlemen and they are very earnest in their efforts and their sincerity, and that is Rick Schultz and Ron Drach.

I also want you to know that I bring greetings from Bob Stump, the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee in the House. I also bring greetings from a very good friend and colleague of mine and a comrade of all of us, and that is Sonny Montgomery. [Applause.]

I want to share something with you, that in the 1960s there was a scene that occurred that's played all across America. In the 1960s, I was a little boy that used to stand on the sidewalk holding a little American flag as I watched these Legionnaires and the DAV and VFW come marching up the street. They called it marching; I wasn't sure what it was. But they were coming down the street. And I was there, probably there anxious really to pick up the brass, so that I could pick up that brass and blow into it.

But you know, I want you to know that I came from an American Legion family. My father is presently a district commander for the American Legion, and my mother just a few weeks ago was elected the Indiana State Auxiliary president of the American Legion. So I come from a family that has lived veterans' issues, and I didn't dream, I guess, in the 1960s that I would now stand here humbly before you as a life member of Amvets, the American Legion and the VFW.

I suppose that individuals who know me, have seen me speak, know that I don't mix words. I'm very direct, very blunt, and I guess candor is a bastard term in Washington, D.C., but I think being straight with people is what's important. And I also suppose that using the satire of Secretary Brown's remarks yesterday, I am the "Young and Restless," trying to turn this country into "Another World," that throws children out of hospitals.

You see, ladies and gentlemen, that is called partisan politics, and I know that the VSOs pride themselves on bipartisanship. But I also know that we should be straightforward with ourselves.

I mean, I know that when my father ran for the district commander, the only place I know that there's more politics is perhaps in Little League. Right? (Laughter) I mean, to say there isn't politics in our organizations, let's be truthful with ourselves.

But if the Secretary has become very partisan in his politics, I accept that, I really do. I just don't believe that you should use veterans and veterans' issues to legitimize political causes. I think that's wrong. You see, no one ever asked me, and I'm sure no one ever asked you that when you stood and took the oath, whether you were Republican or whether you were a Democrat. When you wore the uniform, you wore the uniform to defend the Constitution to lay down your life to protect this country.

And that is the same sincerity in which I serve on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. We pride ourselves on the Veterans' Affairs Committee in our bipartisan nature on the issues, and it is led by the pace, by Chairman Stump and Ranking Member Montgomery.

Let me also share with you that as the "Young and Restless," I believe we can do better. That's why I'm the "Young and Restless," whether it's improving the economy to our families, to the environment or our moral fiber. You see, I believe that our country still needs you. They still need you, because there are individuals in our society that try to seek and change us from a country that was established on very strong Biblical principles to a country of humanistic principles, that people can do whatever they want so long as it feels good and doesn't hurt others, whether it's from same sex marriages to you name it.

I believe that what guides a country through the storm of chaos is a good moral fiber, a strong and deep rudder, and with individuals at the helm who are strong in character. It's easy to sail a boat on a windless day under blue sky and on calm seas, but to carry that boat through stormy waters into the chaos, you need good moral fiber and good strong character.

That's why your country still needs you. That's why your communities still need you. Because individuals in your community look up to you.

National character is extremely important. I believe that there are many things and places that define our national character. Our strength comes from our struggles and our triumphs, from the revolution where revolutionaries first ran at Lexington Green, to the place on the Old North Bridge in Concord, Massachusetts that marks the spot where merchants and farmers first took a stand and challenged the British Army on April 19th of 1775.

Our national character, though, is clearly defined through the emotions of war. War has been with us through the ages. From those of us who have participated to others who've witnessed, stories have been told and written, each capturing some form of glory. War may be glorious in verse or prose, but in reality it is not. It is the soldier, the sailor, the airman or the Marine who felt the cold stings of battle, they've witnessed the long dark shadows of horror, and they've challenged the face of death.

You see, war is not glorious, but glory is found in new levels of courage exercised from the American character, common people called upon to perform uncommon acts of valor. And through that sacrifice, our challenge is that it shall never be in vein. We have a very strong heritage, a very strong heritage. As a member of the National Security Committee and the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I take my responsibilities very serious, because it begins the day someone takes an oath all the way to the bronze marker laid upon the grave.

Let me begin by thanking the President of the United States for his remarks yesterday in regard to terrorism. I worked as a conferee on the anti-terrorism bill and with the Senate, and went with Henry Hyde down to the White House for the signing of that bill. I think his remarks were very appropriate.

It also shows that the world is still yet a dangerous place, that the Russian bear has been replaced by a thousand vipers, that this

is no time to deeply cut the budgets of the defense. It's easy to say I'm for a strong defense, but you must look at the deed. While the Cold War is over, I think the U.S. security interests endure, and as we move into closing years of the 20th century, our nation faces a series of new and serious challenges.

As the sole remaining super power, the United States is called upon to provide stability and leadership in the uncertain world, and we can do that by providing the regional stability, not involving the United States in every corner of the world for what is termed as moral obligations, placing our troops under these powder blue hats and saying now they're extending Americans' cause. No. It must be done to protect vital national security interests.

History shows us that now is not the time to reduce our military forces, yet the greatest open secret in Washington, D.C. and to the world is that we have a national security objective to fight and win two nearly simultaneous major regional conflicts. The reality is, ladies and gentlemen, we do not have a military force structure to do that. We should do a reassessment of our national security objectives and be honest and open with our allies, whether it be in the Pacific Rim to the European Theater.

The current estimates are that the military forces are presently underfunded from the bottom-up review—I don't care if it's from the most liberal estimate to the most conservative estimate—from 60 to a hundred billion shortfall. Sixty to a hundred billion! The defense spending continues to decline. The House proposal for the FY '97 budget at \$266.7 billion, when adjusted for inflation, represents the 12th straight year of decline in defense spending.

When measured as a share of the GDP, defense spending will only be 2.2 percent level since before World War II. You should also note from our budgetary concerns that interest payment on our national debt exceeds what we pay for national defense for the first time in our history.

Since the end of the Cold War, we have cut 11 Air Force fighter wings, 8 active Army divisions, 200 ships, a 27 percent cut in the active military manpower. This year in testimony before the House National Security Committee, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Shalikashvili, stated that to maintain readiness, to maintain military readiness, he needed \$60 billion in the procurement account to replace the aging equipment. The chairman went on to say that we have preserved readiness and forestructure at the expense of modernization.

You see, in the President's budget that was provided, provide only 38.9 billion, the lowest level in over 50 years. We are living off our procurement and our O and M for today and sacrificing the future. You need to know that.

You know that because individuals such as myself are attacked. We're attacked by their saying, "Well, Steve, you're plussing up defense at levels that the Pentagon's not even asking for." Well, there's some gamesmanship that is going on here, ladies and gentlemen. The gamesmanship is that they don't want the defense spending to go up, so they cut deep into defense. As a matter of fact, the cuts went so deep into places, we didn't even have funding for 475 million for the military health care delivery system. Like what? We're not going to pay doctors and nurses? So we have to

plus the budget to actually provide for readiness in O and M, and I wanted you to know that.

Let me share some outlines with you with regard to our veterans' issues. Oh, before I do that, let me share one other thing with you. With Sonny Montgomery leaving the Congress—Sonny has not only done great work on behalf of veterans in the country, what he has done in his service to the nation on national security issues is just as admirable. What Sonny has done in the total force concept for the integration of the Reserve, the National Guard with the active force, has been remarkable over the years.

With Sonny leaving, Paul McHale, Democrat from Pennsylvania, and I have formed a Reserve Components Caucus. I believe it will take—and 50 members have signed up to it—I think it will take about 52 of us members to equal Sonny Montgomery and what he's done. But I wanted you to know what we've done in that cause for the interest of our Reserve components to include the Coast Guard, the National Guard, and all Reservists.

I am also standing here pleased and proud with the 104th Congress and its accomplishments on behalf of veterans. The 104th Congress, I believe, is extending its honor to their nation's veterans, and we're also keeping the faith. The veterans' funding has increased. Veterans' programs have been and will continue to be the high priority program in this Congress.

According to the House Budget Committee, the total VA spending from 37.8 billion in FY '96 has increased to 39.8 billion in FY '97. During the next six years, more than 234.3 billion will be spent on veterans' programs, 19.7 billion more than the previous six years; funding increases, even though the number of veterans is estimated to decline by 11 percent, or 2.6 million by year 2002.

One thing I want to be up front with you is the budget that was sent to us by the President. The President's budget did not pass muster. The House VA HUD appropriations bill. We spend eight million more on VA medical care and research in FY '97 than the President's budget, and 10.6 billion more than the President's budget over six years. We spend 10.6 billion more than the President's budget over six years.

I know the President was here, and he said, you know, "I've asked for an increase of \$1 billion, and they cut it." I want you to note that the \$1 billion plus-up is made in a political presidential season, that when you look at the out years, even Secretary Brown called the budget cuts devastating to the VA.

Let me share with you, in the subcommittee we took up the issue—and it's one that you've discussed with many other VSOs, except for the American Legion—the Davenport versus Brown decision to bring back the service connection with voc. rehabilitation. Out of my subcommittee became the bill that passed the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and has passed the House. We overturned that decision, and we came up with money in the process.

The President's budget wanted to take all that money and put it to deficit reduction. I said No. We put over \$230 billion back into veterans' program. When we have an opportunity to streamline veterans's programs and increase them, then let's do it. So I felt very good about being able to overturn this decision and find monies.

The 230 billion, let me give you a quick outline of the program improvements and their six years' cost and what they include. They are allowing the surviving spouse to retain compensation or pension payments prorated to the date of death instead of the end of the month before a veteran died. That was a \$70 million increase. We're also increasing from one to two years the period of time for which accrued benefits are payable to a surviving spouse in the case of a veteran who dies while a claim is being adjudicated. That's an increase of \$17 million.

Establishing a pilot program under which contract physicians would provide disability examinations to applicants for VA benefits was an increase of 14 million. We also increased the automobile allowance. That's an increase of six million. We extended the homeless veterans' reintegration project through fiscal year 1999, authorizing appropriations in the amount of ten million per year. We also increased the authorized funds to legal assistance organizations representing financially needy veterans in proceedings before the U.S. Court of Veterans' Appeals. That's at a cost of six million.

I also increased the Montgomery GI Bill active duty monthly basic rates to \$421.62. That was a cost of \$92 million. We're also allowing the transfer of certain active duty service members to the Montgomery GI Bill from the post-Vietnam era educational assistance program. That's an increase in cost of \$18 million. We're also providing Montgomery GI Bill eligibility for certain active duty members of the Army and Air National Guard. That was at \$14 million. We're also removing the two-year restriction on all standard degree granting institutions.

And veterans are being told that spending is being decreased when in fact it's being increased. I wanted to share that with you. Five hundred million increase over 1996 in VA health care for FY '97 in the House VA HUD appropriations bill is 60 million more than what the President had requested.

The congressional budget—I'm going to say it again—provides \$10.6 billion more over the VA over the next six years than the President's budget. And Secretary Brown was before us at the full Veterans' Affairs Committee when he said that the President's budget in the out years is devastating the VA and therefore, he said, "I received this assurance from the President that we get to negotiate the budget year by year."

Well, if you negotiate the budget year by year, then please tell me up front where you're taking the money from? Where are you going to take the money from? And they're unwilling to discuss that.

Tomorrow—I wanted you to know also what's happening on the House floor—the House will pass H.R. 3118. It's reforming the VA health care eligibility to move the VA from a costly in-patient model. The VA will provide all needed outpatient care services, including preventive care and home health care. That's been in a bipartisan nature. I believe it will pass overwhelmingly on the House floor.

The House will also pass H.R. 3586 tomorrow, which will extend veterans' preference eligibility to all veterans with at least four years of service upon honorable discharge. This bill extends veterans' preference to all agencies. As I sat there in my office, I kept

thinking, why is it we're not applying veterans' preference across the board? And as we're down-sizing government in these RIF procedures, there is a culture within the bureaucracies that has a bias against veterans.

Let's make sure that the veterans are protected, and that the veterans' preference has meat in it. And so we are extending veterans' preference to all branches of government, the executive branch, the Executive Office of the White House, that has only four percent veterans; to the judiciary branch and the legislative branch. And I think that's extremely important to do that. [Applause.]

Let me just close with this, and I'm hopeful that in the 105th Congress that the issue with regard to flag desecration is brought back up. In 1992, I recall the speeches by Bill Clinton that he made a promise to veterans that he would make sure that that bill passed, when in reality he campaigned against the bill and it was defeated in the Senate. That's a fact, ladies and gentlemen.

And I believe, though, if we get behind this, not only you, but all VSOs, we can prevent the desecration of the American flag. Now, I know that there are some that like to stand up and talk about the Constitution. There aren't enough hay wagons in Indiana that they can stand on to convince me that it's permissible to desecrate the American flag. [Applause.]

Let me just say in closing, I want to share with you on two things as I was reading. I was reading some—I love to read history. It's one of the legacies my father gave me. The other one I'm not so sure about. He made me a Cubs fan. [Laughter.] I guess you can tell I'm loyal. I think that, you know, if the Soviet Union can be no more, I think the Cubs can win the World Series. It'll happen.

But as I was reading a passage—it was about World War II in the European Theater, and there was an individual that talked about an event that occurred. And even some of you in this room, as you marched across Europe, you left freedom in your footsteps. On the battlefield there was someone who was mortally wounded, and there was no one around to hear his last words. So he pulled from his pocket a pad and he wrote down some words, and when the bodies were policed from the battlefield, they found in his hand these words on the pad, and it said, "When you go home, tell them that I gave this day for their tomorrow." Those are very powerful words.

And later on in another chapter, I read where General Patton, when he went to his cemetery, he stood there and he looked at all the little white crosses and the Stars of David, and he said, "I'm not here to pay honor to those who've died for their country. I'm here to pay homage and thank God that they lived."

I'm here to thank God that they lived and to thank you for your sacrifices. As I leave here and go back to Washington and you're going back to your homes, I want you to know I believe you live in luxury. You live in luxury because you get to go home and have conversations with people, and the words that you extend and exchange between each other have meaning. I get to go back to Washington, and I deal with people where words have no meaning. [Laughter and applause.]

"I say it, but I don't believe it." They utter words between themselves as though they're factually challenged. Words are meant to have meaning. Don't say it unless you mean it. Character matters. Character matters, ladies and gentlemen. [Applause.]

But I want you to know I believe, I believe that it is honorable, I believe that it is noble, and it is pleasing to move our minds in charity, rest in Providence and move upon the polls of our minds in charity, rest in Providence and move upon the polls of truth. Coupled with our heritage and a strong character, we'll guide our country to higher ground. God bless you [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you, Congressman Buyer.

At this time, I'm going to call the Employment Committee chairman, Vincent Reed.

Mr. VINCENT P. REED. Thank you, Commander. Comrade Commander and delegates: I'm privileged to present the report of your Convention Committee on Employment. The National Convention Committee on Employment was called to order for its first business session on July 29th, 1996 by the committee advisors, Ronald Drach and Mike Godich.

The first order of business was the election of a committee chairman. Vincent Reed was nominated as chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed and Vinny was elected chairman. The next order of business was the nomination and election of a secretary. M. Rae White was nominated and elected as secretary of the committee.

The committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted, and I'll now report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption. For the sake of saving time as we approach lunch, I will read the approved resolutions' number and title that gives its RESOLVED. The following have been approved by the committee:

Resolution 23. Oppose the transfer of vets to the employment and training administration.

255. To transfer Veterans Employment and Training Service to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

101. Veteran's preference established in one-stop centers was adopted as amended by the committee.

100. Veterans' preference in block grants adopted as amended by the committee.

138. To provide for veterans' preference in all JTPA programs was adopted.

Resolution 275 from the interim was to amend the rules of this convention as it applies to the business done by the committee was adopted.

171. To amend the definition of disabled veterans for purposes of benefits administered under Chapter 42, Title 38, United States Code.

Number 64. Affirmative action program for disabled veterans in government contracts.

Number 192. To amend Section 4103(a)(1) of Title 38 to amend the DVOP preference to allow the appointment of a qualified disabled veteran with priority for Vietnam Era disabled vets.

256. Veterans' preference for state assistance and training, employment and education.

257. To amend the residency requirements for state directors and assistant state directors for the Veterans Employment and Training Service.

Number 063. Affirmative action for the employment of disabled veterans.

65. Allow disabled veterans retired from military on disability to count service time towards civil service retirement.

258. To provide direct loans in set-asides at Small Business Administration for disabled vets.

Resolution 21. Support veterans' preference in all public employment.

143. Establish an outreach to the women veterans of the nation. That was adopted as amended by the committee.

Number 22. Adequate funding and permanencies for veterans' employment and training programs, including NVTI, SBA, DVBOP, LVER and the homeless program.

102. To maintain the assignment of responsibility for federal employment for veterans to the national level.

141. Employer incentives for retraining disabled veterans.

Number 99. Supporting House Resolution 1593, veterans' preference in all federal employment and training programs.

Resolution 262. To amend Chapter 42 of Title 38 to include grants under affirmative action.

Number 263. To provide an appeal process for veterans who believe their veterans' preference rights of affirmative action rights have been violated.

264. To amend the definition of a disabled veteran for the purpose of benefits administered under Chapter 42, Title 38, United States Code.

Number 142. To provide for vocational rehabilitation employment assistance.

259. To expand the authority for unpaid work experience in a resume.

Number 260. The VR&C staff to be provided state-of-the-art equipment to do their jobs.

Number 261. The DVOP should be part of the VA vocational rehabilitations integrated case management system.

And last, 265, to ensure veterans' preference in the United States Postal Service.

Comrade Commander and comrades, this completes my reports. My thanks go to all the committee members who are in attendance, those who were alternates who helped out and gave their input, especially Ron and Mike, our two able advisors, and to the secretary that I had the pleasure of serving with today and on this committee previously, who's on stage with me today, Rae.

And Comrade Commander, this completing the report, I move the adoption of these resolutions, and that my committee be discharged with the thanks of this convention.

[The above-mentioned resolutions follow:]

RESOLUTION NO. 021—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans has strongly supported federal, state and local veterans' preference laws; and

WHEREAS, attempts are being made to weaken, dilute and circumvent existing veterans' preference laws; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports veterans' preference in federal, state and local employment.

RESOLUTION NO. 022—LEGISLATIVE

ADEQUATE FUNDING AND PERMANENCY FOR VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND/OR TRAINING INCLUDING NVTI, SBA, DVOP, LVER, AND HOMELESS PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, there are numerous veterans' employment and training programs that need adequate staffing and funding; and

WHEREAS, those programs include the Veterans' Employment and Training Service of the Department of Labor, LVER and DVOP, JPTA, SBA, NVTI, Homeless and others; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, seeks and supports adequate funding and permanency for all veterans' employment and training programs.

RESOLUTION NO. 023—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE THE TRANSFER OF THE VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE (VETS) TO THE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION (ETA)

WHEREAS, Vice President Gore has established a "National Performance Review" to make recommendations to improve government; and

WHEREAS, it recently came to the attention of the National Employment Director that a recommendation is included in that review to transfer VETS to ETA; and

WHEREAS, part of that proposal abolishes all the positions at the regional level, as well as the State and Assistant State Director positions; and

WHEREAS, this proposal effectively eliminates VETS; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, oppose any efforts by this administration to transfer VETS to ETA.

RESOLUTION NO. 063—ADMINISTRATIVE

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, Congress has enacted a law requiring an Affirmative Action program for disabled veterans in federal government employment; and

WHEREAS, many disabled veterans now working for the federal government are not being afforded the opportunity for training, which would provide them with the necessary knowledge and/or experience needed for promotion to higher grades; and

WHEREAS, there currently does not exist a procedure for enforcing the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 4214 and 5 CFR part 720 for disabled veterans; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, seek enforcement provisions and protections for disabled veterans.

RESOLUTION NO. 064—ADMINISTRATIVE

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM FOR DISABLED VETERANS IN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

WHEREAS, currently the government requires contractors that are awarded contracts by the federal government to have an Affirmative Action program; and

WHEREAS, more definitive contract guidance needs to be provided government contractors on the requirements of the affirmative action program for disabled veterans; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, seeks changes to the regulations which would require all government contractors that receive an award over \$25,000 to have an Affirmative Action program for disabled veterans that would mandate these employers to seek out disabled veterans

to be employed, train these disabled veterans so that they can progress in employment, and to promote these disabled veterans on the same basis as that which is required for, or provided to, minority and/or women under other affirmative action programs of the federal government.

RESOLUTION NO. 065—ADMINISTRATIVE

ALLOW DISABLED VETERANS RETIRED FROM THE MILITARY ON DISABILITY TO COUNT
SERVICE TIME TOWARD CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENT

WHEREAS, military personnel who are injured during time of war and who are then retired because of their service-connected disabilities deserve to receive the full benefit of their disability retirement; and

WHEREAS, men and women who are retired for disability from the military and seek employment with the federal government cannot count their few years of service towards civil service retirement unless they waive their disability retired pay; and

WHEREAS, retired reservists can draw retirement from civil service and the military service for the service rendered during the same period of years without reduction to their civil service time or any requirement to waive their military retired pay in order to receive full civil service retirement; and

WHEREAS, ex-servicemen and women who only draw Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) compensation for their service-connected disability can receive both the VA compensation and civil service retirement pay without waiver of one for the other; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, seek legislation to change the law which now prohibits disabled military retirees, disabled from any cause except willful misconduct, and who served during a period of declared national emergency, war or police action, to be entitled to count their service time towards civil service retirement provided that they pay a sum equal to 7 percent of their military pay into the civil service retirement trust fund or FERS (without interest) to cover the pay they received during those years, for the purpose of counting their time towards civil service retirement.

RESOLUTION NO. 099—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT OF H.R. 1593 VETERANS PREFERENCE IN ALL FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT &
TRAINING PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, it is a National responsibility to provide veterans' preference in all employment and training services available in the United States; and

WHEREAS, it is not practical nor feasible to devolve this responsibility to the States because this will weaken or eliminate the current preference for veterans mandated by Title 38 U.S.C.; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 1593 as proposed by Representative Sonny Montgomery seeks to provide veterans' preference for all Federally funded employment and training programs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, hereby supports passage of H.R. 1593.

RESOLUTION NO. 100—ADMINISTRATIVE

VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN BLOCK GRANTS

WHEREAS, over the past 50 plus years Congress has declared its intent that veterans and disabled veterans receive preference and priority in all employment and training services administered by the Department of Labor; and

WHEREAS, the current direction and movement of the Congress is towards block grant process with the states deciding how the reduced funds for employment and training are to be expended; and

WHEREAS, there are no provisions under the Block Grant process for continuing or addressing this covenant with our nation's veterans/disabled veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, strive to ensure that any and all legislation relating to employment and training

initiatives that is considered, provides clear priority of services to veterans/disabled veterans; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that oversight and monitoring of these initiatives continue to be conducted by the appropriate agency within the Department of Labor.

RESOLUTION NO. 101—ADMINISTRATIVE

VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN ONE-STOP SERVICE CENTERS

WHEREAS, the Texas Legislature has enacted H.B. 1863 which consolidated the Texas Department of Commerce and the Texas Employment Commission into one agency, the Texas Work Force Commission; and

WHEREAS, this legislation also created local boards which will be responsible for administering the employment and training funds that will assist local job seekers including veterans in accessing on the job training, classroom training and the operation of the one-stop centers; and

WHEREAS, other states are taking similar actions; and

WHEREAS, the employment and training needs of veterans/disabled veterans continue to expand due to the downsizing of the military; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, seek legislation mandating that disabled and other veterans receive preference and priority in all employment and training services provided at the One-Stop Centers.

RESOLUTION NO. 102—ADMINISTRATIVE

RETAIN NATIONWIDE PROGRAMS OF EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE FOR VETERANS AS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

WHEREAS, throughout the nearly two hundred and twenty-year history of the United States, the men and women of this nation have served in the Armed Forces in the interest of the collective body of states, united under a central federal government, “to provide for the common defense,”; and

WHEREAS, title 38 U.S.C. § 4301, Congress expressed its purpose in enacting the Uniformed Service Employment and Reemployment rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), in part “to encourage non-career service in the uniformed services by eliminating or minimizing the disadvantage to civilian careers and employment which can result from such service,”; and

WHEREAS, it has been the finding of numerous surveys and studies that, for a variety of reasons, the vast majority of veterans/disabled veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States are disadvantaged in pursuing civilian employment and careers; and

WHEREAS, in title 38 U.S.C. § 4101, “The Congress declares as its intent and purpose that there shall be an effective (1) job and job training counseling service program, (2) employment placement service program, and (3) job training placement service program for eligible veterans/disabled veterans and eligible persons . . .”; and

WHEREAS, legislation has been introduced in both houses of Congress that would reduce the direction and control of such employment assistance programs by the federal government, relinquishing such control to the discretion of the Governors of the states; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, oppose any such elimination of federal direction and control over the employment assistance entitlement earned by America’s veterans/disabled veterans through their honorable service.

RESOLUTION ON. 117—ADMINISTRATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO GIVE DISABLED VETERANS HIRING PREFERENCE WITHOUT REGARD TO PERIOD OF SERVICE

WHEREAS, existing law provides for a priority system for veterans and other eligible persons in federally funded employment and training programs; and

WHEREAS, title 38 U.S.C. requires that those programs give preference to Vietnam veterans over disabled veterans who are rated at less than 30% compensable disabled; and

WHEREAS, titles 5 and 38 U.S.C. give clear definitions of veterans and the preference under which they and other eligible individuals will be employed within the federal sector; and

WHEREAS, title 5 U.S.C. specifically requires that disabled veterans be given preference over other veterans for hiring within the federal government; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports the passage of legislation that will be consistent with the existing federal hiring statutes that do not specify any unique war period of service over another.

RESOLUTION NO. 138—LEGISLATIVE

VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN THE JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACT

WHEREAS, there currently is no provision in the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), Public Law 97–300, to give preference in services to disabled veterans and veterans; and

WHEREAS, disabled veterans and veterans are given priority under laws governing other employment and training programs (title 38 U.S.C., Chapters 41 and 42); and

WHEREAS, a significant percentage of the work force eligible for services under JTPA are disabled veterans and veterans who have served their country, and now face significant barriers to employment; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, hereby goes on record urging Congress to amend the JTPA so as to provide for disabled veterans and veterans' preference in all programs operated under JTPA to include One-stop Career Centers.

RESOLUTION NO. 141—LEGISLATIVE

EMPLOYER INCENTIVES FOR RETRAINING DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, a general transformation of the nation's economy due largely to defense reductions has caused vast numbers of middle income jobs in the industrial and manufacturing sectors to disappear, leaving many veterans and disabled veterans displaced and in need of retraining; and

WHEREAS, against this background, federally sponsored training programs have failed to target veterans in such existing programs as the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA); NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, hereby goes on record strongly urging the Congress to create additional tax incentives and a training reimbursement program designed to generate the needed amount of employer provided training and employment opportunities leading to meaningful careers for veterans and disabled veterans.

RESOLUTION NO. 142—ADMINISTRATIVE

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

WHEREAS, disabled veterans completing VA vocational rehabilitation programs, particularly severely disabled veterans, are too infrequently placed in jobs leading to meaningful careers in their chosen occupations; and

WHEREAS, VA's vocational rehabilitation personnel are often unfamiliar with the avenues through which veterans can receive employment assistance, such as the Disabled Veteran Outreach Specialists (DVOPs) who are required to begin job development for rehabilitated veterans within six months of their completion of training; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, does hereby (1) urge the VA and VETS/DOL to establish formal cross-training for VA vocational rehabilitation counselors and DOL funded veteran employment specialists in order to expedite appropriate and effective job placement for disabled veterans completing their rehabilitation, and (2) request additional funding for this cross training and to augment personnel levels in the VA vocational rehabilitation program, and (3) urge VETS/DOL to increase the number of DVOP staff

outstationed at VA vocational rehabilitation facilities for the purpose of developing more meaningful jobs.

RESOLUTION NO. 143—ADMINISTRATIVE

OUTREACH AND EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN VETERANS

WHEREAS, many women who have served in the military are not aware of services available to them through state operated Job Service offices in the United States and may be less likely to obtain employment and training than their male counterparts; and

WHEREAS, over the last decade there has been a definite increase in the number of women veterans in need of employment and training services; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, does hereby go on record requesting (a) Congress establish and fund special programs and outreach to women veterans in need of employment and assistance from the nation's basic labor exchange system and training assistance through programs operated under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA); (b) additional training in the needs of women veterans be provided to the veteran staff of the State Employment Security Agencies.

RESOLUTION NO. 171—LEGISLATIVE

TO AMEND THE DEFINITION OF DISABLED VETERANS FOR PURPOSES OF BENEFITS
ADMINISTERED UNDER CHAPTER 42, TITLE 38 U.S.C.

WHEREAS, chapter 42, title 38 U.S.C., defines a disabled veteran as one who is rated 30 percent or more services-connected disabled or as one who was discharged or released from active duty because of a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, disabled veterans continue to bear a disproportionate unemployment rate and have not received adequate assistance under Chapter 42, title 38 U.S.C.; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation to amend section 4211 of title 38 U.S.C., to redefine the term “disabled veteran” as “one who has a compensable service-connected disability under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs or whose discharge or release from active duty was for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.”

RESOLUTION NO. 192—ADMINISTRATIVE

AMEND SECTION 4103(a)(1) OF DVOPS APPOINTMENT PREFERENCE TO ALLOW THE APPOINTMENT OF QUALIFIED DISABLED VETERANS WITH PRIORITY GIVEN TO QUALIFIED DISABLED VETERANS OF THE VIETNAM ERA

WHEREAS, it is the intent of Congress that the State Employment Services Agencies (SESA) provide effective employment and training services to veterans with priority given in accordance with title 38 U.S.C. § 4102; and

WHEREAS, it is the SEAS's responsibility to provide priority services to veterans and that all Local Employment Service Office staff provide priority services to veterans; and

WHEREAS, the requirements for the appointment of Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) is now based upon the preference to disabled veterans of the Vietnam era; and

WHEREAS, combat veterans and disabled veterans have been historically shown to have special employment and training needs; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, seek legislation to require that preference be given to disabled veterans with priority given to disabled Vietnam era veterans in appointments to DVOP positions.

RESOLUTION NO. 255—LEGISLATIVE

TRANSFER THE VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE TO THE DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, veterans' educational benefits are administered by VA, not the Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, veterans' health services are administered by VA, not the Department of Health and Human Services; and

WHEREAS, veterans' housing programs are administered by VA, not the Department of Housing and Urban Development; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Labor (DOL) is the only non-VA federal agency administering a veterans' program; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs is now a Cabinet level department, and the initial reason for the establishment of a Department of Veterans Affairs was to avoid duplication, fragmentation or delay in the various services provided to our nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, it is our proposal that the entire Veterans' Employment and Training Service staff and funding be transferred to VA, thereby avoiding a reduction of personnel, salaries, benefits or ability to carry out the mandates of chapters 41, 42, and 43, title 38 U.S.C., and our proposal would continue the DVOP and LVER programs as they currently exist; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation that would transfer the Veterans' Employment and Training Service from the Department of Labor to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 256—LEGISLATIVE

VETERANS' PREFERENCE FOR STATE AND ASSISTANT STATE DIRECTORS OF VETERANS'
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

WHEREAS, current law requires that the Department of Labor's State and Assistant State Directors of Veterans' Employment and Training be veterans; and

WHEREAS, there has been some discussion to eliminate the veterans' preference provision; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, opposes any change to the veterans' preference provisions accorded state and assistant state directors.

RESOLUTION NO. 257—LEGISLATIVE

TO AMEND THE RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE DIRECTORS AND ASSISTANT
STATE DIRECTORS OF THE VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE

WHEREAS, the Congress of the United States has enacted legislation providing for a Veterans' Employment and Training Service within the Department of Labor; and

WHEREAS, the Act provides that the State Director and the Assistant State Director of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service shall be a veteran, and at the time of appointment shall be a bona fide resident of that state for at least two years; and

WHEREAS, this provision prohibits promotional opportunities for Assistant State Directors and others to other states and restricts them to their own states; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, goes on record in support of a waiver to substitute two years' experience as a State Director, an Assistant State Director or DVOP or LVER in lieu of the current residency requirements, thereby allowing them the opportunity to compete for State Director positions as they become vacant.

RESOLUTION NO. 258—LEGISLATIVE

PROVIDE DIRECT LOANS AND “SET ASIDES” FOR DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, many disabled veterans would like to start their own business but cannot obtain the needed loan; and

WHEREAS, many disabled veteran-owned businesses would like to do business with the federal government; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation that would authorize direct loans be provided by the federal government to qualified disabled veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the federal government provide “Set Asides” for disabled veteran owned businesses that are the same as, but separate and apart from, the Small Business Administration Disadvantaged Business 8A Set Aside Program.

RESOLUTION NO. 259—LEGISLATIVE

EXPAND AUTHORITY FOR UNPAID WORK EXPERIENCE

WHEREAS, certain disabled veterans pursuing a program of training under vocational rehabilitation may, as part of that program, participate in an unpaid work experience situation with either the federal, state, or local governments; and

WHEREAS, similar authority does not exist for unpaid work experience with private sector employers; and

WHEREAS, private sector employers may provide meaningful training in such a program; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, seeks legislative relief that would allow these disabled veterans to participate in unpaid work experience with private and not-for-profit sector employers.

RESOLUTION NO. 260—LEGISLATIVE

VR&C STAFF BE PROVIDED STATE-OF-THE-ART EQUIPMENT

WHEREAS, the current Director of the VA’s Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Service has no direct line authority over the approximately 700 employees located throughout the Regional Office structure; and

WHEREAS, these individuals are responsible to and report to the Regional Office Director; and

WHEREAS, these individuals rely on the goodwill of the Regional Office Director to provide them with needed support including current technological support to include computers, faxes, and even telephones, which are necessary to expedite and streamline the processes and will result in earlier enrollments into a program; and

WHEREAS, it has been reported by the recently established “Design Team” set up to review how vocational rehabilitation does business, some VR&C offices do not have this type of equipment and in at least one instance, they do not even have phones; and

WHEREAS, this type of equipment is essential to assist disabled veterans attain their employment goal; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, seeks change that would assure the Regional Office Directors are held accountable and all VR&C staff at the Regional Office level be provided state-of-the-art equipment in order for them to efficiently perform the duties of providing vocational rehabilitation and employment services to disabled veterans.

RESOLUTION NO. 261—LEGISLATIVE

DISABLED VETERANS’ OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALIST (DVOPS) SHOULD BE PART OF VA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CASE MANAGEMENT

WHEREAS, Congress has criticized the VA’s Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for not working closely enough with DVOPs; and

WHEREAS, further criticism was leveled at that office because of VA's inability to determine how many veterans were placed in suitable employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS, they were also criticized for not working closely enough with the DVOF staff; and

WHEREAS, the VA is undergoing a major "redesign" of how Vocational Rehabilitation does business; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, request that a requirement be made that the DVOPs be made part of case management at the earliest onset of rehabilitation process.

RESOLUTION NO. 262—LEGISLATIVE

AMEND CHAPTER 42, TITLE 38 U.S.C. TO INCLUDE GRANTS UNDER AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

WHEREAS, section 4212, chapter 42, title 38 U.S.C. currently requires federal contractors to take affirmative action on behalf of disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, current law does not provide for recipients of federal financial assistance, to include grants to states, to take affirmative action on behalf of veterans; and

WHEREAS, most federal agencies provide grants to universities, colleges, transportation systems and others who are not required to take affirmative action; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, requests that section 4212 of title 38, U.S.C., be amended to include "recipients of federal financial assistance" be covered for affirmative action purposes.

RESOLUTION NO. 263—LEGISLATIVE

PROVIDE AN APPEAL PROCESS FOR VETERANS WHO BELIEVE THEIR VETERANS' PREFERENCE OR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RIGHTS HAVE BEEN VIOLATED

WHEREAS, disabled veterans and other veterans who believe their rights as a preference eligible or rights under affirmative action provisions have been violated currently have no recourse other than a general inquiry; and

WHEREAS, many disabled veterans believe that many agencies intentionally and unintentionally circumvent veterans' preference or don't comply with affirmative action; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation that would provide a meaningful appeal/redress process for veterans and disabled veterans who believe their rights have been violated under veterans' preference or affirmative action.

RESOLUTION NO. 264—LEGISLATIVE

TO AMEND THE DEFINITION OF DISABLED VETERAN FOR PURPOSES OF BENEFITS ADMINISTERED UNDER CHAPTER 42, TITLE 38 U.S.C.

WHEREAS, chapter 42, title 38 U.S.C., defines a disabled veteran as one who is rated 30 percent or more service-connected disabled or as one who was discharged or released from active duty because of a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, disabled veterans continue to bear a disproportionate unemployment rate and have not received adequate assistance under Chapter 42, title 38 U.S.C.; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation to amend section 4211 of title 38 U.S.C., to redefine the term "disabled veteran" as one who has a compensable service-connected disability under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs or whose discharge or release from active duty was for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty."

RESOLUTION NO. 265—LEGISLATIVE

VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

WHEREAS, Congress is currently considering legislation to provide certain protections and enhancements to veterans' preference in federal civil service; and

WHEREAS, this legislation would include all federal agencies including the Postal Service; and

WHEREAS, the Postmaster General of the United States has contacted the Postal Board of Governors indicating his concern that such changes to veterans' preference would be "onerous" on the Postal Service; and

WHEREAS, the Postal Service should be subject to the veterans' preference provisions; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation that would provide additional protections and other enhancements to veterans' preference and that such legislation should include the Postal Service and the Postmaster General be informed of our strong opposition to his language directed to the Postal Board of Governors.

RESOLUTION NO. 275—LEGISLATIVE

TO AMEND PARAGRAPH (f) OF RULE 21 OF THE RULES OF THE CONVENTION

WHEREAS, vocational rehabilitation programs and job placement of veterans are closely interrelated; and

WHEREAS, under rule 21(f) of the DAV's National Rules of the Convention, the Committee on Employment does not have jurisdiction over vocational rehabilitation issues pertaining to the program under Chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, it would be more practical to have the Committee on Employment address these vocational rehabilitation issues in National Convention; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the National Interim Employment Committee, meeting on July 28, 1996, recommend to the 1996 National Convention that Rule 21 (f) be amended to give the Convention Committee on Employment jurisdiction over vocational rehabilitation under Chapter 31 by striking from the last sentence in paragraph (f) the words "education" and "except those provided by Title 38, U.S. Code" and by striking the commas preceding these words.

Commander McMASTERS. You've heard the motion. Is there support? Mike 3.

NEC 1st District Alternate FRANK J. DROGO. Frank Drogo, alternate National Executive Committeeman, makes a motion to accept the report.

Commander McMASTERS. The motion has been made. You support the motion? Mike 3, the motion has already been made. Do you support the motion?

NEC DROGO. Oh! I second it.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you. The motion has been made and supported. Ready for the question? Ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. That's carried. [Applause.].

Ladies and gentlemen, please rise, and I will ask Chaplain Wilkie to lead us in prayer.

Chaplain WILKIE. Let us pray. We are grateful indeed this morning for the activities of the day. We're indeed grateful that words to have meaning, especially when we come to You and find out Your direction. We're especially grateful that character is meaningful, and that there is character in this organization. We're grateful for those who have led us today.

Pray that You will give us an opportunity for refreshment. Bring us back ready to take care of business in our next session. Amen.

Commander McMASTERS. The convention stands in recess until 1:30.

[Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 11:55 o'clock a.m., July 29, 1996.]

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION

The Second Business Session of the 75th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans convened in the Grand Ballroom of the New Orleans Hilton Riverside, New Orleans, Louisiana, Monday afternoon, July 29, 1996, and was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Commander Thomas A. McMaster III.

Commander THOMAS A. McMASTERS III. The convention will please come to order. Please join me in the salute to the flag.

[Salute to the flag.]

Commander McMASTERS. Chaplain, will you please lead us in prayer.

Chaplain WILKIE. Let us pray. Again, Father, we than You for allowing us the time of refreshment. We thank You also for the opportunity that You have afforded us in this great hour to consider again the business affairs of this convention. Enable us especially to be aware of those who employ our veterans as we recognize them. Help us to be aware, O God, of the opportunities we have in so many ways to be of service.

Direct the decisions we make. Amen.

Commander McMASTERS. Please be seated.

Earlier this morning, we adopted the Rules of the Convention probably improperly. What we have done is we've approved the amendment, and at this time, I'm going to call on Mr. Jim Tanner on Mike 3 to actually restate his motion, and we're going to adopt the Rules as amended. And I think that's what we're going to do at this time. Mr. Tanner?

Okay. We will continue. I'll introduce Mr. Gorman for his remarks. Dave has been with the DAV for 25 years, both in the National Service and Legislative Departments. We are fortunate indeed to have someone with Dave's discretion, intelligence and practical know-how at the helm of our team in Washington.

Dave's professional DAV career began in 1971 when he became a national service officer shortly after his discharge from the U.S. Army. He was seriously wounded by a Viet Cong land mine explosion while on patrol in the central area of South Vietnam. His wounds required amputation of both legs.

After three years as an NSO in Boston and Providence, Dave was assigned to the DAV National Appeals staff in Washington, D.C. in 1975, becoming supervisor of the staff in 1981.

Later, he assumed management duties in the DAV's National Service Program at National Service and Legislative Headquarters. He was promoted to assistant national legislative director for medical affairs in 1983 and to deputy national legislative director in 1994.

In 1995, Dave was named executive director of our Washington Headquarters, taking over day-to-day management of our service, legislative, volunteer and employment operations. And this will be Dave's first annual report in that capacity to the National Convention.

Mr. Gorman. [Applause.]

Executive Director DAVID W. GORMAN. Thank you very much. National Commander McMasters, distinguished guests, and, of course, delegates to this 75th National Convention: As the executive director of the DAV's Washington Headquarters, it is truly my honor and privilege to be able to present to you this annual report to the 75th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans.

First, I want to thank you, Tom, for his inspiring leadership and his steadfast commitment to the DAV and our mission of service and hope to disabled veterans and their families.

I also want to express my deep respect and sincere gratitude to National Adjutant Art Wilson. I can't say enough about how vital his resolute guidance, wise counsel and rock-solid support have been for me personally and for the rest of us in our efforts on a daily basis to serve you and your families.

None of what we have been able to accomplish in Washington would be possible without the outstanding work accomplished by Rick Patterson and his great staff in Cold Spring, Kentucky. So thanks, Rick, for that.

And to Auxiliary National Commander Barb Hicks and National Adjutant Maria Tedrow, my sincere thanks. Without the Auxiliary and all the effort they put forth, we would not be nearly as successful as we are.

As we gather here in New Orleans to celebrate our 75th National Convention and retrace the DAV's magnificent history, I find myself standing in awe of how one individual's vision, together with a small but totally dedicated and committed group of World War I veterans untied in a common bond, gave birth to the organization we all love so much today.

Yet, in reflecting on that truly extraordinary achievement, I find myself looking also toward the future as well. It is a future that holds tremendous promise and presents us with a great many challenges in the bargain. The various programs and services that we provide to you on a day-to-day basis are not only geared toward meeting the immediate and the sometimes unique needs of America's veterans and their families, but they are being constantly evaluated, upgraded and improved so we can continue to meet our future challenges as well.

Let me just highlight a few of those for you now, and you can get much more detailed information from the various annual reports from the department directors that are available in the DAV Public Relations Office. As you all know, our National Service Program under the above and steady direction of Ken Wolfe, is not only the largest of the organization's initiatives, but is also the backbone of the DAV and is what our reputation of service and excellence is built on.

For sure, your service program and the national service officers who make it the best it can be, will play a significant role in helping us live up to our potential and meet the challenges we face now and for many years to come. In several important ways, what Ken and his staff have accomplished will have a profound impact on our future.

Not only is our national service officer corps growing, but the quality of our younger NSOs keeps improving as well. National Adjutant Wilson's commitment to service and to excellence was the single driving force that gave birth to the DAV National Service officer Academy that's located in Denver, Colorado. The Academy provides the foundation for the training of our NSOs so the DAV can continue to provide today's veterans as well as tomorrow's unequalled quality representation.

Since that first group of 23 NSO trainees entered the Academy in July of 1994, three classes totalling 77 NSO trainees in all have graduated and have been assigned to work in our DAV national service offices across the country under the direct supervision and the professional guidance of seasoned NSOs. Class 4, consisting of 21 trainees, is currently undergoing training and will graduate on August 23rd, just a little less than a month away.

In addition to ensuring that your NSOs and other staff get the quality training they need, it's essential that DAV management be equipped to provide top-notch leadership as well. Earlier this year, the entire DAV management team, comprised of supervisory and time ever to participate in a very comprehensive week-long program aimed at honing their leadership and management skills. And I want to say to you it was a tremendous success.

While we're talking about the National Service Program, I'd like to take just a minute to show you two DAV public service announcements that the National Communications Department has produced in support of our NSOs. So please, take a look for a moment at the TV screens on either side of the stage.

[Video presentation.]

Executive Director GORMAN. They were great, weren't they? And from all indications, both of those PSAs got tremendous play across the country. And for that, of course, I'd like to thank our National Communications Director, Tom Keller, and his staff for those spots and for all the work they do in continuing support of all of our programs.

In particular, I'd like to offer a special word of thanks and appreciation to Associate National Director of Communications Dave Autry. Dave's presence and day-to-day involvement in the goings-on in Washington make him a very special and valuable asset to our staff.

Another valued member of our very fine staff in the Washington Headquarters is Administrative Assistant Daryl Richardson. I don't know how she managed to do it on a day-to-day basis, but somehow she manages to keep things running smoothly amid all the chaos and hubbub. So my heartfelt thanks goes out to Daryl.

I'd be remiss, of course, if I didn't recognize and extend a very special thank you to the National Service Foundation and the Charitable Service Trust, whose commitment and contributions to our National Service Program has made the job of providing service to veterans that much easier.

Later on during the convention, you'll be hearing a lot more about our legislative battles, but I want to say a word now about Rick Schultz and your DAV legislative team. We all owe these fine gentlemen a world of thanks for warding off the many vicious attacks on our benefits being posed in Washington. With continuing

efforts under way to cut funding for veterans' programs government shutdowns, schemes to tax and means test our service-connected disability compensation, and people always looking for ways to do away with the VA health care system, it's been a really rough year.

And although the past year hasn't produced much in terms of new meaningful legislation, it has been tremendously successful in terms of our grass-roots efforts. Our benefits protection teams and DAV and Auxiliary members, as well as their families, have done a magnificent job of convincing their elected officials to back off from the many horrible and potentially devastating legislative proposals. Only swift action by all of you could have managed to kill morally wrong and mean-spirited schemes like termination disability compensation to certain mentally incompetent veterans.

If what we keep hearing from groups like the Concord Coalition is any indication at all, we're going to have our work cut out for us, no matter who's in the White House or which party is in control of Congress next year. Let's face it: The farther we get away from war, the less our elected officials and policy makers remember the sacrifices made by veterans the ongoing obligation a grateful nation has toward us.

And while you're at it, take a look at who makes up Congress, and you'll discover there are fewer and fewer veterans among our lawmakers today.

There are some folks out there who think veteran's program have ducked the budget ax for far too long. They want to turn our disability compensation system into some kind of an insurance annuity program run by the private sector, and they want to shut the doors of the VA health care system and our VA hospitals.

We need to keep continually reminding Congress of the importance of veterans' programs, and with your help we'll continue to do just that.

Your Employment Department, headed by Ron Drach, is making sure your voice is heard on a number of issues, such as homeless veterans, many of whom have service-connected disabilities that have contributed to their plight. Naturally, much of our efforts are focused on defending veterans' employment rights and maintaining job training and employment assistance programs, such as those administered by the Department of Labor, as well as the VA Vocational Rehabilitation Program and the Transition Assistance Program and Disabled Transition Assistance Program for separating military personnel.

Handling employment-related legislative and oversight issues, with particular emphasis on service-connected disabled veterans involves monitoring several agencies and pending legislation, as well as working with the executive branch and Congress on program development and oversight.

In addition to developing legislative testimony before congressional committees on issues relating to employment rights, job training programs, vocational rehabilitation, small business initiatives and programs for homeless veterans. Ron works closely with your national legislative staff as they appear before Congress on issues affecting veterans; benefits and programs.

DAV volunteer programs just keep on growing and getting better under Bruce Nitsche's guiding hand. Our VA Voluntary Service Program, Hospital Service Coordinator Program, and the DAV Transportation Network continue to be the envy of many others across the country. During the past year alone, DAV volunteer drivers logged nearly 18 million miles, taking nearly half a million veterans to and from VA medical facilities for much-needed health care. That's a tremendous accomplishment, and each and every one of you who are involved in that program should be very proud, and I know I am. [Applause.]

And as you know from the video you saw this morning and Adjutant Wilson's report, our Transportation Network has just put 141 brand-new Ford vans on the road to continue service to veterans. That makes 556 that DAV has donated to VA medical centers nationwide since 1987, and Ford has generously donated an additional 11 vans that will hit the road in August.

The extremely important VAVS Program which involves so many of you brings hope and light into the lives of hospitalized veterans and their families on a daily basis. In the past year alone, DAV and Auxiliary volunteers donated an incredible two and a quarter million hours of VAVS service. That's the yearly equivalent, ladies and gentlemen, of 1100 full-time VA employees with an estimated value of \$28 million in hourly wages alone. [Applause.]

So we should all again take great pride in the fact that if it were not for the DAV and our Auxiliary members, the hospitalized veterans across this great country wouldn't be nearly as well off while they're hospitalized as they are.

And our National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic just simply seems to be getting bigger and better every year as it continues to change the lives of severely disabled veterans. This event really serves as an opportunity at rehabilitation in the nontraditional sense of medical care. After all, if severely disabled veterans can face and meet the challenge head on of coming down the snow-covered slopes of a mountain, surely, in their minds, they can face the challenges of addressing their disabilities in a positive way.

This year has been a tough one, ladies and gentlemen, and no one expects 1997 to be any easier. But you can all rest a little easy in knowing that DAV advocacy is top notch, and it's recognized as such by members of Congress, the VA and other influential policy makers in Washington. When the DAV speaks, they listen. They listen because your Washington staff has earned the reputation, each and every one of them, as highly trained professionals who are committed to excellence when it comes to advocacy for their fellow disabled veterans. And that excellence and that commitment to cause extends all the way across our national service officer programs and to each and every national service officer who is out there working on a daily basis trying to get the benefits each of you and our membership deserves.

And I might add that it doesn't hurt one lick for those in Washington to know that each of your program directors carry just a little bit more credibility due to the fact that each and every one of them are all service-connected combat-disabled veterans.

To be sure, the folks at National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington have done an outstanding job of providing

first-rate programs and services to you and your families, and that's what we're there for. But you know what? We in Washington couldn't do a blessed thing without you, our membership, and for that, we thank you.

In conclusion, and on behalf of the entire Washington headquarters staff, I just want to again say thank you for making it all possible. Thank you. [Applause.]

Commander MCMASTERS. Thank you, David. I can't think of a nicer guy I'd rather go to Bosnia with than David Gorman.

At this time, the Chair will entertain a motion to adopt Mr. Gorman's report. Mike 1.

NEC 4th District ALBERT R. FANSLAU. NEC District 4 moves the adoption of the report.

Commander MCMASTERS. We have the motion. Is there support? Mike 3.

Mr. ALAN W. BOWERS. Alan Bowers, commander, Massachusetts, seconds the motion.

Commander MCMASTERS. We have a motion and support to accept Mr. Gorman's report. All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. That's carried.

[The following written annual report was submitted by Mr. Kenneth D. Wolfe, National Service Director:]

As National Service Director, it is my privilege to report on the achievements of the National Service Department to the 75th national Convention of the Disabled American Veterans.

During the past 75 years since DAV's inception, our forefounders comprised of World War I veterans and those DAV leaders who have followed in their footsteps have witnessed an evolution of change in the world of veterans' benefits. The DAV's mission, however, remains constant, steadfast, and unwavering: caring for those who have borne the burden of war. Since our beginning, one constant has been the need for the DAV. Recent reminders of this need include Panama, Grenada, the Persian Gulf War, Somalia, the peace keeping mission in Bosnia, and the senseless, tragic bombing of the U.S. military barracks in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. The men and women serving our country can be assured the DAV will be ready and able to assist them should the need arise.

The National Service Department continues to carefully monitor activity within the Department of Veterans Affairs and other government agencies.

Proposals to change the VA *Schedule for Rating Disabilities* have been ongoing. Currently, the VA is going through the process to update and revise the schedule making sure it reflects current medical knowledge and other factors. We review proposed rule changes as they appear in the *Federal Register* very closely to protect the integrity of this very sensitive and complex document. In those instances where we disagree with proposed rule changes because they would be harmful to veterans, we respond oftentimes with expert medical opinions to support our position. In turn protecting the rating decisions of veterans in receipt of service-connected disability compensation.

We have serious concerns regarding the General Accounting Office's (GAO) recent intrusion into this time tested and proven system of compensating the nation's war-time disabled veterans. We fear GAO's interest is strictly related to cost savings without regard for disabled veterans. We took the initiative to meet with officials from GAO to express our concerns and we expect follow-up meetings.

This past year the Department of Veterans Affairs planned to radically restructure its benefits delivery system. I can tell you, DAV adopted a position early in their development stages putting the VA on notice that we would oppose any changes that would reduce services to veterans or hinder and restrict their access to the system. We insisted that any changes must produce meaningful improvement in the quality and timeliness of claims adjudication. The VA's plan called for reducing the number of claims processing centers by more than half of the existing regional offices. The VA has informed us this initiative has been delayed until further notice.

DAV NSO TRAINING ACADEMY

The DAV's NSO Training Academy located in Denver, Colorado, grew out of a need to revitalize the DAV's National Service Officer corps. On July 11, 1994, the first class of 23 NSO Trainees began their academic studies. University of Colorado at Denver professors provide college credit courses in medical terminology, anatomy, and physiology, allowing our NSOs to command a sound working medical knowledge when assisting veterans in developing their disability claims. Additionally, they are taught theories of persuasion and argumentation followed by a course in public speaking preparing them to verbally present the merits of a veteran's claim before the Department of Veterans Affairs, Social Security Administration, and various military boards and panels. DAV National Service Officers must also be proficient in preparing written briefs in support of their claimants. To assist them in that process they are provided a course in legal reasoning and brief preparation.

In addition to the instruction provided by the University of Colorado, seasoned DAV National Service Officers provide detailed instruction, teaching what benefits are available, who is eligible and how NSOs assist veterans and their dependents in applying. Trainees also receive instruction on the proper application of pertinent VA laws and regulations to include the VA *Schedule for Rating Disabilities*. The in-depth instruction provided at DAV's Training Academy prepares DAV trainees to effectively serve as veterans' advocates. To date three classes have graduated from the Academy totaling 77 National Service Officer Trainees. Class IV consisting of 21 NSO Trainees is currently in progress and will graduate on August 23, 1996. For three quarters of a century now, the DAV has been out there providing a service to veterans and their families, that remains unmatched anywhere in this country. And with this new wave of DAV NSOs entering the fray, our organization is laying the groundwork to continue that fine tradition of service on into the future. Far and away, we're giving our newest employees the best training available in the field of veterans' affairs.

In this ever-changing world of high technology the way our National Service Officers conduct training has also changed. Thanks to a donation by the Commanders and Adjutants Association, our instructors are using state-of-the-art computer-based imaging training programs. This innovative training allows DAV's instructors to maximize the amount of information they teach during each training module. I would like to take this opportunity to thank President Thomas J. Campbell and the Commanders and Adjutants Association for their support during the past year.

I am pleased to be able to inform you that we are evaluating the need for an additional class which would begin in 1997 if necessary.

DAV STRUCTURED AND CONTINUING TRAINING PROGRAM

Our training does not end when an NSO is rehabilitated. Your DAV leadership continues to recognize the importance and value of an ongoing program to ensure our NSOs are the best qualified to represent all veterans and their dependents. The laws, regulations, and procedures of the Department of Veterans Affairs are always changing, and we must be prepared. You deserve the best, and we will continue to provide the best because of our emphasis on continuing education for all NSOs.

The VA *Schedule for Rating Disabilities* was first targeted for training and all NSOs have, since the introduction of that program, completed the course of training in the proper evaluation of service-connected disabilities. Following this convention, we will introduce to all rehabilitated NSOs a new additional two-year program, emphasizing the VA's claims adjudication process. This program will stress VA adjudication procedures and the importance of proper application of U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals precedent decisions in claims work. As in the past, each NSO will be required to participate fully, undergoing rigorous tests to determine his or her level of proficiency. The implementation of this new program will allow NSOs to stay abreast of changes in VA regulations and keep them up to date on other pertinent matters, especially the effect of U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals decisions in the day-to-day adjudication of claims.

Although the DAV's purpose hasn't changed since DAV was founded, the job of an NSO has drastically changed as a result of medical advancements, the advent of the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals, and the implementation of high technology computer systems in use today. The NSOs' resolve hasn't changed either; these men and women are committed to doing everything possible to obtain the rightful benefits this nation's veterans and their dependents are entitled to. This determination is personified by the ongoing commitment of NSOs to excel in their work, and objective they understand requires continual updating of their skills through training.

MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING

DAV employees are vital in fulfilling our mission. They deserve the finest management and leadership we can provide. National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson recognized this training would be vital to our continued success. The University of Colorado International Training Academy custom tailored the Management and Leadership Training Program to fit DAV's needs. It was decided that all DAV management personnel, both at National Headquarters and National Service and Legislative Headquarters, and DAV's National Service Office Supervisors and Assistants would benefit from this important training. For the first time in the history of DAV, the entire management team was brought together as part of an integrated program to enhance our ability to do what we do best—provide top quality service to disabled veterans and their families.

We were taught the latest management and leadership skills starting with managing personnel and how to motivate employees and get the job done. We learned how to deal with change and conflict management. There were classes in stress management, time management, and problem solving. All of these courses were designed to improve how we deliver DAV services.

Since last year's National Convention, diversity and sensitivity training has been provided to all NSOs and support staff. We believe that training, coupled with the management and leadership training, will provide for a more professional and worker friendly office environment which in turn will have a positive effect on productivity and the quality of services provided by the Disabled American Veterans.

RETIREMENTS

During this 75th historical year several National Service Officers have chosen to enter into retirement. I would like to recognize and thank them for their unselfish dedication and service to the Disabled American Veterans and those veterans and families we serve. Bruce W. Burgess, Supervisor, San Antonio, Texas; Richard A. Fret, Supervisor, San Juan, Puerto Rico; Robert R. Jordan, Supervisor, West Los Angeles, California; Samuel L. King, Supervisor, Muskogee, Oklahoma; Richard L. Richards, Supervisor, Houston, Texas; Donald L. Savage, Supervisor, Oakland, California; Craig A. Bridges, Assistant Supervisor, Oakland, California; Charles Ward, Assistant Supervisor, Louisville, Kentucky; Gerald S. Klein, St. Petersburg, Florida; James M. Waters, Newark, New Jersey; Raymond E. Lawhorn, Chicago, Illinois; Kenneth Morris, Sr., St. Petersburg, Florida; Edward R. Heath, Staff Counsel, St. Petersburg, Florida; and Edward J. Kowalczyk, Chief of Claims, DAV Court of Veterans Appeals Office. During their many years of advocacy, thousands of veterans and their families have reaped the benefit of their knowledge and service. Speaking on behalf of all of those claimants and the Disabled American Veterans, we wish them the very best in their retirement years.

DEATHS

On a sadder note, National Service Officer Nathaniel Hart, assigned to our Oakland, California, National Service Office, passed away on August 7, 1995, ending 24 years of dedicated service to the DAV. NSO Hart is survived by his wife, Edna, and sons, Kevin and Nathaniel, Jr.

National Service Officer Gerald Gregory, assigned to our Boston, Massachusetts, National Service Office, was stricken with sudden illness and taken from our ranks on May 28, 1996. NSO Gregory served the DAV 11 years and is survived by his wife, Donna, and sons, Gerald, Jr., Christopher, and Michael.

COURT OF VETERANS APPEALS

The DAV Court of Veterans Appeals Office (COVA) has undergone significant changes during this past year. Chief of Claims Edward J. Kowalczyk retired from the DAV after 28 years of service. Following his departure, Stephen L. Purcell was transferred from his assignment at the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program to the DAV COVA Office, where he joined Judicial Appeals Representatives James W. Stewart and Ronald L. Smith. On June 3, 1996, National Service Officer Lennox E. Gilmer was reassigned to the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program. This program, where appeals are screened for referral to private attorneys for representation before the Court, is beneficial to veterans and their families, affording them legal representation at no cost. DAV is pleased to support this worthwhile program. Also, in December of 1995, the DAV COVA Office was relocated from Bowie, Maryland, to National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C. While they are not a part of the National Service and Legislative Headquarters staff, their

physical relocation resulted in a cost savings and placed our COVA office in closer proximity to the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals.

The number of appeals to the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals began to increase dramatically in the spring of 1996. DAV's Court of Veterans Appeals Office has played a major role in generating the nearly 100 percent increase in appeals to the Court. DAV represents more claimants than any other organization or individual. Prior to this year, DAV had appealed to the Court in only those cases where it was requested to do so by the claimant. Because the number of cases being decided by the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) declined markedly in 1993 and 1994, the number of cases which could potentially be appealed to the Court was half of what it had been in earlier years. Chief Judge Frank Q. Nebeker in testimony before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee mentioned reducing the number of judges of the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals from seven to five. During that same hearing the DAV testified that a reduction in the number of judges at this time would be premature.

Two changes occurred during this year. Of significant impact the Board of Veterans' Appeals began issuing many more decisions. As these decisions were received by claimants, more and more veterans and dependents began requesting COVA review. The majority of the increase in appeals filed by our COVA Office is the result of a new review program. In late 1995, the DAV COVA Office staff began reviewing BVA decisions even before an appeal was requested by the claimant. Decisions received by the DAV Board of Veterans' Appeals Office are sent to the DAV COVA Office soon after they are issued. If the DAV COVA staff believes the Board has made a reversible error in deciding the case, a letter is sent to the claimant recommending that an appeal be initiated. Our COVA staff continues to set the standard as it has since the Court began.

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE BENEFITS

DAV National Service Officers provide representation before Social Security Administrative Law Judges. From July 1, 1995, through June 30, 1996, National Service Officers represented 215 claimants. By applying their knowledge of Social Security laws and regulations they successfully obtained benefits in the amount of \$3,173,703.00. DAV also presents cases to the Social Security Appeals Council.

INSURANCE

DAV National Service Officers assist claimants in filing for VA insurance, applying for waiver of premiums and beneficiary insurance proceeds. Our National Service Offices in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and St. Paul, Minnesota, continue to provide outstanding representation at the VA Insurance Centers. DAV NSOs appeared before the VA 566 times. Their representative from July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996 resulted in monetary benefits to DAV claimants in the amount of \$4,586,703.00.

PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS

National Service Officers in San Diego, California, San Antonio, Texas, and Washington, D.C., provide representation to military retirees and active duty personnel. Collectively they represented 943 cases before Physical Evaluation Boards and Discharge Review Boards resulting in monetary benefits in the amount of \$8,459,068.00.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS

The DAV's Administrative Review Program continues to be a showcase for the technical expertise and tenacity of our NSOs. Administrative reviews, which are not a part of the VA's appeals process, are requested upon a finding of clear and unmistakable error in a rating decision.

Typically, an NSO, during an examination of a veteran's claims folder will encounter a rating decision which they believe to be in error. NSOs refer these cases to National Service and Legislative Headquarters. Following a review by the National Service Department, appropriate cases reflecting clear and unmistakable error are referred to VA Central Office. During the past year, 25 cases have been submitted for Administrative Review. Only one has not received favorable consideration resulting in a 94.7 percent allowance rate. We are optimistically awaiting responses on six pending cases that have yet to be decided. The Administrative Review Program continues to be a very effective method of resolving complex cases involving matters of policy and procedures. Our NSOs are encouraged to bring interesting cases to our attention.

BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS

Since the 1995 National Convention, the DAV Board of Veterans' Appeals staff, with Supervisor Jerry Cox at the helm, has had to weather several storms, both literally and figuratively. Approximately 21 federal workdays were lost due to the government-wide furloughs, as well as the blizzard of 1996. Although the Board was essentially shutdown, there was no reduction in the number of claimants filing appeals. Notwithstanding the lost workdays, for FY 96 both the BVA as well as the DAV expect to exceed the number of cases processed during FY 95. In FY 95 the Board issued decisions in 28,195 cases. For FY 96 through June 30, 1996, the Board already issued 24,701 decisions and is on pace to decide in excess of 32,000 cases. Despite these efforts, there remains an unacceptably large number of appeals pending on the BVA docket. At the end of FY 95 there were 58,943 appeals which had been certified for BVA review with an additional 27,116 awaiting certification. This adds up to an astonishing 86,059 cases pending in the appellate pipeline. In familiar terms, this is called a "backlog."

Steps instituted at BVA to help alleviate the backlog of appeals includes a restructuring of the Board by setting up geographical decision teams and the hiring of approximately 125 new attorneys. Additionally, with respect to hearings, the Board held 553 Travel Board hearings in FY 95. In FY 96 the Board projects approximately 2,800 Travel Board hearings will be held. Further, while the Board conducted 154 Central Office hearings in FY 95, for FY 96 through June 30, 1996, the Board has already held 209 Central Office hearings. Recently, the Board issued an action plan to significantly increase the number of Central Office hearings from 15 to 48 per week. Further, the Board has held 100 video conference hearings since July 1995 and plans to hold another 80 this summer. The video conference hearings have been held at the St. Petersburg, Florida, and Des Moines, Iowa, regional offices and the Nashville, Tennessee, VA Medical Center. DAV is excited about this new "state of the art" technology, which is still in the early developmental state, because it promises to help address the backlog and delays in appellate hearings.

The average processing time (the time it takes to issue a *final* decision once a claimant has submitted a substantial appeal) is currently 950 days if the appeal requires no remand, 1,425 days in appeals involving one remand, and 1,836 days if more than one remand is required. In FY 95, 47.6 percent of all cases reviewed by the Board were remanded. In FY 96 through June 30, 1996, approximately 43 percent of the cases have been remanded. The DAV continues to be concerned with the number of cases being remanded.

In the face of all these changes and challenges, the DAV BVA staff continues to perform impressive on behalf of the claimants we represent. The DAV was the representative of record in nearly 40 percent of all appeals heard before the Board and has an allowance rate of 23 percent. No other organization has more appeals granted than the DAV again this year.

COMPUTERIZATION

This past year has seen a continuing expansion in the computerization of the National Service Program. In addition to the on-line service from WESTLAW for our Court of Veterans Appeals Office, the National Appeals and National Service Offices are continuing their integration efforts with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Our Board of Veterans' Appeals Office has access to computer-based laws, regulations and text of all BVA decisions. Although BVA decisions are not precedent setting in nature, it is important that the language and logic utilized by our appeals staff provide the most concise and supportive presentation to support veterans' appeals.

Nearly every National Service Office is now provided with access to the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Group which includes the VA TARGET and Automate Reference Material System (ARMS). The TARGET system provides National Service Officers access to the status of claims for those claimants DAV represents without having to have the VA claims folder. ARMS provides each National Service Office with access to the most current version of VA regulations and manual citations. ARMS provides a limited inquiry system which allows cross referencing between laws, regulations, and manual citations.

Finally, there is an ongoing effort to provide personal computers for each DAV National Service Officer to improve their efficiency and knowledge. As a part of this project a "user friendly" National Service Office data base, diary, and report system is being tested. The intent of this program is to decrease the frequency of handling files allowing more time for NSOs to provide direct services to veterans.

AGENT ORANGE

Between 1982 and 1995, the Department of Veterans Affairs recognize that veterans expose to dioxin and other herbicide agents during active military, naval, and air service in Vietnam were incurring certain types of diseases in numbers far exceeding those incurred by the general population. As a result, the VA established regulations to facilitate claims for service connection on a presumptive basis for those diseases. The list of these diseases has been expanded on a continuing basis as the scientific community has raised the question of a statistically significant risk between a disease and exposure to dioxin or other herbicides.

In May of this year, President Clinton announced that Vietnam veterans afflicted with prostate cancer and acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy will be entitled to service connection based on their exposure to herbicides.

Additionally, the President announced that the Department of Veterans Affairs will be proposing legislation to provide an appropriate remedy for children of Vietnam veterans who suffer from spina bifida. Just as the DAV was in the forefront in requesting that the VA recognize entitlement to benefits for Veterans who suffered from diseases related to herbicide exposure, the DAV has already initiated dialogue with government leaders on this issue, concerning the health care needs of children with spina bifida. Moreover, the DAV has suggested the formation of a committee of government and nongovernment experts, to include representatives from veterans' service organizations, to examine the prospect of providing recompense to individuals or family members harmed as a result of a veterans's military service.

PROSTHETIC AND SPECIAL DISABILITIES PROGRAMS

In 1990 the Department of Veterans Affairs established a DAV supported, congressionally mandated Secretary's Advisory Committee on Prosthetic and Special Disabilities Program. Prior to his appointment as Executive Director of DAV's Washington Headquarters, David W. Gorman served on this committee. In March 1996, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown appointed Deputy National Service Director Jerry P. Steelman to this very important committee. The committee has made several recommendations in the areas of spinal cord injuries and blind rehabilitation expansion of VICTORS (Visual Impairment Center to Optimize Remaining Sight) and to establish an eye care center of excellence. This committee has been instrumental in maintaining the strength and integrity of rehabilitation and prosthetic programs.

PERSIAN GULF VETERANS

In 1994, legislation was passed and signed into law authorizing payment of disability compensation to Persian Gulf veterans with chronic undiagnosed illnesses. The Department of Veterans Affairs soon after implemented regulations to establish entitlement to compensation for veterans with symptoms of undiagnosed illnesses which became manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more within two years after leaving the Persian Gulf. The symptoms of undiagnosed illness included fatigue, muscle and joint pains, breathing problems and gastrointestinal problems. DAV National Service Officers are reviewing all rating board actions on Persian Gulf War veterans to detect patterns of illness and need for additional government actions. Because of the low allowance rate (5 percent) and our concern leading to a review of all of the previously denied claims, we are recommending a longer presumptive period of more than two years.

The DAV was in the forefront advocating action for compensation and special health care for Gulf War veterans, and we will continue to monitor actions by both Congress and the VA to ensure continued service for these veterans of our most recent war. Jerry D. Cox, Supervisor of the DAV National Appeals Office, at the Board of Veterans Appeal's, represented DAV serving on the Persian Gulf Expert Scientific Committee. This committee provides legislative recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs regarding Persian Gulf illness.

WOMEN VETERANS

DAV continues to be concerned and committed to the goal of supporting our nation's women veterans. National Service Officer Patricia A. Bracciale serves on this congressionally mandated VA Advisory Committee for Women Veterans addressing such problems as timely and appropriate gender specific health care for women veterans.

Some of the issues are Vietnam women veterans reproductive health research, plight of homeless women veterans, and a constellation of other pertinent issues

specific to women veterans. This committee was in the process of drafting its 1996 report to Congress when the November and December 1995 furloughs occurred. That, together with the lack of congressional funding, has resulted in no committee meetings since June 1995. In spite of this temporary setback to the VA's Women Veterans Advisory Committee, the DAV is resolved to support solutions to those problems faced by our women veterans.

HOSPITAL SERVICE COORDINATORS DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER TRAINING

Hospital Service Coordinators (HSC) and Department Service Officers (DOSs) are on the front line dealing with veterans on a daily basis. Many times they are the first contact a veteran has with the Disabled American Veterans. Certainly, it is important to DAV and the veterans we serve that these individuals are kept knowledgeable about veterans' benefit entitlement programs and the DAV.

During this past year, two HSC/DSO Training Programs were conducted. Presentations were given by Washington Headquarters Executive Director David Gorman, National Legislative Director Richard Schultz, National Employment Director Ronald Drach, National Director of Voluntary Services Bruce Nitsche, and Assistant to the Executive Director for Membership and Purchasing Charles Luttjohann. Additionally, National Service Officers Robert Plante, Supervisor of DAV's National Service Office in Chicago, Illinois, and Harry (Skip) Erway, Supervisor of DAV's National Service Office in Louisville, Kentucky, provided instruction on veterans' benefit entitlements.

We have had an overwhelming response from HSCs and DSOs expressing their thanks for providing this very important training. To date, 147 HSCs and DSOs have received this valuable training. We are currently in the process of updating training materials and hope to be able to provide additional training during the ensuing year. We would like to express our thanks to the Departments of California and Colorado, which hosted this training, as well as those departments who sponsored participants.

INFORMATION SEMINARS

DAV NSOs provide outreach services by conducting information seminars. Many DAV chapters host these very informative meetings as a way to increase public awareness, strengthen their membership, and, most importantly, provide benefit information and claims assistance to veterans in their community. From July 1, 1995, through June 30, 1996, NSOs conducted 52 information seminars and provided assistance to 3,650 veterans and their families. We have directed our NSOs to expand their efforts promoting chapters and departments to take advantage of the Information Seminar Program as it is a vital part of DAV's mission.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND DISABLED TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

As the military continues downsizing, more demands have been placed on our NSOs involved in the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and the Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP). DAV NSO conduct briefings giving an overview on VA entitlement programs. When requested, they conduct service medical record reviews and assist in the filing of claims for VA disability compensation and other benefits. During the past year, NSOs and DSOs have provided transition assistance at 115 military bases and have briefed 104,433 military personnel resulting in 81,614 compensation claims being filed with the VA.

HOMELESS VETERANS

As we celebrate DAV'S Diamond Anniversary, many veterans have little or nothing to rejoice about, for they are homeless. The number of homeless veterans is a growing concern to the DAV. Recent statistics show that veterans make up approximately one-third of the homeless population. One must wonder whether there is a relationship between homeless veterans and their military service. Did that service somehow contribute to psychological and adjustment problems? Regardless of the cause, DAV has once again stepped forward participating in stand-downs. During stand-downs NSOs provide assistance that takes on many different forms including obtaining medical care, filing disability claims, assistance in obtaining food, shelter, clothing, and networking with Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOP) for employment assistance.

In some areas they are able to make referrals to DAV departments and chapters that have homeless programs in place. By caring enough to make a difference, our

NSO, DAV members, departments, and chapters will help bring dignity back into the lives of those men and women who helped to defend our country.

INCARCERATED VETERANS

The DAV recognizes the importance of rehabilitation, and for this reason many NSOs have become involved in programs at correctional facilities. The assistance rendered by our National Service Officers covers a wide range, from claims representation to education and training, preparing them to reenter society. It is certainly a worthwhile service, and I commend those NSO who are active in this area.

NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS

DAV National Service Officers through a variety of programs have been providing outreach service to Native Americans. Some National Service Officers make regularly scheduled visits to reservations where they provide benefit information and assist in the filing of claims. Regardless of the type of service provided, DAV NSOs play an important role in making sure that Native Americans receive those benefits to which they are entitled as a result of their military service.

NATIONAL VETERANS TRAINING INSTITUTE

Our National Service Officers in Denver, Colorado, have been involved with the University of Colorado at Denver, serving as instructors at the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI). To date 4,320 Local Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists have been provided veterans benefits entitlement training. During their instruction, our NSOs stress claims development, medical evidence, secondary disabilities, vocational rehabilitation and education, and other related topics designed to provide LVERs and DVOP a working knowledge of the VA's benefit delivery system. By networking with LVERs and DVOP, DAV NSO nationwide reach out to a greater number of veterans providing the very best claims representation available. We look forward to continuing our relationship with the National Veterans Training Institute on into the future.

SUMMARY

The accomplishments reflected by this report were made possible through the combined efforts of all DAV and DAV Auxiliary members. Each member's efforts, whether at the chapter of department level or at a VA medical center, help DAV to fulfill its mission.

Hospital Service Coordinators, Department Service Officers and Chapter Service Officers play an important role in DAV's success. Their direct contact and assistance to veterans and their families in the initial stage of a VA claim is of tremendous benefit to our National Service Officers. By everyone caring enough to make a difference, DAV continues to provide service second to none.

The Service Department during this past year has been very fortunate to have the support of National Commander Thomas A. McMasters, III, the National Line Officers, National Executive Committee, National Finance Committee, and the National Service Foundation and the Charitable Service Trust. I can tell you without question, their commitment to DAV's National Service Program is as strong, if not stronger, than ever before. I would like to thank them for that support.

The staff of your National Service Department has also changed during this past year, and I would like to recognize another recent retiree. On October 22, 1972, a young combat wounded Army veteran of the Vietnam conflict joined DAV's NSO corps. He underwent his initial phase of training at DAV's National Service Office, Lincoln, Nebraska, Transferring in October of 1972 to DAV's National Service Office in San Antonio, Texas. In 1974, he was promoted to supervisor of that office and served in that capacity until his promotion to supervisor of DAV's office in Chicago, Illinois. In October of 1990, he was appointed to the position of personnel director at DAV's National Headquarters in Cold Spring, Kentucky. On November 1, 1993, he was named field director of the National Service Department at National Service and Legislative Headquarters, Washington, D.C. I can tell you that National Service Officer Darrel E. Babcock gave his all to the DAV and those veterans we serve. His dedication and unselfish devotion to the DAV is without question. On behalf of the National Service Department, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for a job well done and wish National Service Officer Babcock the very best in his retirement.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the National Service Officer corps and their support staffs for their devotion, compassion, and unselfish service they

display on the job daily. I know first hand of their sacrifices. I also know they are successful because they believe in DAV's mission.

On behalf of the National Service staff, we wish to thank National Headquarters Executive Director Richard E. Patterson, and the directors, managers, and employees of Cold Spring, Kentucky for their assistance supporting the Service Department and your service programs.

The National Service Department works closely with the DAV Auxiliary. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Auxiliary National Commander Barbara Hicks, the Auxiliary Line Officers, and Auxiliary National Adjutant Maria Tedrow for their support. We look forward to working with the Auxiliary in the ensuing year.

I also wish to thank Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman for his guidance and leadership. His vast experience in legislation and service has been extremely valuable as we plan for the future.

At National Service and Legislative Headquarters networking with all of DAV's program directors is vitally important in the daily activity of your National Service staff. I would like to thank Legislative Director Richard F. Schultz, Employment Director Ronald W. Drach, Director of Voluntary Services Bruce G. Nitsche, Associate National director of Communications David E. Autry and their staffs for their support. That old adage "by working together we will get the job done" is certainly true.

I would be remiss if I didn't personally thank the support staff at National Service and Legislative Headquarters for their very efficient assistance during this year of change. That assistance has been invaluable to the Service Department.

I would also like to thank the National Service Department staff who is charged with the responsibility of fulfilling DAV's chartered purpose. This is being accomplished by Assistant National Service Directors Anthony L. Baskerville and Michael J. Walsh, and Deputy National Service Director Jerry P. Steelman. Each Member of the Service Department has different areas of responsibility. As they fulfill those responsibilities, the scope, depth, and direction of DAV's Service Programs take shape, I am confident that your Service Department will continue its efforts to improve DAV's Service Programs and in turn fulfilling DAV's mission.

As we look back on the accomplishments of our 75th year, it becomes apparent that the world we live in will continue to change. There will be advancement in the field of medicine. And, yes, the highly technical computers of today will become obsolete necessitating the DAV to once again change how it conducts business. We must and will continue our modernization program to ensure quality representation.

The success reflected throughout this report didn't just happen by chance, National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson has been there at every turn providing his support, guidance, and encouragement. On behalf of the entire National Service Department, I wish to thank him for his outstanding leadership. . . .

In DAV's 75-year history, we have grown in stature and wisdom. We've learned that history repeats itself and that, unfortunately, there continues to be a need for the Disabled American Veterans to remain strong. As our nation battles for freedom and world peace, the price of that freedom continues to be high. The casualties American troops have sustained in Bosnia and in the recent bombing in Saudi Arabia make it clear that there will be a continuing need for DAV's services. You can be assured the DAV stands ready and our cause is just. The DAV will be there for today's returning warriors just as it was for you and me. In closing, the success achieved by each of our National Service Offices is reflected in the statistical data of this report.

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

Montgomery, Alabama

1. New Service Connections	294
2. Compensation Increased	954
3. Compensation Maintained	1,253
4. Pension	516
5. Pension Maintained	102
6. Social Security	0
7. Education Benefits	304
8. Miscellaneous	91
9. Death Compensation	52
10. Death Pension	81
11. Insurance	0

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

12.	Burial Allowances	250
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	3,897
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$1,835,683.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$24,959,721.15
17.	Full Amount	\$26,795,404.15
18.	VA Files Reviewed	4,186
19.	Power of Attorneys	784
20.	Interviews	1,793
21.	Rating Board Appearances	2,322
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	3
24.	New Claims	2,352
25.	Membership	43

Phoenix, Arizona

1.	New Service Connections	809
2.	Compensation Increased	1,559
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,647
4.	Pension	258
5.	Pension Maintained	76
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	846
8.	Miscellaneous	160
9.	Death Compensation	103
10.	Death Pension	11
11.	Insurance	2
12.	Burial Allowances	373
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	5,844
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$3,205,179.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$45,463,004.00
17.	Full Amount	\$48,668,183.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	9,222
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,530
20.	Interviews	3,538
21.	Rating Board Appearances	8,045
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	1
24.	New Claims	3,285
25.	Membership	120

Little Rock, Arkansas

1.	New Service Connections	504
2.	Compensation Increased	1,338
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,372
4.	Pension	621
5.	Pension Maintained	140
6.	Social Security	14
7.	Education Benefits	459
8.	Miscellaneous	204
9.	Death Compensation	113
10.	Death Pension	152
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	306
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	5,223
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$2,624,913.00

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$34,423,951.00
17.	Full Amount	\$37,048,864.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	9,366
19.	Power of Attorneys	3,007
20.	Interviews	4,416
21.	Rating Board Appearances	5,817
22.	Military Affairs	541
23.	Social Security Activities	108
24.	New Claims	4,878
25.	Membership	209

W. Los Angeles, California

1.	New Service Connections	839
2.	Compensation Increased	1,143
3.	Compensation Maintained	2,498
4.	Pension	1,487
5.	Pension Maintained	189
6.	Social Security	3
7.	Education Benefits	1,195
8.	Miscellaneous	113
9.	Death Compensation	121
10.	Death Pension	390
11.	Insurance	61
12.	Burial Allowances	406
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	8,445
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$3,688,368.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$49,343,811.00
17.	Full Amount	\$53,032,179.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	9,844
19.	Power of Attorneys	4,603
20.	Interviews	5,567
21.	Rating Board Appearances	6,407
22.	Military Affairs	2,867
23.	Social Security Activities	3
24.	New Claims	6,126
25.	Membership	81

San Francisco, California

1.	New Service Connections	1,287
2.	Compensation Increased	1,743
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,924
4.	Pension	198
5.	Pension Maintained	37
6.	Social Security	2
7.	Education Benefits	393
8.	Miscellaneous	222
9.	Death Compensation	129
10.	Death Pension	8
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	390
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	6,333
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$6,737,855.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$52,565,854.00
17.	Full Amount	\$59,303,709.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	7,121
19.	Power of Attorneys	2,309

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

20.	Interviews	3,338
21.	Rating Board Appearances	5,642
22.	Military Affairs	527
23.	Social Security Activities	15
24.	New Claims	3,914
25.	Membership	199
Denver, Colorado		
1.	New Service Connections	1,122
2.	Compensation Increased	1,234
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,805
4.	Pension	260
5.	Pension Maintained	96
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	687
8.	Miscellaneous	156
9.	Death Compensation	69
10.	Death Pension	39
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	286
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	5,754
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$2,943,377.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$45,660,589.00
17.	Full Amount	\$48,603,966.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	7,698
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,852
20.	Interviews	1,866
21.	Rating Board Appearances	5,687
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	2,753
25.	Membersip	252
Hartford, Connecticut		
1.	New Service Connections	85
2.	Compensation Increased	332
3.	Compensation Maintained	593
4.	Pension	48
5.	Pension Maintained	226
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	121
8.	Miscellaneous	13
9.	Death Compensation	23
10.	Death Pension	2
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	123
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	1,566
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$795,617.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$10,149,536.20
17.	Full Amount	\$10,945,153.20
18.	VA Files Reviewed	2,604
19.	Power of Attorneys	229
20.	Interviews	494
21.	Rating Board Appearances	1,189
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	0

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

24.	New Claims	830
25.	Membership	14
Washington, DC		
1.	New Service Connections	322
2.	Compensation Increased	583
3.	Compensation Maintained	904
4.	Pension	95
5.	Pension Maintained	210
6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	274
8.	Miscellaneous	48
9.	Death Compensation	38
10.	Death Pension	8
11.	Insurance	2
12.	Burial Allowances	117
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	131
14.	Total Awards	2,733
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$1,300,614.45
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$20,946,768.90
17.	Full Amount	\$22,247,383.35
18.	VA Files Reviewed	2,272
19.	Power of Attorneys	498
20.	Interviews	2,305
21.	Rating Board Appearances	1,097
22.	Military Affairs	901
23.	Social Security Activities	3
24.	New Claims	1,544
25.	Membership	95
St. Petersburg, Florida		
1.	New Service Connections	1,360
2.	Compensation Increased	3,768
3.	Compensation Maintained	5,913
4.	Pension	1,118
5.	Pension Maintained	447
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	1,121
8.	Miscellaneous	202
9.	Death Compensation	450
10.	Death Pension	187
11.	Insurance	6
12.	Burial Allowances	1,132
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	15,704
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$7,960,365.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$120,072,087.36
17.	Full Amount	\$128,032,452.36
18.	VA Files Reviewed	18,996
19.	Power of Attorneys	3,444
20.	Interviews	6,971
21.	Rating Board Appearances	12,001
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	8,868
25.	Membership	289
Atlanta, Georgia		
1.	New Service Connections	238

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

2.	Compensation Increased	393
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,077
4.	Pension	60
5.	Pension Maintained	54
6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	578
8.	Miscellaneous	16
9.	Death Compensation	76
10.	Death Pension	9
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	51
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	2,553
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$1,374,594.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$18,035,444.00
17.	Full Amount	\$19,410,038.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	4,012
19.	Power of Attorneys	859
20.	Interviews	1,518
21.	Rating Board Appearances	2,614
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	11
24.	New Claims	1,924
25.	Membership	64

Honolulu, Hawaii

1.	New Service Connections	151
2.	Compensation Increased	203
3.	Compensation Maintained	490
4.	Pension	9
5.	Pension Maintained	7
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	0
8.	Miscellaneous	28
9.	Death Compensation	12
10.	Death Pension	2
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	70
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	972
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$535,345.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$8,977,275.00
17.	Full Amount	\$9,512,620.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	1,104
19.	Power of Attorneys	288
20.	Interviews	1,261
21.	Rating Board Appearances	1,047
22.	Military Affairs	205
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	903
25.	Membership	62

Boise, Idaho

1.	New Service Connections	231
2.	Compensation Increased	205
3.	Compensation Maintained	563
4.	Pension	31
5.	Pension Maintained	568

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	177
8.	Miscellaneous	18
9.	Death Compensation	33
10.	Death Pension	20
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	60
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	1,907
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$964,959.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$11,626,597.00
17.	Full Amount	\$12,591,556.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	1,437
19.	Power of Attorneys	736
20.	Interviews	1,154
21.	Rating Board Appearances	1,373
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	9
24.	New Claims	715
25.	Membership	33

Chicago, Illinois

1.	New Service Connections	396
2.	Compensation Increased	1,122
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,071
4.	Pension	559
5.	Pension Maintained	397
6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	27
8.	Miscellaneous	110
9.	Death Compensation	51
10.	Death Pension	37
11.	Insurance	41
12.	Burial Allowances	343
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	4,155
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$3,121,571.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$27,400,567.80
17.	Full Amount	\$30,522,138.80
18.	VA Files Reviewed	3,979
19.	Power of Attorneys	841
20.	Interviews	2,065
21.	Rating Board Appearances	3,203
22.	Military Affairs	3
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	2,184
25.	Membership	95

Indianapolis, Indiana

1.	New Service Connections	235
2.	Compensation Increased	934
3.	Compensation Maintained	757
4.	Pension	339
5.	Pension Maintained	427
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	389
8.	Miscellaneous	143
9.	Death Compensation	61

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

10.	Death Pension	68
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	97
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	3,450
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$1,433,960.12
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$19,804,571.32
17.	Full Amount	\$21,238,531.44
18.	VA Files Reviewed	4,874
19.	Power of Attorneys	589
20.	Interviews	1,202
21.	Rating Board Appearances	3,974
22.	Military Affairs	33
23.	Social Security Activities	19
24.	New Claims	2,310
25.	Membership	45

Des Moines, Iowa

1.	New Service Connections	207
2.	Compensation Increased	559
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,155
4.	Pension	335
5.	Pension Maintained	741
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	284
8.	Miscellaneous	195
9.	Death Compensation	40
10.	Death Pension	273
11.	Insurance	45
12.	Burial Allowances	152
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	3,986
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$1,861,845.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$23,525,768.95
17.	Full Amount	\$25,387,613.95
18.	VA Files Reviewed	4,501
19.	Power of Attorneys	522
20.	Interviews	1,613
21.	Rating Board Appearances	3,507
22.	Military Affairs	2
23.	Social Security Activities	1
24.	New Claims	1,491
25.	Membership	523

Wichita, Kansas

1.	New Service Connections	259
2.	Compensation Increased	412
3.	Compensation Maintained	702
4.	Pension	95
5.	Pension Maintained	742
6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	239
8.	Miscellaneous	13
9.	Death Compensation	48
10.	Death Pension	159
11.	Insurance	2
12.	Burial Allowances	130
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

14.	Total Awards	2,802
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$1,351,881.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$17,872,068.00
17.	Full Amount	\$19,223,949.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	1,954
19.	Power of Attorneys	772
20.	Interviews	1,416
21.	Rating Board Appearances	1,832
22.	Military Affairs	6
23.	Social Security Activities	1
24.	New Claims	2,736
25.	Membership	87

Louisville, Kentucky

1.	New Service Connections	399
2.	Compensation Increased	1,088
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,192
4.	Pension	5,106
5.	Pension Maintained	140
6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	69
8.	Miscellaneous	118
9.	Death Compensation	101
10.	Death Pension	1,720
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	556
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	10,490
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$4,380,662.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$75,168,803.00
17.	Full Amount	\$79,549,465.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	6,900
19.	Power Of Attorneys	2,191
20.	Interviews	700
21.	Rating Board Appearances	7,034
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	3
24.	New Claims	4,826
25.	Membership	132

New Orleans, Louisiana

1.	New Service Connections	347
2.	Compensation Increased	655
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,006
4.	Pension	421
5.	Pension Maintained	213
6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	399
8.	Miscellaneous	90
9.	Death Compensation	24
10.	Death Pension	18
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	8
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	3,182
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$1,526,174.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$23,998,644.00
17.	Full Amount	\$25,524,818.00

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

18.	VA Files Reviewed	4,338
19.	Power Of Attorneys	768
20.	Interviews	3,553
21.	Rating Board Appearances	2,871
22.	Military Affairs	29
23.	Social Security Activities	36
24.	New Claims	4,784
25.	Membership	81

Togus, Maine

1.	New Service Connections	165
2.	Compensation Increased	723
3.	Compensation Maintained	513
4.	Pension	87
5.	Pension Maintained	48
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	310
8.	Miscellaneous	55
9.	Death Compensation	18
10.	Death Pension	1
11.	Insurance	1
12.	Burial Allowances	96
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	2,017
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$1,364,740.08
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$17,779,533.36
17.	Full Amount	19,144,273.44
18.	VA Files Reviewed	2,089
19.	Power of Attorneys	316
20.	Interviews	2,612
21.	Rating Board Appearances	1,881
22.	Military Affairs	1
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	229
25.	Membership	240

Baltimore, Maryland

1.	New Service Connections	201
2.	Compensation Increased	480
3.	Compensation Maintained	495
4.	Pension	96
5.	Pension Maintained	88
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	234
8.	Miscellaneous	20
9.	Death Compensation	18
10.	Death Pension	12
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	29
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	1,674
15.	Total Monthly Increases	824,841.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$11,526,031.00
17.	Full Amount	12,350,872.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	2,048
19.	Power of Attorneys	324
20.	Interviews	1,061
21.	Rating Board Appearances	1,145

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	560
25.	Membership	67
Boston, Massachusetts		
1.	New Service Connections	450
2.	Compensation Increased	1,498
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,505
4.	Pension	259
5.	Pension Maintained	31
6.	Social Security	3
7.	Education Benefits	565
8.	Miscellaneous	30
9.	Death Compensation	77
10.	Death Pension	62
11.	Insurance	1
12.	Burial Allowances	392
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	4,873
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$2,573,805.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$39,523,737.00
17.	Full Amount	\$42,097,542.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	9,231
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,586
20.	Interviews	5,393
21.	Rating Board Appearances	6,352
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	7
24.	New Claims	4,670
25.	Membership	293
Detroit, Michigan		
1.	New Service Connections	243
2.	Compensation Increased	1,018
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,126
4.	Pension	449
5.	Pension Maintained	467
6.	Social Security	4
7.	Education Benefits	329
8.	Miscellaneous	117
9.	Death Compensation	71
10.	Death Pension	302
11.	Insurance	2
12.	Burial Allowances	407
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	4,535
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$1,864,364.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$24,913,578.00
17.	Full Amount	\$26,777,942.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	10,445
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,456
20.	Interviews	1,777
21.	Rating Board Appearances	4,750
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	28
24.	New Claims	4,849
25.	Membership	72

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

St. Paul, Minnesota

1.	New Service Connections	646
2.	Compensation Increased	1,228
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,276
4.	Pension	335
5.	Pension Maintained	117
6.	Social Security	4
7.	Education Benefits	646
8.	Miscellaneous	234
9.	Death Compensation	80
10.	Death Pension	150
11.	Insurance	13
12.	Burial Allowances	288
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	5,017
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$2,578,965.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$36,222,972.00
17.	Full Amount	\$38,801,937.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	9,159
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,223
20.	Interviews	1,656
21.	Rating Board Appearances	5,853
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	11
24.	New Claims	8,959
25.	Membership	81

Jackson, Mississippi

1.	New Service Connections	155
2.	Compensation Increased	479
3.	Compensation Maintained	639
4.	Pension	387
5.	Pension Maintained	82
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	207
8.	Miscellaneous	30
9.	Death Compensation	26
10.	Death Pension	38
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	94
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	2,137
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$976,453.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$15,013,538.00
17.	Full Amount	\$15,989,991.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	1,828
19.	Power of Attorneys	358
20.	Interviews	622
21.	Rating Board Appearances	1,398
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	1,339
25.	Membership	35

St. Louis, Missouri

1.	New Service Connections	738
2.	Compensation Increased	1,338
3.	Compensation Maintained	2,684

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

4.	Pension	697
5.	Pension Maintained	518
6.	Social Security	15
7.	Education Benefits	1,528
8.	Miscellaneous	289
9.	Death Compensation	75
10.	Death Pension	78
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	201
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	8,161
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$4,836,437.49
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$52,645,428.28
17.	Full Amount	\$57,481,865.77
18.	VA Files Reviewed	8,815
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,984
20.	Interviews	2,845
21.	Rating Board Appearances	7,155
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	35
24.	New Claims	7,117
25.	Membership	144

Fort Harrison, Montana

1.	New Service Connections	106
2.	Compensation Increased	369
3.	Compensation Maintained	156
4.	Pension	70
5.	Pension Maintained	19
6.	Social Security	2
7.	Education Benefits	73
8.	Miscellaneous	19
9.	Death Compensation	11
10.	Death Pension	6
11.	Insurance	8
12.	Burial Allowances	84
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	923
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$378,398.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$5,622,679.00
17.	Full Amount	\$6,001,077.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	498
19.	Power of Attorneys	257
20.	Interviews	1,894
21.	Rating Board Appearances	489
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	17
24.	New Claims	246
25.	Membership	52

Lincoln, Nebraska

1.	New Service Connections	171
2.	Compensation Increased	376
3.	Compensation Maintained	450
4.	Pension	157
5.	Pension Maintained	17
6.	Social Security	5
7.	Education Benefits	37

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

8.	Miscellaneous	22
9.	Death Compensation	25
10.	Death Pension	24
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	113
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	1,397
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$791,024.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$11,116,719.00
17.	Full Amount	\$11,907,743.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	1,320
19.	Power of Attorneys	520
20.	Interviews	631
21.	Rating Board Appearances	950
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	32
24.	New Claims	771
25.	Membership	8

Manchester, New Hampshire

1.	New Service Connections	263
2.	Compensation Increased	624
3.	Compensation Maintained	859
4.	Pension	79
5.	Pension Maintained	169
6.	Social Security	7
7.	Education Benefits	210
8.	Miscellaneous	49
9.	Death Compensation	18
10.	Death Pension	2
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	9
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	2,289
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$1,739,053.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$20,532,666.00
17.	Full Amount	\$22,271,719.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	4,665
19.	Power of Attorneys	511
20.	Interviews	2,361
21.	Rating Board Appearances	3,203
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	96
24.	New Claims	983
25.	Membership	83

Newark, New Jersey

1.	New Service Connections	239
2.	Compensation Increased	966
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,059
4.	Pension	114
5.	Pension Maintained	155
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	403
8.	Miscellaneous	39
9.	Death Compensation	89
10.	Death Pension	25
11.	Insurance	1

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

12.	Burial Allowances	277
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	3,367
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$2,008,462.92
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$17,778,846.41
17.	Full Amount	\$19,787,309.33
18.	VA Files Reviewed	3,787
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,219
20.	Interviews	2,424
21.	Rating Board Appearances	2,494
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	1
24.	New Claims	3,598
25.	Membership	94

Albuquerque, New Mexico

1.	New Service Connections	289
2.	Compensation Increased	601
3.	Compensation Maintained	791
4.	Pension	207
5.	Pension Maintained	295
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	293
8.	Miscellaneous	16
9.	Death Compensation	35
10.	Death Pension	48
11.	Insurance	1
12.	Burial Allowances	178
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	2,754
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$1,402,858.23
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$16,859,793.85
17.	Full Amount	\$18,262,652.08
18.	VA Files Reviewed	2,661
19.	Power of Attorneys	667
20.	Interviews	2,327
21.	Rating Board Appearances	1,999
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	1,341
25.	Membership	89

New York, New York

1.	New Service Connections	482
2.	Compensation Increased	1,530
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,500
4.	Pension	185
5.	Pension Maintained	301
6.	Social Security	3
7.	Education Benefits	53
8.	Miscellaneous	172
9.	Death Compensation	98
10.	Death Pension	59
11.	Insurance	45
12.	Burial Allowances	443
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	4,871
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$2,111,448.49

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

16.	Total Retroactive payments	\$39,847,026.56
17.	Full Amount	\$41,958,475.05
18.	VA Files Reviewed	7,580
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,317
20.	Interviews	3,521
21.	Rating Board Appearances	4,485
22.	Military Affairs	4
23.	Social Security Activities	17
24.	New Claims	1,976
25.	Membership	284

Albany, New York

1.	New Service Connections	0
2.	Compensation Increased	0
3.	Compensation Maintained	0
4.	Pension	0
5.	Pension Maintained	0
6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	0
8.	Miscellaneous	0
9.	Death Compensation	0
10.	Death Compensation	0
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	0
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	1
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$500.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$16,500.00
17.	Full Amount	\$17,000.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	0
19.	Power of Attorneys	207
20.	Interviews	686
21.	Rating Board Appearances	2
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	6
24.	New Claims	554
25.	Membership	52

Buffalo, New York

1.	New Service Connections	206
2.	Compensation Increased	565
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,452
4.	Pension	73
5.	Pension Maintained	292
6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	1,782
8.	Miscellaneous	40
9.	Death Compensation	51
10.	Death Pension	29
11.	Insurance	6
12.	Burial Allowances	107
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	4,604
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$2,354,013.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$28,727,569.00
17.	Full Amount	\$31,081,582.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	7,631
19.	Power of Attorneys	762

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

20.	Interviews	1,616
21.	Rating Board Appearances	5,812
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	2,295
25.	Membership	102
Syracuse, New York		
1.	New Service Connections	0
2.	Compensation Increase	0
3.	Compensation Maintained	0
4.	Pension	0
5.	Pension Maintained	0
6.	Social Security	16
7.	Education Benefits	0
8.	Miscellaneous	0
9.	Death Compensation	0
10.	Death Pension	0
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	0
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	16
15.	Total Monthly Increase	\$32,318.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$319,361.00
17.	Full Amount	\$351,679.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	475
19.	Power of Attorneys	358
20.	Interviews	1,815
21.	Rating Board Appearances	0
22.	Military Affairs	10
23.	Social Security Activities	106
24.	New Claims	3,100
25.	Membership	49
Winston-Salem, North Carolina		
1.	New Service Connections	516
2.	Compensation Increased	1,768
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,669
4.	Pension	249
5.	Pension Maintained	425
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	388
8.	Miscellaneous	48
9.	Death Compensation	51
10.	Death Pension	26
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	296
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	5,436
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$2,740,624.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$38,675,127.00
17.	Full Amount	\$41,415,751.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	6,815
19.	Power of Attorneys	3,073
20.	Interviews	1,755
21.	Rating Board Appearances	5,233
22.	Military Affairs	29
23.	Social Security Activities	8

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

24.	New Claims	4,308
25.	Membership	96
Fargo, North Dakota		
1.	New Service Connections	164
2.	Compensation Increased	355
3.	Compensation Maintained	417
4.	Pension	185
5.	Pension Maintained	186
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	361
8.	Miscellaneous	24
9.	Death Compensation	12
10.	Death Pension	125
11.	Insurance	1
12.	Burial Allowances	15
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	1,845
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$826,555.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$9,776,211.00
17.	Full Amount	\$10,602,766.00
18.	Va Files Reviewed	2,474
19.	Power of Attorneys	518
20.	Interviews	1,403
21.	Rating Board Appearances	1,123
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	1,213
25.	Membership	96
Cleveland, Ohio		
1.	New Service Connections	343
2.	Compensation Increased	1,431
3.	Compensation Maintained	2,185
4.	Pension	548
5.	Pension Maintained	838
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	539
8.	Miscellaneous	32
9.	Death Compensation	153
10.	Death Pension	520
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	845
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	7,434
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$3,641,191.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$51,718,584.00
17.	Full Amount	\$55,359,775.00
18.	Va Files Reviewed	13,898
19.	Power of Attorneys	2,106
20.	Interviews	2,406
21.	Rating Board Appearances	11,346
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	3
24.	New Claims	4,704
25.	Membership	207
Cincinnati, Ohio		
1.	New Service Connections	0

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

2.	Compensation Increased	0
3.	Compensation Maintained	0
4.	Pension	0
5.	Pension Maintained	0
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	0
8.	Miscellaneous	0
9.	Death Compensation	0
10.	Death Pension	0
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	0
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	0
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$0.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$0.00
17.	Full Amount	\$0.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	182
19.	Power of Attorneys	950
20.	Interviews	938
21.	Rating Board Appearances	150
22.	Military Affairs	6
23.	Social Security Activities	9
24.	New Claims	1,797
25.	Membership	19

Muskogee, Oklahoma

1.	New Service Connections	363
2.	Compensation Increased	1,071
3.	Compensation Maintained	812
4.	Pension	406
5.	Pension Maintained	53
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	784
8.	Miscellaneous	117
9.	Death Compensation	53
10.	Death Pension	120
11.	Insurance	34
12.	Burial Allowances	159
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	3,972
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$1,917,558.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$28,724,403.96
17.	Full Amount	\$30,641,961.96
18.	VA Files Reviewed	3,875
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,362
20.	Interviews	1,808
21.	Rating Board Appearances	3,304
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	7
24.	New Claims	4,264
25.	Membership	121

Portland, Oregon

1.	New Service Connections	364
2.	Compensation Increased	1,067
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,250
4.	Pension	248
5.	Pension Maintained	366

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	464
8.	Miscellaneous	36
9.	Death Compensation	46
10.	Death Pension	49
11.	Insurance	3
12.	Burial Allowances	224
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	4,118
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$2,322,626.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$32,212,838.00
17.	Full Amount	\$34,535,464.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	4,312
19.	Power of Attorneys	659
20.	Interviews	1,164
21.	Rating Board Appearances	3,940
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	2,682
25.	Membership	140

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1.	New Service Connections	461
2.	Compensation Increased	1,629
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,597
4.	Pension	369
5.	Pension Maintained	400
6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	392
8.	Miscellaneous	112
9.	Death Compensation	86
10.	Death Pension	144
11.	Insurance	126
12.	Burial Allowances	446
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	5,763
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$2,458,460.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$39,925,939.00
17.	Full Amount	\$42,384,399.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	6,114
19.	Power of Attorneys	2,167
20.	Interviews	2,616
21.	Rating Board Appearances	4,642
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	5
24.	New Claims	2,685
25.	Membership	174

Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

1.	New Service Connections	0
2.	Compensation Increased	0
3.	Compensation Maintained	0
4.	Pension	0
5.	Pension Maintained	0
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	0
8.	Miscellaneous	0
9.	Death Compensation	0

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

10.	Death Pension	0
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	0
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	0
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$0.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$0.00
17.	Full Amount	\$0.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	99
19.	Power of Attorneys	60
20.	Interviews	478
21.	Rating Board Appearances	69
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	178
25.	Membership	19

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

1.	New Service Connections	504
2.	Compensation Increased	1,252
3.	Compensation Maintained	2,716
4.	Pension	768
5.	Pension Maintained	2,820
6.	Social Security	19
7.	Education Benefits	294
8.	Miscellaneous	216
9.	Death Compensation	98
10.	Death Pension	870
11.	Insurance	10
12.	Burial Allowances	237
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	9,804
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$4,507,762.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$61,614,777.00
17.	Full Amount	\$66,122,539.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	6,569
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,354
20.	Interviews	2,279
21.	Rating Board Appearances	3,803
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	50
24.	New Claims	3,560
25.	Membership	506

Providence, Rhode Island

1.	New Service Connections	270
2.	Compensation Increased	613
3.	Compensation Maintained	677
4.	Pension	6
5.	Pension Maintained	331
6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	189
8.	Miscellaneous	3
9.	Death Compensation	33
10.	Death Pension	59
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	139
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

14.	Total Awards	2,383
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$1,191,836.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$19,517,610.00
17.	Full Amount	\$20,709,446.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	3,425
19.	Power of Attorneys	588
20.	Interviews	1,894
21.	Rating Board Appearances	2,650
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	27
24.	New Claims	940
25.	Membership	167

Columbia, South Carolina

1.	New Service Connections	341
2.	Compensation Increased	712
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,194
4.	Pension	459
5.	Pension Maintained	288
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	333
8.	Miscellaneous	98
9.	Death Compensation	43
10.	Death Pension	139
11.	Insurance	51
12.	Burial Allowances	220
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	3,878
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$1,853,254.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$27,135,107.00
17.	Full Amount	\$28,988,361.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	4,262
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,053
20.	Interviews	1,885
21.	Rating Board Appearances	2,540
22.	Military Affairs	16
23.	Social Security Activities	8
24.	New Claims	1,790
25.	Membership	149

Sioux Falls, South Dakota

1.	New Service Connections	165
2.	Compensation Increased	312
3.	Compensation Maintained	528
4.	Pension	110
5.	Pension Maintained	88
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	388
8.	Miscellaneous	31
9.	Death Compensation	21
10.	Death Pension	35
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	59
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	1,737
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$805,065.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$9,248,432.56
17.	Full Amount	\$10,053,497.56

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

18.	VA Files Reviewed	1,666
19.	Power of Attorneys	328
20.	Interviews	570
21.	Rating Board Appearances	1,220
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	1,135
25.	Membership	44

Nashville, Tennessee

1.	New Service Connections	505
2.	Compensation Increased	945
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,362
4.	Pension	457
5.	Pension Maintained	141
6.	Social Security	2
7.	Education Benefits	420
8.	Miscellaneous	55
9.	Death Compensation	41
10.	Death Pension	86
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	213
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	4,227
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$1,968,960.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$31,881,928.47
17.	Full Amount	\$33,850,888.47
18.	VA Files Reviewed	3,458
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,069
20.	Interviews	1,071
21.	Rating Board Appearances	3,212
22.	Military Affairs	1
23.	Social Security Activities	2
24.	New Claims	2,242
25.	Membership	123

Waco, Texas

1.	New Service Connections	1,006
2.	Compensation Increased	3,074
3.	Compensation Maintained	3,301
4.	Pension	639
5.	Pension Maintained	471
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	828
8.	Miscellaneous	265
9.	Death Compensation	272
10.	Death Pension	133
11.	Insurance	2
12.	Burial Allowances	836
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	10,827
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$4,981,526.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$78,811,563.00
17.	Full Amount	\$83,793,089.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	12,148
19.	Power of Attorneys	4,077
20.	Interviews	2,943
21.	Rating Board Appearances	9,680

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	1
24.	New Claims	5,041
25.	Membership	146

Houston, Texas

1.	New Service Connections	673
2.	Compensation Increased	1,105
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,805
4.	Pension	561
5.	Pension Maintained	1,092
6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	523
8.	Miscellaneous	94
9.	Death Compensation	73
10.	Death Pension	521
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	293
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	6,741
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$3,068,597.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$41,534,884.00
17.	Full Amount	\$44,603,481.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	8,231
19.	Power of Attorneys	597
20.	Interviews	2,712
21.	Rating Board Appearances	6,841
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	5
24.	New Claims	1,239
25.	Membership	129

San Antonio, Texas

1.	New Service Connections	0
2.	Compensation Increased	0
3.	Compensation Maintained	0
4.	Pension	0
5.	Pension Maintained	0
6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	0
8.	Miscellaneous	0
9.	Death Compensation	0
10.	Death Pension	0
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	0
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	232
14.	Total Awards	233
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$355,668.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$4,687,707.00
17.	Full Amount	\$5,043,375.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	391
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,193
20.	Interviews	3,623
21.	Rating Board Appearances	185
22.	Military Affairs	1,213
23.	Social Security Activities	3
24.	New Claims	2,077
25.	Membership	144

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

Salt Lake City, Utah

1.	New Service Connections	170
2.	Compensation Increased	523
3.	Compensation Maintained	523
4.	Pension	114
5.	Pension Maintained	25
6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	197
8.	Miscellaneous	23
9.	Death Compensation	20
10.	Death Pension	19
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	126
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	1,741
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$964,516.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$11,801,566.00
17.	Full Amount	\$12,766,082.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	3,258
19.	Power of Attorneys	405
20.	Interviews	956
21.	Rating Board Appearances	2,049
22.	Military Affairs	202
23.	Social Security Activities	1
24.	New Claims	682
25.	Membership	96

White River Junction, Vermont

1.	New Service Connections	75
2.	Compensation Increased	203
3.	Compensation Maintained	274
4.	Pension	80
5.	Pension Maintained	58
6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	51
8.	Miscellaneous	22
9.	Death Compensation	15
10.	Death Pension	1
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	20
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	800
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$393,290.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$5,638,947.00
17.	Full Amount	\$6,032,237.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	2,777
19.	Power of Attorneys	343
20.	Interviews	2,306
21.	Rating Board Appearances	1,512
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	22
24.	New Claims	948
25.	Membership	83

Roanoke, Virginia

1.	New Service Connections	680
2.	Compensation Increased	1,133
3.	Compensation Maintained	2,132

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

4.	Pension	532
5.	Pension Maintained	221
6.	Social Security	18
7.	Education Benefits	1,175
8.	Miscellaneous	78
9.	Death Compensation	65
10.	Death Pension	58
11.	Insurance	1
12.	Burial Allowance	243
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	6,336
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$3,841,251.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$49,255,639.00
17.	Full Amount	\$53,096,890.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	10,912
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,406
20.	Interviews	6,592
21.	Rating Board Appearances	4,310
22.	Military Affairs	18
23.	Social Security Activities	31
24.	New Claims	3,826
25.	Membership	182

Seattle, Washington

1.	New Service Connections	1,046
2.	Compensation Increased	1,683
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,953
4.	Pension	274
5.	Pension Maintained	103
6.	Social Security	6
7.	Education Benefits	904
8.	Miscellaneous	30
9.	Death Compensation	93
10.	Death Pension	15
11.	Insurance	1
12.	Burial Allowance	203
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	6,311
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$3,763,522.88
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$49,813,189.88
17.	Full Amount	\$53,576,712.76
18.	VA Files Reviewed	4,518
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,670
20.	Interviews	2,089
21.	Rating Board Appearances	3,647
22.	Military Affairs	1
23.	Social Security Activities	37
24.	New Claims	3,086
25.	Membership	158

Huntington, West Virginia

1.	New Service Connections	114
2.	Compensation Increased	363
3.	Compensation Maintained	548
4.	Pension	241
5.	Pension Maintained	184
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	168

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

8.	Miscellaneous	57
9.	Death Compensation	23
10.	Death Pension	74
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowance	180
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	1,952
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$996,303.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$13,839,279.00
17.	Full Amount	\$14,835,582.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	2,445
19.	Power of Attorneys	296
20.	Interviews	1,275
21.	Rating Board Appearances	1,869
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	1,085
25.	Membership	28

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

1.	New Service Connections	461
2.	Compensation Increased	1,376
3.	Compensation Maintained	1,837
4.	Pension	350
5.	Pension Maintained	360
6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	606
8.	Miscellaneous	71
9.	Death Compensation	47
10.	Death Pension	101
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowance	285
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	5,495
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$2,956,078.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$39,318,032.00
17.	Full Amount	\$42,274,110.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	7,492
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,173
20.	Interviews	2,160
21.	Rating Board Appearances	6,838
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	13
24.	New Claims	3,056
25.	Membership	231

Cheyenne, Wyoming

1.	New Service Connections	77
2.	Compensation Increased	118
3.	Compensation Maintained	144
4.	Pension	32
5.	Pension Maintained	6
6.	Social Security	00
7.	Education Benefits	10
8.	Miscellaneous	17
9.	Death Compensation	6
10.	Death Pension	1
11.	Insurance	0

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

12.	Burial Allowances	35
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	446
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$241,763.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$3,995,050.00
17.	Full Amount	\$4,236,813.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	544
19.	Power of Attorneys	52
20.	Interviews	294
21.	Rating Board Appearances	423
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	249
25.	Membership	5

Wilmington, Delaware

1.	New Service Connections	50
2.	Compensation Increased	130
3.	Compensation Maintained	144
4.	Pension	17
5.	Pension Maintained	39
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	63
8.	Miscellaneous	9
9.	Death Compensation	9
10.	Death Pension	4
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	47
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	512
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$239,620.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$3,225,212.50
17.	Full Amount	\$3,464,832.50
18.	VA Files Reviewed	1,300
19.	Power of Attorneys	107
20.	Interviews	534
21.	Rating Board Appearances	728
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	424
25.	Membership	8

Dallas, Texas

1.	New Service Connections	0
2.	Compensation Increased	0
3.	Compensation Maintained	0
4.	Pension	0
5.	Pension Maintained	0
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	0
8.	Miscellaneous	0
9.	Death Compensation	0
10.	Death Pension	0
11.	Insurance	2
12.	Burial Allowances	0
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	2
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$10,000.00

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$10,000.00
17.	Full Amount	\$20,000.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	37
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,098
20.	Interviews	4,668
21.	Rating Board Appearances	3
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	5
24.	New Claims	1,410
25.	Membership	32

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

1.	New Service Connections	0
2.	Compensation Increased	0
3.	Compensation Maintained	0
4.	Pension	0
5.	Pension Maintained	0
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	0
8.	Miscellaneous	0
9.	Death Compensation	0
10.	Death Pension	0
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	0
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	0
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$0.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$0.00
17.	Full Amount	\$0.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	0
19.	Power of Attorneys	199
20.	Interviews	3,406
21.	Rating Board Appearances	0
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	386
25.	Membership	35

San Diego, California

1.	New Service Connections	1,522
2.	Compensation Increased	797
3.	Compensation Maintained	967
4.	Pension	76
5.	Pension Maintained	85
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	2,067
8.	Miscellaneous	123
9.	Death Compensation	46
10.	Death Pension	7
11.	Insurance	98
12.	Burial Allowances	225
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	36
14.	Total Awards	6,049
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$3,183,505.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	32,548,427.00
17.	Full Amount	\$35,731,932.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	7,437
19.	Power of Attorneys	1,796

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

20.	Interviews	5,284
21.	Rating Board Appearances	4,359
22.	Military Affairs	3,256
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	3,003
25.	Membership	143
Reno, Nevada		
1.	New Service Connections	237
2.	Compensation Increased	537
3.	Compensation Maintained	680
4.	Pension	102
5.	Pension Maintained	40
6.	Social Security	1
7.	Education Benefits	397
8.	Miscellaneous	29
9.	Death Compensation	33
10.	Death Pension	4
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	111
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	2,171
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$899,808.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$12,137,513.00
17.	Full Amount	\$13,037,321.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	1,629
19.	Power of Attorneys	586
20.	Interviews	1,277
21.	Rating Board Appearances	1,399
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	869
25.	Membership	28
San Juan, Puerto Rico		
1.	New Service Connections	49
2.	Compensation Increased	219
3.	Compensation Maintained	559
4.	Pension	75
5.	Pension Maintained	103
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	579
8.	Miscellaneous	14
9.	Death Compensation	31
10.	Death Pension	9
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	5
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	1,643
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$1,130,023.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$13,811,773.00
17.	Full Amount	\$14,941,796.00
18.	Va Files Reviewed	2,110
19.	Power of Attorneys	199
20.	Interviews	2,494
21.	Rating Board Appearances	1,225
22.	Military Affairs	0
23.	Social Security Activities	0

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

24.	New Claims	128
25.	Membership	72
Norfolk, Virginia		
1.	New Service Connections	0
2.	Compensation Increased	0
3.	Compensation Maintained	0
4.	Pension	0
5.	Pension Maintained	0
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	0
8.	Miscellaneous	0
9.	Death Compensation	0
10.	Death Pension	0
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	0
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	0
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$0.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$0.00
17.	Full Amount	\$0.00
18.	VA Files Reviewed	72
19.	Power of Attorneys	741
20.	Interviews	72
21.	Rating Board Appearances	0
22.	Military Affairs	4,491
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	918
25.	Membership	34
NAS Miramar, San Diego		
1.	New Service Connections	0
2.	Compensation Increased	0
3.	Compensation Maintained	0
4.	Pension	0
5.	Pension Maintained	0
6.	Social Security	0
7.	Education Benefits	0
8.	Miscellaneous	0
9.	Death Compensation	0
10.	Death Pension	0
11.	Insurance	0
12.	Burial Allowances	0
13.	Physical Evaluation Boards	0
14.	Total Awards	0
15.	Total Monthly Increases	\$0.00
16.	Total Retroactive Payments	\$0.00
17.	Full Amount	\$0.00
18.	Va Files Reviewed	210
19.	Power of Attorneys	102
20.	Interviews	210
21.	Rating Board Appearances	0
22.	Military Affairs	50,486
23.	Social Security Activities	0
24.	New Claims	2
25.	Membership	1
Total National Service Office Report		
1.	New Service Connections	23,595

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES—Continued

July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996

2. Compensation Increased	52,436
3. Compensation Maintained	69,701
4. Pension	21,711
5. Pension Maintained	16,134
6. Social Security	141
7. Education Benefits	26,352
8. Miscellaneous	4,676
9. Death Compensation	3,606
10. Death Pension	7,140
11. Insurance	566
12. Burial Allowances	13,030
13. Physical Evaluation Boards	399
14. Total Awards	239,487
15. Total Monthly Increases	\$124,740,005.66
16. Total Retroactive Payments	\$1,679,300,780.51
17. Full Amount	\$1,804,040,786.17
18. Va Files Reviewed	299,300
19. Power of Attorneys	70,214
20. Interviews	141,173
21. Rating Board Appearances	211,930
22. Military Affairs	64,848
23. Social Security Activities	806
24. New Claims	158,937
25. Membership	7,538

[The following written annual report was submitted by Mr. Bruce G. Nitsche, National Director of Voluntary Services.]

National Commander Thomas A. McMasters, III, National Officers, Distinguished Guests and Delegates to the 75th national Convention of the Disabled American Veterans:

"It is better to give than to receive." Those words have struck a responsive chord in the hearts of good, kind, and loving people ever since biblical times.

The man who put real meaning to that statement was Francis of Assisi, a man who was ready to put his money where his mouth was. Turning his back on the great wealth he stood to inherit from his father, he gave everything he owned to the poor and devoted the rest of his life to the needs of others.

When his hour of death came, he suffered horribly, but he was enveloped by the love of many hundreds of people who had gathered to pay him their final tribute . . . people who believed that "It is better to give than to receive". . . people who would carry that phrase through the centuries that followed.

St. Francis' admonition definitely rings in the hearts of the men and women who offer their love to the world through the volunteer programs of the Disabled American Veterans and the DAV Auxiliary. Their own volunteer action has proven how great the personal rewards can be when one gives of one's self.

Even as the DAV celebrates its 76 years of service to America's disabled veterans and their families, we mark yet another anniversary that adds excitement to our festivities. That is the 50th anniversary of the DAV and Auxiliary involvement in the VA Voluntary Service Program.

For 50 years now, the DAV and Auxiliary VAVS programs have become a vital force of compassion in the lives of the veterans who populate the wards of the VA.

Today, as we celebrate the anniversaries of the DAV and our VAVS program, we really celebrate the wonderful people who have made our organization and its programs the envy of the veterans' community. Today, I'd like to take a moment to salute those members and everything they've accomplished during the year just past. Although this report focuses on the past year's successes, let's not stop the discussion there! While we can and should be proud of our past achievements, we must also look ahead. We must determine where the DAV and Auxiliary will find new volunteers to meet the growing needs of our veterans, particularly those who are aging. If you're not already in the ranks of our volunteers, we need you. We need your time, your sensitivities, your ideas, and your help in making certain that America's veterans get the care they deserve.

As you consider your own possible future role in our volunteer effort, please remember that there are more than enough opportunities to go around—not only at VA medical centers but in the communities where veterans live. Think of the unused skills and talents in our membership ranks! Think of the services we could offer veterans if more of us became involved!

The following program descriptions present statistics totaling the money spent, the hours donated, and the number of people who participate in our volunteer effort. But these figures can never fully represent the leadership and unselfish assistance provided by State VAVS Chairmen, Hospital Representatives, Deputies, and individual volunteers. No one can put a price on programs like transportation to medical treatment, direct patient care, entertainment, and recreational and sporting activities. No one can place a monetary value on doing for older veterans what they can no longer do for themselves. Nor could we place a dollar sign in front of the friendship one veteran extends to another . . . or the love an Auxiliary member holds out to a family much like her own. The statistics in this report merely measure what DAV members, DAV families, and DAV friends have done in accomplishing our organization's purpose. They cannot measure the gift our volunteers offer or the reward they receive in their own hearts.

DAV DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICES PROGRAM

The DAV VAVS program is the largest of the DAV's volunteer initiatives. Through it, DAV volunteers provide a broad array of services to veterans in our nation's VA medical facilities. Under this program, 8,414 DAV VAVS volunteers donated 1,856,585 hours in the 12 months ending March 31, 1996.

With a group this large and the huge number of assignments they perform, you can imagine the extensive management effort that's carried out on a local level by 20 State Chairmen, 185 VAVS Representatives, 27 Associate Representatives, 315 Deputy Representatives, and six Associate Deputy Representatives.

The DAV Volunteer effort is enhanced by a very active corps of 2,943 Auxiliary volunteers who donated 380,273 hours last year. Together, DAV and Auxiliary volunteers provided 2,236,858 hours of VAVS service over the past year—more than any other service organization. This is equivalent to the VA having an additional 1,100 full-time employees with an estimated value of \$27,848,882 in hourly wages alone.

VAVS monetary donations during 1995 totaled \$2,923,160.06. Other hospital and service-related donations came to \$9,516,809.52. This figure includes Department and Chapter expenditures on welfare and relief, as well as Hospital Service Coordinator and Department Service Officer programs. When you add the total Chapter and Department spending on volunteer programs to the estimated monetary value of the time donated by our volunteers, you get a total contribution in the range of \$40 million—quite impressive by any standard!

DAV HOSPITAL SERVICE COORDINATOR TRANSPORTATION NETWORK PROGRAM

Because so many sick and disabled veterans lack transportation to and from VA medical facilities for needed treatment, the DAV operates a nationwide Transportation Network. This program continues to show tremendous growth as an indispensable resource for veterans. Across the nation, 168 DAV Hospital Service Coordinators (HSCs) operate 190 active programs. They've recruited 5,006 volunteer drivers who logged 17,907,663 miles last year, taking 480,753 veterans to and from VA medical facilities. Many of these veterans rode in vans the DAV donated to VA medical facilities for use in the Transportation Network. DAV Departments and Chapters, together with the National Organization, have now donated 556 vans to VA medical centers nationwide at a cost of \$9,656,581.89.

But DAV HSCs do more than coordinate transportation; they also help veterans file claims for VA benefits. HSCs have completed 72,433 VA claim forms, referring 24,818 veterans to DAV National Service Officers for professional benefits assistance. They've also conducted over 385,000 telephone and personal interviews. DAV HSCs and VAVS volunteers form a hospital-based service program that thousands of veterans have come to know and trust for help whenever it's needed.

DAV OLDER VETERANS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

As with the American population as a whole, the fastest growing segment of the veteran population is the elderly. Today more than 8 million veterans are over the age of 65. By 1999 that number is expected to peak at 9 million, representing 37 percent of the total population. For many of these veterans, these are days of loneliness, failing health, and economic hardship. They face growing needs in terms of finances, housing, nutrition, transportation, recreation, and more.

The DAV Older Veterans Assistance Program was formed to help meet those needs. It's a community-based program, organized and run by local DAV and Auxiliary members through their Chapters and Units. To support that effort, the DAV's National Organization has provided \$180,336 in grant assistance to DAV Chapters with active programs. Chapter volunteers help older veterans with everyday problems in obtaining basic life support items like food, shelter, clothing . . . maintaining a balanced diet . . . getting to the store or a doctor's appointment. In some communities DAV members even make home repairs, which can be as simple as replacing burned out light bulbs in ceiling fixtures that an older veteran can no longer reach or as extensive as building an entrance ramp to the front door for a veteran who can no longer negotiate the front steps.

THE GEORGE H. SEAL MEMORIAL AWARD

The George H. Seal Memorial Award recognizes an outstanding DAV and Auxiliary VAVS volunteer each year, people whose volunteer activities closely reflect the values that characterized the life of the late National DAV VAVS Representative George Seal.

During the 19 years since its inception, this award has become one of the most esteemed honors presented at the DAV's annual national convention. VA Medical Center Chiefs of Voluntary Services throughout the nation are each allowed to submit nominations for one DAV and one DAVA volunteer. These nominations submitted by VA medical centers throughout the nation are then thoroughly evaluated by an independent committee composed of well-known authorities in the field of voluntary service. The two volunteers selected by the committee receive an expense-paid trip to the DAV national convention for the award presentation. After reviewing the nominations of 91 DAV volunteers and 54 Auxiliary volunteers, the committee chose as this year's winners:

Tillman Rutledge.—A life member of DAV Chapter No. 5, Mr. Rutledge has been a volunteer at the Audie L. Murphy VA Medical Center (VAMC), San Antonio, Texas for 20 years with over 25,500 hours of service. He volunteers for the Chaplain, Recreation Therapy, and Voluntary Services. The Chiefs of these three services are extremely confident in Mr. Rutledge's invaluable service and support in managing their programs. He recruits, trains, and monitors volunteers' activities throughout the state of Texas and specifically at the VAMC. He ensures that volunteer programs are carried out in keeping with hospital and organization policies.

Mr. Rutledge is currently serving in his third year as DAV Department of Texas VAVS Chairman. During this period he has improved the reporting of volunteer hours throughout Texas. The effect of these improvements is that volunteers are now receiving their earned recognition from the National Organization.

His volunteer service does not stop at the hospital—he also serves as the DAV Benefits Protection Team Leader for the DAV Department of Texas. In this volunteer position, Mr. Rutledge has been the driving force behind the Benefits Protection Program in the state.

As a VAVS volunteer, Mr. Rutledge goes the extra mile by assisting with any special project or activity in the hospital apart from his assigned duties, anything from a special event to a routine errand or answering the phone. What is most appreciated is that he performs all of his duties with joy and as if they were the most important functions in the hospital. He is not a person who responds negatively to any request. The only concern that the VA employees have concerning Mr. Rutledge is that he will do too much because he is so capable and willing. As the DAV State Commander puts it . . . "Tillman will undertake anything asked of him. He does not know the word "NO;" it is not in his vocabulary. He will do anything he can to make matters better for his fellow veterans. Not only does Mr. Rutledge volunteer at this facility, but also at Willford Hall Air Force Hospital.

Mr. Rutledge saw a need for notary services for patients. Out of his own pocket and concern he became a notary public, and provides that service free of charge to patients and their families. He is often called at home, sometimes late at night to notarize wills and other documents.

A former POW, Mr. Rutledge has dedicated his life to helping his fellow man, specifically veterans. This in itself is noteworthy considering he was put through tremendous personal pain and disgrace at the hands of a foreign force. It would have been easy for Mr. Rutledge, upon his return from the POW experience, to try to wash away the unpleasant memories and years of torture by staying as far away as possible from the military and veterans. But that is not his way.

His supervisors describe Mr. Rutledge as . . . "singularly superb—absolutely outstanding . . . an inspiration . . . epitomizes volunteerism at its best and is a credit

to the DAV . . . serves the veteran, his fellow volunteers and the South Texas Veterans Health Care System with distinction."

Dorothy Marie Waters.—A life member of DAV Auxiliary Unit No. 83 and a regularly scheduled volunteer at the North Chicago, IL VA Medical Center in the areas of Community Affairs (Voluntary Service), Medical Administration Service, and Chaplain Service. As of January 1996, Mrs. Waters has 43 years of service and 32,000 hours as a volunteer, and she takes great pride in whatever she is called upon to do. As a front door greeter to patients and guests, she is a role model in the VAMC's "Goodwill Ambassador" program for other volunteers, VAVS Representatives and even VA staff members. Arriving each morning at 4:30 a.m., she prepares the coffee and refreshments for fellow volunteers and logs them in for their assignment areas. Her cheerful nature starts everyone's day on a happy note and a wish for a good day.

At 82 years young and in excellent health, she drives 20 miles each way to the VAMC, with the often inclement Chicago weather not deterring her in the slightest. Her volunteer assignment is between 4:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., averaging 52.5 hours per week. Unselfishly assuming her volunteer work responsibilities above and beyond the call of duty. Due to the expanded role of the voluntary service department, which includes public affairs, media support, and information services, she is often called upon to assist with projects on a moment's notice. Her accomplishments and contributions to the VAMC testify to Mrs. Waters as a special individual who brings quality and integrity to the meaning of volunteer service. She is described as one who has "truly answered the call!"

The selection committee once again stated that all of the nominees are very special volunteers. Each nominee has been awarded a certificate of merit for outstanding volunteer performance in meeting the needs of hospitalized veterans.

SPORTS FOR THE DISABLED

Athletic programs for handicapped veterans have always been important to the DAV. We have a history of leadership in efforts that encourage athletic activity among disabled veterans of all ages. Working together with the VA, DAV leaders are committed to providing these men and women with opportunities to participate in sports which many thought would not be possible with their disabilities.

The Veterans' Advisory Committee on Rehabilitation previously cited a study in which Kathy Stokes, Ph.D., reported that "the health care needs of those not involved in sports activities were three times higher than those involved in some type of sporting program." *Modern Healthcare Magazine* states that sports offer a better quality of life, improved self-confidence and self-esteem, and a way for many newly disabled people to adjust to their handicaps. Athletic activity provides a new and very necessary social outlet, while improving physical endurance and maintaining physical fitness.

More and more, doctors recognize it's not enough to stabilize patients medically and send them home. Without an introduction to sports or recreation, the hospital will see that person again and again. Disabled people involved in sports generally encounter fewer medical problems than those who aren't, therapists say. Athletics maintain cardiovascular conditioning, increase circulation to the extremities, and help avert skin breakdowns. Another advantage is that sports are community-based rather than hospital-based undertakings. The DAV believes disabled veterans should have the same opportunity to participate in these activities as those who aren't handicapped.

The DAV National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic.—In March, more than 240 disabled veterans from 38 states took part in the 10th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic at Crested Butte, Colorado. With more than 500 volunteers—including 147 ski instructors, most of whom are certified in teaching the disabled—it was the largest and best Winter Sports Clinic ever conducted. An annual event sponsored jointly by the DAV and VA, the clinic is open to veterans with visual impairments, spinal-cord injuries, certain neurological conditions, orthopedic amputations, or other severe disabilities. Veterans disabled in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf War, and Bosnia were represented. Our sponsors this year were:

National: Lockheed Martin; Prince Bandar bin Sultan; Sprint.

Gold: American Express Company; Baxter Healthcare Corporation; Bayer Corporation; The Coca-Cola Company; Johnson & Johnson Health Care Systems, Inc.; Milbank; Memorial Fund; PaineWebber.

Silver: American Country Countdown with Bob Kingsley; DAV-California Rehabilitation Foundation, Inc.; DAV-Department of Colorado; Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher; General Electric Medical Systems; London International U.S. Hold-

ings, Inc.; McGaw, Inc.; The Rex Foundation; Roho, Inc. and Crown Therapeutics, Inc.; Schiff, Kreidler-Shell, Inc.; Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC); 3M; Zeneca Pharmaceuticals.

Bronze: Advanced Prosthetics & Orthotics, Inc.; AMSUS-Sustaining Members; AT&T Wireless Services; C.R. Bard, Inc.; Dickstein, Shapiro & Morin, L.L.P.; Evian; *Federal Practitioner* John, Cathy, Timothy, and Taffney Fischer; Flex-Foot, Inc.; Genentech, Inc.; Hoechst Marion Roussel; Kuschall of America; Eli Lilly and Company; Marsam/Schein Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; Oakley; Orthotics & Prosthetics National Office; Pfizer, Inc.; Piper & Marbury, L.L.P.; Radventures, Inc.; SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals; SSDS, Inc.; Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., Chapter #57.

Using the theme of "Changing Lives," the clinic promotes rehabilitation by helping physically disabled veterans develop sports skills through a wide variety of adaptive workshops. With assistance from hundreds of volunteers, the clinic breaks down physical and emotional barriers that could otherwise block participation in these sports. It allows the veterans to regain lost self-confidence and find their own limits. The workshops focus on such sports skills as downhill and cross-country skiing, wheelchair basketball, scuba diving, wheelchair self-defense, golf, and snowmobiling.

DAV FREEDOM AWARD

Four years ago we instituted the DAV Freedom Ward at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sport Clinic. It is given each year to the veteran who makes the most progress during the week, showing outstanding courage and accomplishments in taking a giant step forward in his or her rehabilitation process. This annual award is sponsored by His Royal Highness Prince Bandar bin Sultan, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia. The award's inscription reads: "Your accomplishments during the . . . DAV National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic have proved to the world that physical disability does not bar the doors to freedom. We salute your desire to excel so that others may follow." The 1996 recipient was Martin Begosh of Rockville, Maryland.

A first-time Clinic participant, Mr. Martin Begosh was performing missions in Bosnia when the military Humvee he was driving hit a land mine and was destroyed. Two fellow soldiers were uninjured, but Mr. Begosh's right foot, ankle, and leg were shattered. As he scrambled from the wreckage, he fell on another land mine. Fortunately this one was an anti-vehicle land mine and did not detonate. "I'm not sure whether I'll lose my foot or not said Mr. Begosh. "But I don't worry about that. Considering everything involved with my accident, I realize it could have been much worse. I'm really just happy to be alive." Although Mr. Begosh's leg was still in a cast and he faced many months of extensive surgery when he went to the clinic, he still attended the different activities and had an incredible time. "I had no idea what to expect from the clinic," he said. "People said it would be a fun time, but I had no idea it would be as fun as it is!" He has already snowmobiled, cross-country skied, and even tried the bi-ski. (All this from a man who's doctor's instructed him to "take it easy.") When he wasn't tearing up the slopes, he could be found soaking up some sun and meeting as many people as possible. "Everybody here has really motivated and inspired me," he said. "Everywhere you go, guys are giving it their all. No matter what their disability, they're not stopping—they're not giving up. I'm really awed by the whole experience."

Mr. Begosh is modest about his experience in Bosnia and disagree with those who consider him a hero. "Some people say I'm a hero just because I went to Bosnia and got my foot blown up," he said. "I don't see why I'm a hero, I volunteered to go over there, fully aware of the risk factors, and I didn't let that hamper my mission. I'm no braver than any other soldier who is still over there."

For Bosnia vet Mr. Begosh, he has been given a second chance at life and he plans to live each day to its fullest. At only 23, he has already learned how fragile life can be. Mr. Begosh's plans for the future are relatively simple: to stay in good spirits, to work at his recovery, and to do his best to be a good role model for others. "My accident has really woken me up and shown me how fragile life can be. I haven't done half the things in life that I want to do. In a way, I feel like I've been given a second chance, so I'm going to make sure that I slow down, enjoy life and, in a sense—live a little."

Golf for the Disabled.— Golf is one of the fastest growing and most popular sports in America, perhaps in the world. Recognizing this fact, the DAV and DAV Charitable Service Trust support two golf programs that promote rehabilitation and a more active lifestyle for disabled veterans:

National Amputee Gold Open Championships— The DAV National Commander's Trophy honors the disabled veteran who puts in the best overall performance at the National Amputee Golf Association (NAGA) championship tournament. Additionally, it recognizes the contributions the winner has made in his or her own community in furthering the opportunities of disabled individuals. Last year's 47th annual tournament in Tenley Park, Illinois, August 15–17, 1995, drew 110 entries, at least 50% of them veterans. The winner of the DAV trophy was Stuart A.M. Reeder, a combat-disabled Vietnam veteran who lost both legs in an enemy mine explosion and plays golf from a wheelchair. Mr. Reeder works with other trauma victims attempting to serve as a positive influence in their lives. He conducts motivational lectures several times a year at high schools near his home and organized a work group for accessibility at the Mid-Tennessee Diocese of the Episcopal Church. An active member of the Southern States Amputee Golf Association and NAGA, he also serves as an instructor at adaptive golf clinics and actively encouraged the production of "Fore" Wheel Gold, a program promoting golf for all disabled persons.

First Swing Golf.— This is the DAV's eighth year of involvement with the "First Swing" instructional golf program for the disabled. With support from the DAV Charitable Service Trust, this program provides therapists throughout the country with instruction on the rehabilitation benefits of golf. Use of golf therapy at hospitals and rehabilitation centers has brought the game back into the lives of many who played prior to becoming disabled. It has also introduced the sport to countless handicapped people who never dreamed golf would be part of their lives. During 1995, 28 First Swing seminars and Learn to Golf clinics were conducted. Participants included 451 therapists; 532 physically challenged people, 123 of whom were disabled veterans; 98 professional golfers; and 342 others.

DAV CELEBRITY ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAM

Continuing to provide a morale boost to hospitalized veterans, the DAV Celebrity Entertainment Program assures these patients that they're not forgotten* * *that the American people still appreciate what they've done for all of us.

We're truly fortunate to sponsor some very talented people with a great deal of compassion for those veterans, so many of whom face long and lonely stays in hospitals, often far from family and friends. Making more than 100 hospital visits last year alone, these wonderful people include country singer, composer, and entertainer Travis Tritt; Kevin Dobson, actor/director of television and motion pictures; television/film actor Barry Corbin; American Country Countdown Host Bob Kingsley; and Major League Baseball Umpires Larry Barnett and Eddie Montague. The DAV is indeed honored that such outstanding celebrities want to be a part of the DAV Voluntary Service Program. We recognize the enormous demands they face, and we appreciate the gift of their valuable time. They've demonstrated that they care very deeply about the needs of disabled veterans.

IN CLOSING

It's been a tremendous year for DAV volunteer programs, and many deserve our thanks. They include DAV and Auxiliary National Commanders Thomas A. McMasters, III and Barbara L. Hicks, National Officers and staff of the DAV and its Auxiliary, the staff of National Service and Legislative Headquarters led by Executive Director David W. Gorman, and the staff at National Headquarters in Cincinnati led by Executive Director Richard E. Patterson. Special thanks go to National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson for his leadership and dedication to service for all disabled veterans. My personal thanks to Executive Secretary Linda DeMartino. Over and again, we've gained invaluable help from our DAV National Service Officers, Hospital Service Coordinators, and VAVS leadership teams across the nation. I cannot forget Jim Delgado, who heads up the VA Voluntary Service program and his assistant Jim Mayer. And the assistance of the DAV Charitable Service Trust was an essential ingredient of our 1995 success story.

Last to be mentioned are most important, the members of the volunteer corps fielded by the DAV and Auxiliary. As has often been said, "There is no higher distinction than service to others." And there are none more distinguished than the men and women who are out there right now, working to bring the comfort of love and the joy of life to our nation's disabled veterans and their families. Thank you.)

[The following written annual report was submitted by Mr. Ronald W. Drach, National Employment Director:]

National Commander McMasters, Distinguished Guests and Delegates to our 75th National Convention:

I am honored and privileged to submit to the delegates at our 75th National Convention my annual report as your National Employment Director and provide you with an overview of the various activities of this department during the past year.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to National Commander Thomas A. McMasters, III and his line officers for their support and cooperation. Commander McMasters' leadership has been extremely valuable. Additionally, National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson has been a strong ally of the employment programs, and I thank him for his support. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate David W. Gorman on his appointment as Executive Director, Washington Headquarters and thank him for his support and leadership.

Our National Service Officers (NSOs) are unequaled in their skill and ability to provide representation to our nation's disabled veterans and their dependents. The NSOs' hard work helps ensure that our nation's service-connected disabled veterans and their dependents receive all of their employment rights and benefits. Those rights and benefits include veterans' preference, affirmative action laws for service-connected disabled veterans and regulations and employment-related programs serving homeless veterans.

The National Employment Department works very closely with National Service Director Kenneth D. Wolfe, National Legislative Director Richard F. Schultz, National Director of Voluntary Services Bruce G. Nitsche, and National Director of Communications Thomas K. Keller and their respective staffs.

I would be remiss if I did not thank National Auxiliary Commander Barbara Hicks and National Auxiliary Adjutant Maria Tedrow. Both have provided strong leadership and always respond to our requests for help.

A special thanks is in order to all workers and volunteers at the department and chapter level and individual DAV members who work so hard to make all of our programs work.

The National Employment Department handles employment-related legislative and oversight issues with particular emphasis on service-connected disabled veterans. As Director, I am responsible for monitoring several agencies and pending legislation. I work with the Executive branch and the Congress in program development and oversight.

As a registered lobbyist I appeared before Congress five times since our last National Convention and worked closely with the National Legislative staff as they appeared before Congress on issues affecting veterans' benefits and programs.

Since our last convention, I have appeared before committees of Congress on issues relating to consolidation of employment and training programs; vocational rehabilitation; small business initiatives; programs for homeless veterans; reemployment rights; transition assistance; and several times on veterans' preference. I have been working closely with the members and staffs of the Subcommittee on Education, Employment, and Training of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Subcommittee on Civil Service of the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight to develop a meaningful complaint/appeal mechanism for veterans who believe veterans' preference or affirmative action has been violated. Our major emphasis is always on the service-connected disabled veteran.

Last year, I reported to you on some of the issues relating to the U.S. Postal Service's (USPS) reduction-in-force. I have had an opportunity to meet with senior White House officials on the USPS problems, which resulted in establishing the White House Veterans Interagency Policy Group. At the initial meeting with White House staff, a written document was presented outlining many of the major concerns of the DAV. There have been several follow-up meetings with senior White House officials to update them on many of these issues.

I oversee various employment issues with the Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the U.S. Postal Service, the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (PCEPD), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

DAV PROGRAMS

During the past 12 months I worked closely with National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson, Executive Director David W. Gorman, National Service Director Kenneth D. Wolfe and the entire National Service Department as we participated, to the fullest extent possible, in the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and the Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP).

TAP and DTAP are joint cooperative efforts among the DOL, Department of Defense (DoD) and the VA to provide information and services to active duty military personnel who are within 180 days of discharge to ensure a smooth transition from

military to civilian life. Services include employment information as well as assistance in developing job-finding skills, including interviewing techniques and resume preparation.

Many of our offices participated in TAP/DTAP briefings at various military installations. Our National Service Officers had contact with over 93,000 separating military personnel over the period January 1, 1995 to December 31, 1995. Of those, 84,655 were male and 8,838 were female. We assisted in filing 72,842 claims for VA disability compensation benefits. Of major concern is how close to discharge these individuals are prior to attending the TAP session. The law requires separating service members to attend these sessions 180 days prior to discharge. According to our reports:

- 40,815 are within one month of being discharged;
- 23,835 are within two to three months of being discharged;
- 18,579 are within four to six months of being discharged; and
- 10,528 are within six months or more of being discharged.

DOL PROGRAMS

DOL programs for veterans are administered by the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS).

Heading VETS is Assistant Secretary of Labor Preston Taylor, who was appointed by President Clinton and confirmed by the Senate. The DAV has enjoyed a positive, open communication with his office.

Programs under VETS include Veterans' Reemployment Rights (VRR) and Title IVc of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). VETS also provides grants to states to employ Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) and operate the Disabled contract basis, funding for the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI).

I reported last year that the members of the Congressionally mandated Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment and Training (ACVET) were at last appointed by Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich in November 1994, and the first meeting was convened in December 1994. Secretary Reich asked and I agreed to serve as Chairman of the Advisory Committee. The Committee has met several times since then to discuss major employment and training issues as they affect our nation's veterans. The major purpose of ACVET is to advise the Secretary of Labor on employment and training issues relating to veterans. ACVET members are in the process of planning a national veterans' employment forum for later this year.

The forum will focus on veterans' employment issues relative to private sector, federal government, and state and local government employment. The participants will be asked to come up with issues and solutions to advance employment opportunities for veterans. There will be special emphasis on service-connected disabled veterans.

VA PROGRAMS

Our department is involved in several VA activities—the agency's personnel policies as they relate to employment of disabled veterans and the Vocational Rehabilitation program. I chair the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Rehabilitation, which was established by law in 1980 to advise the Secretary on issues affecting all VA rehabilitation programs.

In May 1995, the Subcommittee on Education, Employment and Training held an oversight hearing to discuss how well the Department of Labor's DVOPs were working with the VA's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to assure quality job placement was occurring for those service-connected disabled veterans completing training under vocational rehabilitation. The results of the hearing revealed that little cooperation was ongoing between the two agencies and they were put on notice to work closer together to improve employment services.

As a result, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling established a "Design Team" and "Steering Committee" to review how the VA provides those services and make recommendations for meaningful change. The Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling asked me in February of this year to serve on the Steering Committee. The final report was provided to the Steering Committee during the week of June 10, 1996.

On a separate track, the Department of Labor developed a new training module through the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI) in Colorado to provide training, particularly to disabled veterans outreach program specialists (DVOPs), to deal with the unique problems many of the vocational rehabilitation clients have. I assisted in the development and assessment of the curriculum. We will be monitoring the ongoing development and implementation of these new initiatives to ensure

that disabled veterans under vocational rehabilitation actually obtain meaningful employment consistent with their training.

OPM PROGRAMS

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is responsible for enforcing the veterans' preference provisions of Title 5, USC. It is also responsible for administering affirmative action mandated by Section 4214, Title 38, USC, and the Veterans' Readjustment Appointment (VRA) authority.

OPM has delegated most hiring authority to individual federal agencies. Consequently, each agency hiring site has the flexibility to circumvent, intentionally or unintentionally, veterans' preference. In response, we have been working closely with OPM staff and meet with them at least quarterly regarding this and other issues of concern to veterans.

Congress and the Clinton Administration are reviewing the Office of Personnel Management with a view towards streamlining and reinventing programs. We are watching these proposals, and will be vigilant to assure any changes result in positive actions on veterans' preference.

The House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Education, Employment and Training and the House Subcommittee on Civil Service have held hearings on veterans' preference with a specific reference to "appeal rights" for those preference eligibles who believe their rights may have been violated. DAV had significant discussions and input with staff of these committees and on June 6, 1996, a bill was introduced proposing positive changes to veterans' preference to include an appeal process. We are optimistic that positive action will happen during this session of Congress.

Additionally, legislation has been introduced at the request of the Administration to modify the Civil Service system. Within that proposal, veterans' preference will remain intact. We will monitor the progress of this legislation to be sure that veterans' preference is not weakened and, hopefully, actually strengthened.

In addition, we routinely receive inquiries from service-connected disabled veterans who are seeking federal employment. Many veterans inquire about employment opportunities, veterans' preference, and the Veterans' Readjustment Appointment (VRA) Authority. They also want to know their rights and remedies under federal employment laws.

We respond by providing technical information and referring veterans to the appropriate DAV National Service Office for assistance. We also answer inquiries regarding dual compensation, retirement and health issues, federal employee's compensation for work-related injuries, transfers and promotions.

For the past several years, we have worked with OPM and other federal agencies in developing a disabled veteran workshop to be conducted during a national symposium on employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

We continue to receive complaints about the agency's employment practices from our NSOs, service-connected disabled veterans and others.

These complaints tend to reflect USPS' discriminatory practices and a lack of knowledge of veterans' laws. We initially try to resolve these complaints informally, a strategy that has proved successful. At other times we advise the veteran to file an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) complaint or appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB). the USPS is now attempting to implement the MSPB rulings which found the USPS "reorganization" violated veterans' reduction-in-force protections. We anticipate problems as the USPS appears to have taken short cuts in establishing a "compliance RIF register." We are concerned that more RIF violations may occur, and will continue to monitor that effort. Postal officials in the Postmaster General's office recently agreed to meet with us on an ongoing basis to discuss this and other issues.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA)

We continue to hold discussions with the SBA on providing direct loan assistance to veterans who wish to start their own business. We support direct loans for business start-ups, but we also believe that "set-asides" in the federal government contracting and procurement process must be made available to service-connected disabled veteran-owned businesses. The set-aside would be similar to that currently provided under the 8a Program for minority-owned businesses.

We receive and respond to inquiries from service-connected disabled veterans interested in starting their own business or getting federal contracts for existing veteran-owned businesses.

Assistance to veterans seeking business start-up aid includes putting them in touch with the local SBA office, which as a veterans' affairs officer. Many veterans do not understand that the SBA does not offer direct loans, but they can obtain information and advice through the veterans' affairs officers on the agency's loan guaranty process.

Many service-connected disabled veterans business owners vying for federal contracts are sometimes surprised to learn that they are not eligible as "8a contractors" or any other special consideration. Certain minority-owned businesses that receive special consideration for contracts with federal departments and agencies are considered "8a contractors." These contracts are generally known as "set-asides" and are available to minority-owned businesses and are not let through the normal competitive process.

We advise those veterans that the DAV is working with the appropriate committees in Congress to establish a separate set-aside program for service-connected disabled veteran-owned businesses as well as a separate business loan program within the VA.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (EEOC) PROGRAMS

The EEOC is the final administrative authority on all disability employment discrimination cases filed against federal departments and agencies. Under current legislation, disabled veterans are not specifically identified as a covered group protected by anti-discrimination laws. However, if a disabled veteran meets the statutory definition of a person with a disability (most disabled veterans will meet that definition) and if any such disabled veteran believes he or she has been discriminated against, a complaint may be filed through the equal employment opportunity process.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the EEOC receives, investigates and prosecutes disability civil rights complaints against nonfederal employees. We advise disabled veterans of their rights under that process.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

We monitor the aforementioned agencies' activities and programs, the *Congressional Record*, *Federal Register* and a myriad of other publications to keep abreast of changing laws, regulations and policies regarding disabled veterans. When appropriate, we respond to proposed regulations that may impact on veterans' employment and training programs.

When significant legislative, regulatory or policy changes are announced by these agencies, we notify our NSOs through bi-monthly Employment Bulletins and special reports. The *DAV Magazine* also reports on activities of the Employment Department.

NONGOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

We have been involved with numerous nongovernment entities interested in employment and training programs. These include the Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies, International Association of Personnel in Employment Security, National Organization on Disability, National Rehabilitation Association, and the Society for Human Resource Management (formerly the American Society of Personnel Administration).

In conclusion, I want to again thank everyone for their support and encouragement.

[The following annual written report was submitted by Mr. Richard F. Schultz, National Legislative Director:]

NATIONAL COMMANDER THOMAS A. McMASTERS III, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS AND DELEGATES TO THIS 75TH NATIONAL CONVENTION:

As your National Legislative Director, it is indeed a great privilege and honor to present the annual report of the National Legislative Department to the 75th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans.

At the outset, I wish to express my deep gratitude to Commander Thomas A. McMasters III, and National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson for their unwavering support and leadership. As a result of their collective efforts, the DAV has continued to renew itself and its commitment to provide the very best possible service to our membership and to all our nation's 2.2 million service-connected disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors.

I also wish to personally thank former Deputy National Legislative Director, now Executive Director of Washington Headquarters, David W. Gorman, for his out-

standing work, while a member of the National Legislative Staff. I know that David will continue his excellent work on behalf of America's service-connected disabled veterans in his new position. I also wish to thank Legislative Counsel Joseph A. Violante and Assistant National Legislative Director Rick Surratt, as well as Lennox E. Gilmer who served as Associate National Legislative Director before accepting his current duties as a Judicial Appeals Representative. Clearly, their dedication to the principles of the DAV has touched the lives of countless service-connected disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors. I am very proud to be associated with these dedicated veterans' advocates. Finally, I thank the DAV's National Service Officers, whose support and dedication to service has greatly enhanced our efforts here in our nation's capital.

Although 1995/1996 was not so productive in terms of new legislation for service-connected disabled veterans, it was a successful year in terms of our grassroots efforts. We prevented the introduction of many proposals to cut, reduce or terminate veterans' benefits into the 104th Congress (1995-1996). This was due in large measure to quick action by DAV and DAV Auxiliary members and their families, who contacted their elected officials to express their opposition to these proposals. Grassroots efforts stopped the provision to terminate disability compensation to certain mentally incompetent veterans from the VA appropriation bill (H.R. 2099). Those efforts also resulted in clarification that a lobbying reform measure (H.R. 2564) would not adversely affect the office space DAV and other veterans' service organization (VSOs) receive from VA. Accordingly, I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank all DAV and DAV Auxiliary members for their grassroots efforts in support of the National Legislative Department, especially the members of DAV's Benefit Protection Team.

I am extremely proud of the work being done by the Benefit Protection Team leaders and their teams. Their efforts on behalf of the National Legislative staff is greatly appreciated and, in fact, it has been one of the main reasons for the success of our grassroots efforts. I commend their dedication to that work and look forward to working with them in the future on issues affecting service-connected disabled veterans.

This past year has been a very trying year, one in which the legislative staff has had to rely heavily upon the grassroots efforts of the members of the DAV and its Auxiliary to combat the direct attacks upon the benefits and services earned by service-connected disabled veterans in service to our country and administered through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We commemorated the 50th Anniversary of the end of World War II in September 1995, a war that demonstrated America's unprecedented ability to carry out and win a war on two fronts, in Europe and in the Pacific. During the past year, we found those same heroic veterans of World War II and their fellow veterans embroiled in another war on two fronts. The first front involved adequate funding for the integrity of VA programs, benefits, and services. On the second front, the VSOs were subjected to unprecedented attacks that threatened irreparable harm to their ability to represent veterans in their claims for VA benefits and services and as veterans' advocates before Congress.

I have often said it before: No matter how just our cause, we have nothing without the support of the caring, dedicated members of the DAV and Auxiliary. But with those members, we are capable of protecting and seeking meaningful improvements in the federal benefits and services earned as a result of our sacrifices in defense of America. They give us the ability to withstand the attacks against veterans' benefits. They are responsible for our ability to represent veterans and advocate on their behalf. This is the true measure of their dedication and their drive.

I caution, however, that we cannot rest on our laurels. Past accomplishments can lull us into a false sense of security. Therefore, we must be ever vigilant, redoubling our resolve to ensure that VA receives adequate funding for its services and programs.

The President has submitted his Fiscal Year 1997 through 2002 budget proposal to Congress. In turn, the Congress has adopted a 6-year budget plan which differs from the President's. Significant changes to the President's budget plan by Congress for veterans programs include:

- Increasing the Montgomery GI Bill \$5.00 per month;
- Allowing surviving spouse to retain the veteran's compensation pro rated to date of death instead of the month before veteran died;
- Increasing from one year to two years the period of time for which past due benefits payments can be paid to a surviving spouse in cases where the veteran dies while awaiting the processing of a claim by VA;
- Increasing automobile allowance available to certain severely service-connected disabled veterans by \$1000; and

Authorizing pro bono legal assistance program for financially needy veterans in proceedings before COVA.

Action now has shifted to the appropriation process. The House of Representatives approved the VA's FY 1997 (10-1-96 through 9c31-97) appropriation on June 26, 1996. Major changes to the President's budget request include:

An increase of \$60 million over the President's budget request for VA medical care;

An increase of \$2 million over the President's budget request for funding the operations of the Veterans Benefits Administration; and

An additional \$20 million for VA prosthetic research projects.

The Senate will now consider the FY 1997 VA appropriation bill. In all likelihood, their bill will differ from the House appropriation bill which will require a conference to work out their differences. Once differences are worked out in Congress, VA's appropriation bill will then go to the President for his signature or veto. We will keep you informed.

In all our grassroots dealings with members of Congress, their staffs and the general public, it is important to remind them that the DAV is not acting in an irresponsible manner. We are not simply asking for more, more, more. Nor are we asking to be spared in the attempt to bring order to the financial crisis facing our nation. We remain willing to sacrifice. After all, it is the service-connected veteran who has sacrificed the most in defense of this nation's principles and the ideals cherished by its citizens.

All we ask is fairness. Fairness that veterans' programs not be singled out for disproportionate cuts when other lesser priority federal programs go unscathed or realize significant enhancements. Not is it equitable to allow "corporate welfare" to flourish at the expense of American taxpayers.

According to a recent national survey, 77% of those who expressed their opinion preferred to increase funding for veterans' programs to keep up with inflation rather than reduce the federal deficit or reduce taxes. Of those polled, 96% believe our nation has an obligation to provide ongoing disability and death benefits to veterans and their families for injuries and fatalities occurring while in the armed services. While this poll demonstrates the commitment of America's citizens to our nation's sick and disabled veterans, we hear other voices from well-organized and financed groups and coalitions, as well as members of Congress and the President's cabinet. These voices continue to call for reduction, elimination, or taxation of compensation payments to service-connected disabled veterans and their dependents. Do not be fooled by the rhetoric of these "self-appointed watchdogs." Do not listen when they say these cuts will not take benefits away from combat veterans or our most severely disabled veterans. These cuts are so deep, they go to the heart of the VA system. They threaten the very integrity and viability of all VA programs.

Since last year's report to the National Convention, the National Legislative Staff has appeared before committees and subcommittees of the United States Congress on numerous occasions, presenting DAV's views on a wide range of issues affecting service-connected disabled veterans and their families. In addition, National Commander Thomas A. McMasters, III and other Headquarters personnel have participated in hearings before Congress. During the first session of the 104th Congress (January-December 1995) and the first half of the second session (January-June 1996), Congress did very little on veterans' issues. In fact, according to the *Congressional Monitor*, a daily digest of Congressional action, the first session of the 104th Congress was the second longest in history; however, the 104th Congress had the lowest legislative output since 1933, when January was established as the month for the start of a new Congress. A total of only 88 bills were enacted as Public Law in 1995 (only one, our COLA, was a veterans' bill). This was down from 225 Public Laws in 1994.

For the second time in three years, a member of the legislative staff went to Vietnam as a member of the Presidential Delegation on POW/MIAs. Unfortunately, our concerns about the extent of the Vietnamese cooperation on the fullest possible accounting of our POW/MIAs fell on deaf ears. After the last trip, in March 1996, DAV, the American Legion, and the National League of Families of POW/MIAs submitted a minority report, taking issue with the findings of the delegation that the Vietnamese were significantly cooperating with our efforts to account for our POW/MIAs. As you may know, President Clinton recently certified that the Vietnamese have cooperated in "full faith," thereby paving the way for full normalization of relations between the United States and Vietnam, including the naming of an ambassador to Vietnam, Representative Pete Peterson (D-FL), a former POW of the Vietnam War.

As we look at the overall situation faced by the DAV's National Legislative staff, it becomes sadly apparent that our success will not be measured in the number of

new initiatives passed by the 104th Congress. Rather, success will be measured in the number of current benefits, programs, and services we are able to protect from elimination, reduction, or taxation. Clearly, there is a “disconnect” between what the grateful citizens of this nation would like to see happen with respect to the defenders of America’s freedoms and what Congress and the Administration have in store for America’s veterans.

Below is a compilation of legislation affecting DAV and DAVA members:

MAJOR VETERANS’ LEGISLATION ENACTED INTO LAW SINCE THE 74th National Convention

COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT IN COMPENSATION AND DIC, PUBLIC LAW 104-57,
ENACTED NOVEMBER 22, 1995—H.R. 2394

This measure increases VA’s service-connected disability and death compensation (the same flat-rate COLA for old law and new law DIC) by 2.6%. This was the smallest increase in more than 20 years due to the low inflation rate. These rates were rounded down to the next whole dollar.

Social Security recipients also received a 2.6% cost-of-living adjustment. Accordingly, effective December 1, 1995, VA compensation rates were increased by that amount. The increase also applied to additional compensation for dependents, annual clothing allowance and the statutory awards, including the “K” award.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1996, PUBLIC LAW 104-106, ENACTED FEBRUARY 10,
1996—S. 1124

In the act authorizing appropriations for the Department of Defense for FY 1996, there is a provision authorizing the award of the Purple Heart Medal to persons who were wounded while being held as a prisoner of war (POW) before April 25, 1962.

The law provides that a former POW who was wounded before April 25, 1962, while being held as a POW or while being taken captive, is entitled to an award of the Purple Heart Medal in the same manner and under the same standards in effect for former POWs who were wounded on or after April 25, 1962.

This act fulfills a long-standing DAV mandate to have the Purple Heart Medal issued to former POWs injured during captivity prior to April 25, 1962.

VA HEALTH CARE DELIVERY ACT, PUBLIC LAW 104-110, ENACTED FEBRUARY 13, 1996—
H.R. 2353

This measure extended certain expiring authorities at the VA relating to the delivery of medical care and other items. It extends until December 31, 1996, the special eligibility for VA inpatient care accorded to certain veterans exposed to ionizing radiation, Agent Orange, and environmental hazards during the Persian Gulf War. It also extends until December 31, 1996, the special eligibility for VA outpatient care accorded to Persian Gulf War veterans.

Additionally, this measure extended until December 31, 1997, the following programs and activities:

- VA’s authority to contract for community-based drug and alcohol care.
- VA’s pilot program of non-institutional alternatives to nursing home care;
- VA’s authority to enter into agreements with non-profit organizations and state and local governments to acquire real property in order to furnish services to homeless veterans;
- VA’s authority to determine appropriate locality pay for VA nurse anesthetists;
- VA’s health professional scholarship program;
- VA’s authority to enter into enhanced-use leases with non-VA entities;
- VA’s program of community-based residential care for homeless chronically mentally ill veterans;
- VA’s authority to make grants to entities for the purpose of furnishing services and assistance to homeless veterans; and the Department of Labor’s homeless veterans’ reintegration projects, authorizing appropriations of \$10 million for this program.

This measure also made permanent the VA’s authority to guarantee loans which bear an interest rate negotiated between the veteran and the lender; the VA’s authority to guarantee loans that include costs related to making energy-efficient improvements to the dwelling that is the object of the loan; and the VA’s authority to permit a lender who is authorized to make loans which are automatically guaranteed to review appraisals.

OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 1996, PUBLIC LAW NO. 104-134, ENACTED APRIL 26, 1996—H.R. 3019

The FY 1996 appropriations battle was the most protracted federal budget battle in modern history. It came to an end on April 26, 1996, when President Clinton signed the final version of the bill, H.R. 3019, appropriating \$164 billion for the last several months of FY 1996.

Before discussing the belated enactment of the FY 1996 VA appropriation, I believe it is important to go back to the initial VA, HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriations bill, H.R. 2099.

On July 31, 1995, H.R. 2099 was passed by the House and sent to the Senate for consideration. As you will recall, this measure contained the provision to terminate compensation to certain mentally incompetent veterans. On September 27, 1995, the Senate passed H.R. 2099, which also contained the provision to terminate compensation to certain mentally incompetent veterans, as well as some provisions which differed from the House-passed bill.

On November 16, 1995, a conference committee completed its work on H.R. 2099, striking the provision to terminate compensation to certain mentally incompetent veterans and resolving the differences between the House- and Senate-passed bills. On November 29, 1995, the House passed a motion by Representative David Obey (D-WI) to recommit (return) the conference report to the conferees with instructions to the House conferees to increase VA health care funding by \$213 million, the amount contained in the House-passed measure.

On December 6, 1995, the second conference was completed; however, no additional money was provided for VA health care. On December 7, 1995, Representative Obey again attempted to recommit the measure to the conference committee with instructions to increase VA health care funding by \$213 million; however, this attempt failed and the House adopted the measure without any additional funding for VA health care.

President Clinton vetoed the appropriations bill on December 18, 1995. In vetoing this measure, the President stated that "H.R. 2099 would * * * leave veterans seeking medical care with fewer treatment options." The President went on to further state that "the bill provides less than I requested for the medical care of this Nation's veterans. It includes significant restrictions on the funding for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that appear designed to impede him from carrying out his duties as an advocate for veterans. Further, the bill does not provide necessary funding for VA hospital construction."

In order to pay disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation by January 1, 1996, Congress needed to pass a resolution authorizing the VA to make these payments. This measure passed and January compensation checks were received in a timely fashion. On January 5, 1996, Congress passed and the President signed another measure that allows for the payment of existing veterans' benefits through the end of September 1996.

In March 1996, Congressional leaders considered compiling and passing an omnibus spending bill which encompassed the five spending measures that had not yet become law at that time, including VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies. National Commander McMasters, in a letter to the members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, expressed the DAV's concerns about a provision of the VA's appropriation bill which, if enacted, would have a devastating impact on the office of the VA Secretary. Commander McMasters noted that "the objectionable provisions of this measure are the unreasonable, and seemingly punitive, limitations on being placed on the personnel and travel budget for the office of the VA Secretary as well as three other of its supporting offices." Should this measure pass, the Secretary would be required to furlough a significant number of very dedicated career VA employees over the next six months. In addition, the activities of the Center for Minority Affairs and the Center for Women Veterans would be significantly curtailed. Further, the restrictions imposed by this measure would not only prevent the Secretary from executing his duties to oversee VA operations, but would also curtail other activities which directly support our nation's sick and disabled veterans, such as the Disabled Veterans' Winter Sports Clinic, National Veterans' Wheelchair Games, Golden Age Games, and Creative Arts Festival.

National Commander McMasters called upon the members of the Senate Appropriations Committee to sponsor and support an amendment to the VA's FY 1996 Appropriation Bill that would remove these unwarranted spending restrictions.

On March 7, 1996, H.R. 3019, an appropriations bill to fund those departments, including VA, and agencies not yet funded for FY 1996, was brought to the floor of the House for a vote. That bill contained provisions to severely limit the travel

fund of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and to restrict the number of personnel positions available to the Secretary.

Prior to the vote on the bill, Congressman David Obey (D-WI) offered a motion to recommit (return) H.R. 3019 to the Committee on Appropriations with the instruction that the committee report the bill back to the House with an amendment to properly fund the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' travel budget and to not eliminate personnel positions available to the Secretary.

Congressman Obey noted that the intent of this amendment is supported by the DAV and other VSOs. For the record, he read a paragraph from DAV's letter sent to every member of congress wherein it was stated that the restrictions placed on the Secretary's travel and the number of personnel positions available would have an adverse affect on "activities which directly support our nation's sick and disabled veterans." By a vote of 182 to 228, Congressman Obey's motion to recommit was defeated. By a vote of 209 to 206, H.R. 3019 was passed by the House.

The Senate version did not contain any restrictions on the number of personnel available to the Secretary; however, it did contain the travel restrictions.

At mid-afternoon on April 25, the House voted 399 to 25 to adopt the conference report on H.R. 3019. The Senate cleared the bill later that evening on a vote of 88 to 11.

On April 26, President Clinton signed the measure into law, enabling the government to continue operating normally for the remainder of FY 1996. Democrats and Republicans declared victory in this long war of attrition over spending priorities for FY 1996. The FY 1996 VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies appropriations, H.R. 3019, Pub. L. No. 104-134 provides \$38.59 billion for the VA, \$883 million less than requested by President Clinton in his proposed FY 1996 budget.

This budget retains travel restrictions on Secretary Brown; however, the restrictions on personnel in the Secretary's office were removed. While we are pleased that Congress removed the treat of staff cuts in the Secretary's office, we are still concerned that the travel restrictions on Secretary Brown, as we understand, will make it difficult for him to visit any VA hospital or regional office around the country, or attend veterans' conventions.

Provisions of this appropriation bill include:

HEALTH CARE

For FY 1996, VA will have \$16.564 billion available for VA medical care. This is approximately \$400 million less than the President's request, but approximately \$350 million above the enacted FY 1995 appropriations.

The total Veterans' Health Administration appropriation for FY 1996 is \$16.885 billion, approximately \$415 million less than requested by the President. In addition to the health care spending noted above, this amount includes \$257 million for medical and prosthetic research, \$5 million more than enacted in FY 1995; \$64 million for medical administration and miscellaneous operating expense (MAMOE), a decrease of \$6 million from the FY 1995 enacted level and \$8 million less than requested by the President; and no funds were provided for health professional scholarship, although the President's request included \$10 million.

GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSE (GOE)

This account provides funding for the personnel and equipment costs needed to administer nonmedical VA programs. The appropriation for FY 1996 provides for \$880 million, a decrease of \$10 million from the FY 1995 enacted appropriation and \$36 million less than the President's request. Included in the funding for GOE is \$666 million for the Veterans' Benefits Administration, a decrease of \$28 million from the amount requested by the President.

CONSTRUCTION

For FY 1996, VA will take a significant funding cut in major construction. The FY 1995 enacted appropriation for major construction was \$354 million, compared to \$136 million in FY 1996. The President had requested \$514 million or \$378 million more than Congress appropriated. Minor construction spending is set at \$190 million, an increase of almost \$40 million above the enacted FY 1995 level but \$39 million below the President's request. Congress appropriated \$48 million for State Veterans Homes grants and parking garage revolving fund, an increase of \$3 million above that requested by the President.

National Cemetery System

The appropriation for the National Cemetery System remains at the FY 1995 enacted level, \$73 million. This amount is \$2 million less than the President's request of \$75 million.

Mandatory spending (veterans benefits)

There was no difference in the amount requested by the President and the amount passed by Congress for funding for compensation and pension and readjustment benefits. The funding for compensation and pension benefits is \$18.332 billion. Readjustment benefits are set at \$1.345 billion. The spending level for housing programs is \$645 million, \$12 million less than the President's request of \$657 million.

THE LOBBYING DISCLOSURE ACT, PUBLIC LAW 104-65, ENACTED DECEMBER 19, 1996—S.
1060

This measure was enacted to provide for the disclosure of lobbying activities engaged in to influence the federal government. Added to this was an amendment offered by Senator Alan Simpson (R-WY) which proposed to prohibit certain non-profit organizations that lobby from receiving federal funds. The term "federal funds" was defined as "constituting an award, grant, loan, or any other form." This language was broad enough to include the non-monetary assistance, i.e., space and office facilities provided by the VA to VSOs.

National Commander McMasters sent a letter to every member of the Senate expressing DAV's concerns with the language of the amendment. This bill was sent to the House for their consideration and was passed by the House. The concerns of DAV and other VSOs were taken under consideration by members of the House, however. With your assistance, your DAV Legislative Staff was able to convince Representatives Charles T. Canady (R-FL) and Representative Patrick Kennedy (D-RI) to make a statement on the floor of the House that it was not the intent of H.R. 2564 (the companion bill to S. 1060) to adversely impact upon the DAV's office space received from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The House passed the same language contained in S. 1060 so that the measure would not have to go to conference.

It is our belief, however, that the statements made by Representatives Canady and Kennedy demonstrate that there was no Congressional intent to affect our ability to represent veterans by eliminating the availability of free office space provided to VSOs. They both are to be commended and thanked for their efforts on our behalf.

DAV LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES/PENDING LEGISLATION IN THE SECOND SESSION OF THE
104TH CONGRESS

VA FUNDING FOR FISCAL YEAR 1997

On March 19, 1996, President Clinton sent Congress his Fiscal Year (FY) 1997 budget (October 1, 1996 through September 30, 1997) request totaling \$1.6 trillion in federal government spending. The President's seven-year balanced budget plan includes \$38.8 billion for the VA for FY 1997. This request represents an increase of almost \$500 million above the level approved by Congress for FY 1996, \$444 million of the increase is for medical care.

The Administration's budget requests \$18.7 billion to provide compensation and pension benefits to veterans and their survivors. More than 2.2 million veterans and 303,000 survivors will receive compensation benefits in 1997.

The Administration's proposed FY 1997 VA budget would support an employment level of 217,747 employees, a decrease of almost 6,000 employees from the FY 1996 estimate.

General operating expenses (GOE)

The GOE account provides funding for the personnel and equipment costs needed to administer VA nonmedical programs. In FY 1997, the administration requests budget authority of \$843.7 million, a decrease of \$4.4 million below the FY 1996 level. This funding level requires a major reduction in the average employment level, almost 1,100 nonmedical care employees, during FY 1997.

Highlights of the GOE budget include:

While the Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) will receive an \$18 million increase in budget authority, employee levels will be cut by 624 employees, from 12,700 in FY 1996 to 12,076 in FY 1997.

Budget authority for the administration of Compensation and Pension (C&P) benefits is \$225.6 million. This is \$51.3 million above the current level approved

by Congress and will support 4,958 employees. The net increase of \$51.3 million and 952 employees over the FY 1996 estimate is due solely to the transfer of Veterans' Assistance Service (VAS) personnel into the C&P service. While the C&P (VAS) employees level will include 1,123 additional employees from VAS, there will be a net reduction of 171 employees available to process C&P claims.

There is a \$118.3 million decrease in readjustment benefits for FY 1997. The FY 1997 budget authority request is \$1.23 billion. The Readjustment benefits account makes payments to eligible veterans to assist in their readjustment to civilian life and to eligible dependents.

Budget authority of \$49 million is requested in FY 1997 by the Administration to support the Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling (VR&C) program. This represents a \$5 million decrease in funding. The employee level includes a transfer of 138 employees from VAS for a net gain of 109 employees over the FY 1996 levels or approximately 826 employees for FY 1997.

In FY 1997, VBA has set a goal to process original compensation claims 33 days faster than in the previous fiscal year. In FY 1996, VBA anticipates completing original compensation claims in 150 days and it will attempt to reduce that number to 117 in FY 1997. In addition, the pending caseload is expected to be reduced from about 378,600 cases at the end of FY 1995 to 277,000 cases at the end of FY 1997, an expected reduction of 27%.

Funds are requested by the Administration to continued development of VBA's VETSNET initiative, which will replace computers and software currently used to process veterans' compensation and pension checks.

General Administration's budget authority will be cut by the Administration from \$214 million to \$201 million in FY 1997. General Administration consists of the office of the Secretary, five Assistant Secretaries and three department-level staff offices (Board of Contract Appeals, Board of Veterans' Appeals and office of the General Counsel).

The National Cemetery System's (NSC) budget will increase from \$73 million to \$77 million, a 5.5% increase in the Administration's request. The employee level will increase by 14 to 1,335 employees. New Cemeteries are planned to open in Seattle (11/97), Chicago (11/99), and Dallas/Fort Worth (11/99).

The Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) will increase by 50 employees to help address timeliness issues in processing veterans' appeals.

Health care

For FY 1997, the President is requesting \$17.008 billion for the delivery of health care to our nation's veterans. This represents an increase of \$444 million over the FY 1996 level and will result in a projected loss of the equivalent of 5,154 employees from the FY 1996 level.

Continuing the pattern established over decades, small budget increases do not maintain the health care delivery system at previous year's level because of the increased cost of providing health care. While the Medical Care portion of the overall Medical Program's budget will increase by \$444 million, 72% (\$321 million) will fund a payroll increase for medical staff and \$213 million is budgeted to cover the cost for inflation and changes in other VA health care related costs. Thus, to make up the difference, staffing is reduced by 5,154 employees under the President's request and projected savings of nearly \$88 million due to program changes in the delivery of health care.

This budget request is based, in part, on certain innovative management improvements which began in FY 1996. These improvements should continue to have a positive impact through reduced costs due to efficiencies which should result in positive program improvements. Taken together, these management initiatives are projected to result in savings due to: decentralization which will reduce administrative layers, reduction in the number of personnel by reducing layers of management, consolidation and realignment of medical center services, integration of services and administrative functions, increased utilization of available community services, and cost savings due to the shift from inpatient to ambulatory care.

In part, this budget reflects the current political debate in Washington over achieving a federal balanced budget by the year 2002. Many in Congress, in this administration, and in the press have professed the view that the VA budget has been untouchable while other federal departments and programs have felt significant cuts. The DAV's view is that the VA budget, particularly in health care, has been virtually straightlined in terms of real dollar increases for decades. This has resulted in VA's inability to fully meet veterans' health care needs. We believe VA must provide the full spectrum of programs and services necessary to meet the health care needs of disabled veterans. We support VA's administrative initiatives

to continue to provide high quality medical services to veterans in a continuing climate of fiscal restraint.

Other programs and services affected by the President's budget include:

An increase of \$944,000 to \$111.1 million for the Beneficiary Travel Program.

An increase to nearly \$976 million to enhance the quality of care provided to veterans through various educational and training programs.

Continued expansion of VA's geriatric and extended care programs to nearly \$104 million for much needed non-institutional long-term care initiatives such as Hospital-Based Home Care, Adult Day Health Care, Home Health Aide Services, and Community Residential Care.

VA programs to assist homeless veterans would increase by \$3 million to \$92.5 million.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder treatment programs would see an increase of \$2 million to \$61 million.

The Readjustment Counseling Service (Vet Centers) would receive a \$2.1 million increase to \$66 million.

The VA would continue expansion of sharing agreements to include VA/DoD sharing of resources.

In FY 1997, VA projects that 2.9 million individual veterans would choose VA as their health care provider. These veterans will account for one million hospital admissions and 29 million outpatient visits.

The proposed \$257 million medical and prosthetics research budget for FY 1997 represents no increase above the 1996 level and is projected to result in a reduction of 179 employees and 145 research projects.

Construction

VA's FY 1997 budget request of \$439 million is a significant drop from the 1996 budget request of \$742.9 million. However, it is a significant increase over the Congressional appropriation of \$326 million. A breakdown of the request is as follows:

Major construction projects—\$250 million, an increase of approximately \$114 million from FY 1996; and

Minor construction projects—\$189 million, a decrease of \$759,000 from FY 1996.

Of the total amounts requested by the Administration, \$363 million will be sued for VA medical programs. Key aspects of the construction budget request include:

\$74.7 million for replacement and modernization;

\$58.7 million for outpatient improvements;

\$52.9 million for patient environment;

\$53.2 million dedicated to the national cemetery program system;

\$11.5 million for VA regional office programs; and

\$9 million for nursing home care.

The construction budget request includes funds for a new medical center and nursing home in Brevard County, Florida and a replacement medical center for Travis, California.

VA legislative initiatives

The Administration's budget request proposes to make permanent several 1993 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) provisions, most of which would expire in 1998. Those and other cost-saving legislative items proposed in the budget would:

Provide a 2.8% increase in disability compensation and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), effective December 1, 1996.

Permanently round down disability compensation and DIC COLAs.

Permanently extend monthly pension limitations for the recipients of Medicaid-covered nursing home care.

Provide permanent authority to verify income data.

Amend Section 1151 of title 38 United States Code by limiting compensation benefits for additional disability or death sustained in receiving VA medical care to two situations: where VA was at fault in furnishing the care, or where a not reasonably foreseeable event occurred. This amendment would legislatively reverse the Supreme Court decision in *Gardner v. Brown*.

Amend Chapter 31 of title 38, U.S.C., to require a veteran's service-connected disability materially contributes to an employment handicap in order for the veteran to establish entitlement to a rehabilitation program under Chapter 31, thereby legislative overturning the Court of Veterans Appeals decision in *Davenport v. Brown*.

Permanently extend provisions in current law, due to expire on September 30, 1998 that:

- allows collection of a 3% fee for reuse of VA Loan Guaranty with less than a 5% down payment;
- allows inclusion in the “net value” calculation that amount of expected losses on resale or foreclosed properties with VA guaranteed loans;
- requires payment of a 0.75% funding fee on loans refinanced to obtain a lower interest rate;
- authorizes collections from insurance companies for certain health care provided by VA;
- authorizes income verification, for medical care purposes, through the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration; and
- authorizes the recovery of pharmacy and other copayments.

Provide a “gainsharing” provision whereby VA medical facilities would be allowed to retain a portion of the money VA collects from third parties—insurance carriers, copayments and other receipts—to further expand and improve the quality of health care VA delivers. Currently, all recoveries in excess of administrative expenses are returned to the Treasury. Under the “gainsharing” provision, once VA exceeds the goal established in legislation, additional collections will be shared—VA retains 25% of collections from Category A veterans and 100% from Category C veterans. This will result in an additional \$3.439 million in FY 1997.

Total savings from OBRA extenders and other legislative initiatives will be \$194.6 million in FY 1997 for a total seven-year savings of \$7.377 billion.

VA FISCAL YEAR 1997 APPROPRIATIONS—H.R. 3666

On June 26, 1996, the House of Representatives approved the Fiscal Year 1997 VA Appropriations bill (H.R. 3666). This measure will now go to the Senate for their consideration.

During the House debate on H.R. 3666, Congressmen Gerald Solomon (R-NY), Bob Stump (R-AZ) and G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery (D-MS) offered an amendment to increase spending on VA medical care by \$40 million and increased funding for the Veterans Benefits Administration by \$17 million. Their amendment was approved by voice vote.

Also, an amendment offered by Representative Todd Tiahrt (R-KS) added an additional \$40 million to VA, \$20 million for health care and \$20 million for research from the funding for AmeriCorps national service program. This also passed by voice vote.

An amendment offered by Representative W.G. “Bill” Hefner (D-NC) removed the travel restriction placed on Secretary Brown. This amendment passed by voice vote too.

Finally, Congressman Bernard Sanders (I-VT) offered an amendment to increase funding for the Court of Veterans Appeals by \$1.4 million. This amendment passed by a vote of 358 to 55.

Major provisions of H.R. 3666 as compared to the President’s budget request are:

	President’s request	House passed (H.R. 3666)
Medical care	17,008,000,000	17,008,000,000
Construction, major	250,000,000	245,000,000
Construction, minor	189,000,000	160,000,000
VBA	643,000,000	645,000,000
General	201,000,000	196,000,000
Administration credit reform	143,000,000	140,000,000
National Cemetery System	77,000,000	77,000,000
All Other	391,000,000	416,000,000
Total discretionary programs	18,901,000,000	18,946,000,000
Total entitlements	18,937,000,000	19,937,000,000
Total appropriations	38,838,000,000	38,883,000,000

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FY 1997—S. 1745

The Senate Committee on Armed Services has marked up its version of the FY 1997 Defense Authorization Act. Those items in the bill that could impact on VA are highlighted below.

No funds are authorized for cooperative VA/DoD research.

It directs DoD to establish a uniformed policy regarding retention of active duty members who are permanently not assignable worldwide for medical reasons. This would include those who have tested positive for the HIV virus.

It would delete several missing persons authorities enacted in the FY 1996 Defense Authorization Act. The bill would retain those provisions that pertain to unaccounted-for military personnel whose original status was prisoner of war or missing in action and not those classified as killed in action/body not recovered.

The bill language authorizes the President to award the Medal of Honor to seven African-American soldiers who served during World War II.

The bill language would provide a survivor annuity to surviving spouses of members of the uniformed services who died before March 21, 1940. Any such annuity would be reduced by the amount of DIC that the surviving spouse receives.

It would require DoD to provide a uniform software package for use by providers of health care under the TRICARE program and by military treatment facilities.

The bill language would enhance the third-party collection program of CHAMPUS to include collections from workers' compensation programs.

It would designate the Nellis Federal Hospital, Las Vegas, Nevada, as the Michael O'Callaghan Federal Hospital.

Report language recommends the establishment of a Center for Prisoner of War Studies under the auspices of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.

FY 1997 BUDGET—DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE

After a review of the President's proposed FY 1997 budget for the Department of Labor's (DOL's) Veterans Employment and Training Service, we must ask ourselves—"Is the glass half empty or half full?"

Two major concerns are the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) and the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project (HVRP), both of which are zeroed out in FY 1997.

The President's Fiscal Year 1997 budget request would increase the number of Disabled Veterans Outreach Programs (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) over FY 1996 employment levels. The budget request for FY 97 would fund 1,598 positions, an increase of 62 from the current level. However, in Fiscal Year 1995, there were 1,646 positions.

Section 4104, title 38 U.S.C., states that DoL shall provide enough money to fund 1,999 DVOP positions. While the FY 1997 budget request would fund more positions than currently funded, it still falls far short of the Congressional mandate.

The President's request in FY 1997 for LVERs is sufficient to staff 1,397 positions. There are 1,336 LVERs currently employed. In FY 1995, there were 1,431 LVERs.

However, Section 4103(a), title 38 U.S.C., requires that the DoL shall provide funds for 1,600 full-time LVER positions. The FY 1997 budget request falls short by 203 positions.

The funding request for Title IV-C of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) is \$7.3 million. This program is designed to fund local employment and training initiatives for veterans.

The President has requested \$2.8 million for transition services under the Transition Assistance Program (TAP). The FY 1996 appropriations are \$2 million.

CLEAR AND UNMISTAKABLE ERROR—H.R. 1483

This measure would allow veterans who have a claim for clear and unmistakable error in a prior, final decision of the Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) to reopen their cases and have their appeals decided on the merit of the issue of clear and unmistakable error. Currently, the Board has the authority to "reconsider" decisions; however, this authority is totally discretionary, and the Board determination, either to deny the veteran's motion for reconsideration or the denial on the merits of the veteran's claim, is not appealable to the Court of Veterans Appeals (Court) in those cases involving a final Board decision. This bill would require the Board to render written decisions on all claims alleging clear and unmistakable error and would allow the veteran to appeal that determination to the Court.

This legislation is extremely important because it allows those veterans who have been wrongfully denied benefits to have their claims properly considered by the Board and have adverse determinations reviewed by the Court of Veterans Appeals.

On April 17, 1996, the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Compensation, Pension, Insurance, and Memorial Affairs marked up H.R. 1483. It passed unanimously by voice vote. On May 8, 1996, the full Veterans' Affairs Committee marked up H.R. 1483 and the full House passed it on May 21.

We are currently working with Members of the Senate to introduce a companion bill. Two years ago a similar measure stalled in the Senate and the measure died at the end of that Congress. We are hopeful that we can move this legislation through the Senate this year.

HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY REFORM

On September 28, 1995, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee approved a VA health care eligibility reform provision allowing VA, within available appropriations, to furnish a full range of medical services, including preventive health care, to eligible veterans via an enrollment/registration system. While the number of veterans able to enroll would be limited by available funding, a priority system for enrollment is mandated with the highest priority going to veterans 30 percent or more disabled due to service-connected disability and the next priority covering 10 percent and 20 percent service-connected veterans and former POWs. A grandfather clause would preclude veterans from having their benefits reduced. Veterans exposed to environmental hazards such as Agent Orange would retain their treatment eligibility. This provision was included in the balanced budget bill that was later vetoed by the President. Its provisions were then reintroduced as H.R. 3118, discussed below.

H.R. 3118

This measure, introduced by Representative Bob Stump, Chairman, House Veterans' Affairs Committee for himself, Representatives "Sonny" Montgomery, Tim Hutchinson, and Chet Edwards, would reform eligibility for health care provided by the VA. H.R. 3118 would provide hospital care and medical services to any veteran with a compensable service-connected disability, former prisoners of war, those veterans exposed to a toxic substance, radiation, or environmental hazards, and any veteran unable to defray the expenses of necessary care, i.e., low-income veterans. It would require the Secretary to establish and operate a system of annual patient enrollment based on the following priorities:

1. Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 30% or greater;
2. Veterans who are former POWs and veterans with compensable service-connected disabilities rated less than 30%;
3. Veterans in receipt of increased pension based on need of regular aid and attendance or by reason of being permanently housebound and other veterans who are catastrophically disabled;
4. Veterans unable to defray the expenses of necessary care; and
5. All other veterans eligible for hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care under § 1710(a)(1) of title 38.

While H.R. 3118 does not contain all of the provisions of health care eligibility reform contained in S. 1563 and H.R. 3119, it is a good "first step." Therefore, the DAV supports H.R. 3118.

S. 1563

On February 7, 1996, Senators Alan Simpson, Chairman, Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, and John "Jay" Rockefeller, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, introduced legislation at the request of the DAV, AMVETS, PVA, and VFW. This measure includes our collective views regarding VA health care eligibility reform as contained in the *Independent Budget*. This bill would authorize the VA to provide a full continuum of care for Category A veterans, provide adequate funding through a combination of appropriations, third-party collections, and cost-sharing by certain higher income, non-service-connected veterans choosing to use the system.

Specifically, this measure would allow the VA Secretary to furnish, on an ambulatory or outpatient basis, such medical services as the Secretary determines are needed to any eligible veteran. Special rules regarding such ambulatory outpatient services would also apply to veterans exposed to ionizing radiation, Agent Orange, or toxic substances or environmental hazards during service in the Persian Gulf War.

Another important feature of this legislation is the medical care cost recovery provision, which would allow the VA to use a portion of the unobligated balance remaining in the Medical Care Cost Recovery Fund. The amounts available in this fund will be derived from the VA's reimbursement from third-party insurers for the cost of care provided to veterans for non-service-connected disabilities. These funds would be available to the Secretary for payment of the costs of providing hospital care and medical services and would be available without fiscal year limitations. The bill also would make VA health care facilities eligible to participate as a provider of services to Medicare eligible veterans, enabling the VA to receive reimbursement from Medicare for the cost of care provided.

Further, the VA's capacity to provide specialized treatment and rehabilitation needs to disabled veterans will be maintained. The Secretary would also have the authority to furnish primary health care services or preventive health care service at non-VA facilities to veterans located more than 50 miles or one hour traveling time from VA facilities.

H.R. 3119

This measure, introduced by Representative "Sonny" Montgomery, would revise and improve the eligibility for medical care and services under title 38, United States Code. This is a companion bill to S. 1563 and is, therefore, supported by DAV.

If the VA is to remain a viable health care provider for sick and disabled veterans, the VA must be able to provide quality and timely health care services in a cost-effective and efficient manner. These measures, S. 1563 and H.R. 3119, will help to ensure that the VA can continue its mission to provide adequate health care and medical services to America's veterans.

H.R. 3117

This measure, introduced by Representative "Sonny" Montgomery is intended to enable the VA to receive Medicare payments for operating health plans that would serve Medicare-eligible, nonservice-connected veterans who cannot now gain access to VA health care. H.R. 3117 provides for Medicare payments to VA for higher-income, non service-connected, Medicare-eligible veterans who are largely shut out of the VA system today, provided VA enrolls such veterans in VA managed-care plans.

CONCURRENT RECEIPT LEGISLATION—H.R. 65 AND H.R. 303

These measures would provide for the concurrent receipt of military longevity retired pay and VA disability compensation. Under present law, a military retiree must offset his or her military longevity retired pay by the amount of VA disability compensation received. In essence, the military retiree, who served 20 or more years and who earned retired pay under criteria totally different than the criteria for disability compensation, must finance their disability compensation from their retired pay. Since the criteria for earning retired longevity pay and VA disability compensation are completely distinct from each other, it is inherently unfair that these veterans cannot receive military longevity retired pay and VA disability compensation concurrently.

The DAV has a long-standing resolution supporting the concurrent receipt of military longevity retired pay and VA disability compensation. Your support of this legislation is greatly appreciated.

Representative Michael Bilirakis (R-FL) recently attempted to introduce two amendments to the Defense Authorization bill for FY 1997 that would provide for the concurrent receipt of military longevity retired pay and VA disability compensation for certain severely disabled veterans. Unfortunately, the House Rules Committee would not permit these amendments to be introduced at that time. According to Representative Bilirakis' office, he is currently searching for another bill to attach these amendments to or he will attempt to introduce them as free standing bills.

SERVICEMEN'S GROUP LIFE INSURANCE (SGLI) AND VETERANS' GROUP LIFE INSURANCE (VGLI)—H.R. 2843

This bill's major provisions allow the Secretary to terminate coverage when premiums are not paid within 60 days; set the automatic coverage at \$200,000; change the name of the program to Service members' Group Life Insurance; merge the Retired Reserve Service Members' Group Life Insurance Program and automatically convert retired reservists' policies to VGLI; and liberalize the rules concerning renewal and conversion to commercial policies.

This measure was passed by the House on May 21, 1996, and is currently under consideration in the Senate. Most of these provisions are contained in S. 996 which is pending in the Senate.

H.R. 3674

This legislation would increase the one-time maximum automobile allowance from \$5,500 to \$6,500; provide up to two years of accrued benefits to survivors of veterans who died while their cases were being adjudicated; pay disability compensation benefits through the day of death of the veteran; authorize pro bono legal assistance program for financially needy veterans in proceedings before COVA; clarify the causal relationship required between a veteran's service-connected disability and

employment handicap for purposes of determining eligibility for training and rehabilitation assistance; and increase the Montgomery GI bill \$5.00 per month.

This measure was passed by the House Veterans' Affairs Committee on June 20, 1996.

H.R. 3673

This legislation would add bronchiolo-aveolar carcinoma to the list of illnesses presumed to be service-connected for veterans exposed to ionizing radiation; add a presumption of permanent and total disability for veterans over 65 years of age if they reside in a nursing home; allow the Veterans Benefits Administration under a pilot program to contract with private physicians for compensation and pension physical examinations; eliminate VA's clothing allowance for incarcerated veterans; authorize the American Battle Monuments Commission to assume responsibility for some overseas memorials and accept private funds for their maintenance; extend the time for submission of the final report from the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission to December 31, 1996, and provide an additional \$150,000 in funding; allow opportunity to pursue educational programs through open circuit TV; permit payment of education benefits for flight training to certain veterans; allow veterans training under cooperative training programs to be paid full-time educational benefits; extend the authority of VA, for an additional year, to guarantee the real estate mortgage investment conduits used to market vendor loans; extend the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project through FY 1999 and authorize appropriations in the amount of \$10 million; and expand eligibility for burial benefits to include certain veterans who die in state nursing homes.

This measure was favorably reported out of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee on June 20, 1996.

TAX-EXEMPT STATUS FOR VETERANS' BENEFITS—S. 297 AND H.R. 972

These measures would clarify that VA benefits are tax-exempt. As you may recall, this legislation was passed during the 102nd Congress, but the measure was vetoed by President Bush because of other provisions contained in the bill. DAV continues to pursue the enactment of this measure and requests your support of our efforts in this regard.

THE VETERANS' HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS AND EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS BENEFITS ACT OF 1995—H.R. 2289

On December 13, 1995, the House, by voice vote, passed H.R. 2289. This measure would:

- Extend several VA home loan and housing programs including negotiated interest rates, energy efficient mortgages, and housing assistance for homeless veterans;

- Reduce VA reporting requirements;

- Streamline the operations of the veterans' employment and training service; and

- Clarify many of the provisions of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

This measure is pending action in the Senate and was one of the measures discussed at the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee hearing on May 23.

VA CONSTRUCTION

H.R. 2814

The House Veterans' Affairs Committee approved by voice vote H.R. 2814. This measure would have authorized 13 major medical construction projects for fiscal year 1996. The bill authorized \$279 million in new construction spending, including three projects totaling \$78 million that were funded under the fiscal year 1996 VA appropriations bill that was vetoed by the President. This bill did not come up for a vote by the full House. Many of the provisions of H.R. 2814 were incorporated in H.R. 3376.

H.R. 3376

On June 4, 1996, the House of Representative, by voice vote, passed H.R. 3376 that would authorize \$434 million for construction at 27 VA hospitals around the country. The measure would also name the VA hospital in Jacksonville, Mississippi after retiring Representative G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery (D-MS), another facility in Johnson City, Tennessee after retiring Representative James H. Quillen (R-TN),

and a third facility in Aspinwall, Pennsylvania will be named after former Senator John Heinz (R- PA).

Other provisions of the bill include:

- \$13.5 million for an ambulatory care facility in Brockton, Massachusetts;
 - \$25 million for outpatient improvements in Shreveport, Louisiana;
 - \$19.9 million for an ambulatory care project in Dallas, Texas;
 - \$21.1 million for an ambulatory care project in Lyons, New Jersey;
 - \$12.7 million for an ambulatory care project in Tomah, Wisconsin;
 - \$9.5 million for environmental improvements for renovation of nursing units at Lebanon, Pennsylvania;
 - \$11.5 million for environmental improvements at Marion, Illinois;
 - \$28.2 million for environmental improvements at VA Medical Center in Atlanta, Georgia;
 - \$22.9 million for environmental improvements at VA Medical Center psychiatric building in Battle Creek, Michigan;
 - \$7.7 million for environmental improvements at VA Medical Center in Omaha, Nebraska;
 - \$17.4 million for environmental improvements at VA Medical Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania;
 - \$26 million for environmental improvements at VA Medical Center in Waco, Texas;
 - \$15.1 million for renovation of psychiatric wards at Perry Point, Maryland;
 - \$17.3 million for replacement of three psychiatric buildings at Marion, Indiana;
 - \$17.2 million for environmental enhancements at Salisbury, North Carolina;
- The Secretary may also carry out seismic corrections at the following:
- VA Medical Center in Palo Alto, California in the amount of \$36 million;
 - VA Medical Center in Long Beach, California in the amount of \$20.2 million;
 - VA Medical Center in San Francisco, California in the amount of \$26 million.
- \$28.8 million for an ambulatory care unit in Asheville, North Carolina;
 - \$9.8 million for an ambulatory care unit in Temple, Texas;
 - \$35.5 million for an ambulatory care unit in Tucson, Arizona; and
- The Secretary may also enter into leases for medical facilities at the following:
- Satellite outpatient clinic in Allentown, Pennsylvania;
 - Satellite outpatient clinic in Beaumont, Texas;
 - Satellite outpatient clinic in Boston, Massachusetts;
 - Parking facility in Cleveland, Ohio;
 - Satellite outpatient clinic and VBA field office in San Antonio, Texas; and
 - Satellite outpatient clinic in Toledo, Ohio.

Finally, the Secretary is required to submit a report on the health care needs of veterans in east central Florida. He may also obligate funds for the design work for the conversion of the former Orlando Naval Training Center Hospital in Orlando, Florida. The Secretary is also required to submit a report, no later than January 31 of each year, on the long-range health planning of the VA.

RECONCILIATION

Initially, the FY 1996 reconciliation target for the Department of Veterans Affairs was \$6.4 billion over a seven-year period. Essentially, this deficit reduction target was met by extending certain provisions in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, including recovery from health insurers for nonservice-connected health care, prescription copayments, increased home loan fees and foreclosure procedures, and the rounding down of COLAs. Additionally, both the House and Senate agreed to repeal the provisions of the *Gardner* decision which allowed a veteran to prevail on an 1151 claim (the equivalent of medical malpractice) without a showing that the VA was at fault in causing the additional disability. However, the Senate and House were unable to agree on provisions relating to the Montgomery G.I. Bill. The House wanted to increase the prescription copayment fee to \$3, while the Senate wants to limit to one-half the cost-of-living allowance adjustment for the G.I. Bill and increase the contribution amount of the military member.

On November 1, 1995, the Veterans' Affairs Committee was notified that their reconciliation target was increased to \$6.7 billion over the next seven years. No determination was made as to where the additional \$300 million dollar cuts would come from.

No action was taken on reconciliation during FY 1996 as it was vetoed by the President and Congress was unable to override the veto or make sufficient changes to the bill to allow for its passage.

The Fiscal Year 1997 VA budget adopted by Congress on June 7, 1996 sets the savings (reconciliation) required by VA over the next six years at \$5.1 billion. This is \$1.3 billion below last year's recommendation.

VETERANS INTEGRATED SERVICE NETWORKS (VISNS)

The Veterans' Health Administration (VHA) is progressing in efforts to achieve a major overhaul of how VA delivers health care in the future. The new field elements of VHA are referred to as Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs).

The goal of VISNs is simply to improve veterans' access to VA health care services and provide an increased degree of quality, timeliness and efficiency of care provided to veterans.

There will be 22 VISNs, each consisting of between 5 and 12 medical centers. Each VISN will have an overall director whose job will be to ensure the integration and coordination of all VA health care services so that the maximum number of veterans may be provided quality medical care.

Recently, Senator Simpson introduced, at the request of the VA, S. 1748, which would facilitate the reorganization of the headquarters of the Veterans' Health Administration (VHA) by authorizing a VHA reorganization notwithstanding the notice and wait provisions of section 510 of title 38, United States Code. The draft bill also proposes the elimination of the statutory requirement that VHA have a centralized medical service, dental service, podiatric service, optometric service, and nursing service, and would eliminate the requirement that the associate deputy Undersecretary for Health be a doctor of medicine.

AGENT ORANGE, IONIZING RADIATION, ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS, AND OTHER MEASURES—H.R. 3463

This bill was favorably reported out of Committee and would extend priority health care for veterans exposed to Agent Orange and Persian Gulf veterans to December 31, 1998; make permanent priority health care for radiation-exposed veterans; create a committee on care of severely chronically mentally ill veterans and centers for mental illness research, education, and clinical activities; authorize the VA to appropriate from its research funds moneys to support research, education and training activities of centers in the amount of \$3.13 million for FY 1998 and \$6.25 million for FY 1999–2001; extend priority health care for veterans who served in Israel or Turkey during the Persian Gulf War; and improve health care for women veterans.

Agent Orange

On May 28, 1996, President Clinton announced that Vietnam veterans disabled by prostate cancer or acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy will be entitled to disability compensation based on their presumed exposure to Agent Orange. The President also announced that the VA will be proposing legislation that would provide appropriate remedy for children of Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange who suffer from a birth defect of the spine called spina bifida.

In March, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) issued a report indicating that NAS found that there is new limited or suggestive evidence to show an association with prostate cancer, acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy (a neurological disorder) in Vietnam veterans, and spina bifida (a congenital abnormality) in their children.

The VA will be developing a regulation as quickly as possible so that it can begin compensating Vietnam veterans currently disabled from acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy, if manifested within one year of herbicide exposure, and those with prostate cancer.

VA estimates that potentially up to 3,000 children of Vietnam veterans may be afflicted with spina bifida. It is unclear how the VA will handle this situation.

Ionizing Radiation

The Subcommittee on Compensation, Pension, Insurance, and Memorial Affairs held an oversight hearing on April 30, 1996, to discuss the controversy surrounding access to VA medical treatment and VA disability compensation for veterans exposed to ionizing radiation. We noted in our testimony that, due to the belief of many atomic veterans that they are not receiving adequate health care for their illnesses due to radiation exposure, Congressional oversight in the area of access to health care was needed. Additionally, we indicated that Atomic veterans also felt that the physicians whom they saw for care and treatment did not have sufficient

expertise in the harmful effects and residuals caused by exposure to ionizing radiation.

It was the DAV's position that, as far as disability compensation was concerned, remedial legislation passed in the 1980s was a total failure. DAV pointed out that very few veterans or their survivors benefited from these laws. DAV called upon Congress to add all "radiogenic diseases" and any other illnesses, diseases, or disability for which others are compensated for by the federal government as a result of exposure to ionizing radiation to the list of diseases presumed to be service-connected. America's Atomic veterans should receive a rebuttable presumption for all such diseases, illnesses, or disabilities.

Persian Gulf War Veterans

Congress continues to hold oversight hearings on the controversy surrounding "Persian Gulf Syndrome." Reportedly, nine government agencies and departments are researching this issue. To date, nothing has been resolved, and the brave men and women who served in the Persian Gulf continue to suffer from unexplained ailments.

In May 1996, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, at the request of Senator Jay Rockefeller, Ranking Minority Member of the Committee, held a Gulf War Illnesses "briefing." Attending the briefing to answer questions regarding the government's handling of Persian Gulf veterans' complaints were officials from the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs. Also attending the briefing was a private physician and a professor of pharmacology at Duke University who has conducted research on the possible effects of the nerve gas pills, insect repellents, and insecticides given to U.S. military personnel during the Persian Gulf War.

Senator Rockefeller admonished the Department of Defense (DoD) for their handling of the issue of Persian Gulf illnesses. Senator Rockefeller also criticized DoD for its handling of other issues over the years beginning with Mustard Gas during World War I, ionizing radiation during and after World War II, and Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. He stated that this demonstrated a "track record" in DoD's failure to acknowledge that problems existed with these various issues. Senator Rockefeller also refused to accept statements made by both VA and DoD that the symptoms experienced by Persian Gulf veterans were no different than those symptoms experienced by the general public. Both DoD and VA reported that, while no single etiology could be found for the illnesses suffered by Persian Gulf veterans, research was continuing. It was Senator Rockefeller's belief that our government was not moving quickly enough on this issue. It was also his belief that all resources of our government should be directed to finding answers to these puzzling illnesses affecting Persian Gulf veterans.

On the other hand, Senator Simpson indicated that he was not willing to do anything at this time on this issue, since nine departments and agencies of our government were studying and researching this issue.

S. 995

S. 995 would restrict payment of clothing allowance, in the case of incarcerated veterans, otherwise payable to eligible veterans. This measure would also create a presumption of permanent and total disability for pension payments for veterans over age 65 who are patients in a nursing home.

S. 281

This measure proposes to change the date of the beginning of the Vietnam Era for purposes of VA benefits from August 5, 1964, to December 22, 1961.

S. 749

This measure proposes to revise the authority relating to the Center for Minority Veterans and the Center for Women Veterans and to extend the termination date of the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans from December 31, 1997 to December 31, 1999.

S. 1342

This measure would authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make direct loans to refinance loans made to veterans under the Native American Veteran Housing Loan Pilot Program.

S. 993

This measure, introduced at the request of the VA, would provide for cost savings in the Home Loan Program for veterans, including the repeal of the loan debt collection restrictions, section 3726 of title 38; an increase in the manufactured home loan down payment and fee; extension of the loan fee increase; extension of the fee for multiple use of loan entitlements; and the extension of the no-bid formula; and it would limit the cost of living increases for Montgomery GI Bill benefits.

DAV is concerned that by repealing 38 U.S.C. § 3726, we could be opening “Pandora’s Box” in that veterans, who had loans assumed prior to the change in law affecting loan assumptions, could now be held liable for those loans. These veterans, through no fault of their own, would be legally responsible for those defaulted loans. DAV, therefore, opposes the repeal of § 3726.

This measure would provide savings of approximately \$304 million in FY 1999 and an additional \$295 million in FY 2000. The DAV firmly believes that these savings should be used to correct inequities in the VA that currently exist in the law. While we are cognizant of the importance of reducing the deficit, we believe that these funds would be better put to use within the VA system.

The DAV does not support limiting the cost-of-living adjustment for Montgomery GI Bill benefits. We see no reason to single out the Montgomery GI Bill recipients for reduction in their cost-of-living adjustment. DAV has consistently stated that we would forego a COLA if all federal programs received similar across-the-board COLA cuts, in a fair and equitable manner.

S. 994

This measure was introduced at the request of the VA and would clarify the eligibility of certain minor children for burial in national cemeteries.

S. 1752

This measure, also introduced at the request of VA, would exempt full-time registered nurses, physician’s assistants and expanded-function dental auxiliary from restrictions on remunerated outside professional activities.

S. 1711

Senator Bob Dole introduced S. 1711 on April 29, 1996, the purpose of which is “To establish a commission to evaluate the programs of the federal government that assist members of the armed forces and veterans in readjusting to civilian life and for other purposes.”

DAV supports the intent of S. 1711 and has made some suggestions to change some of its provisions so as to better serve veterans.

H.R. 3458

This measure would increase, effective December 1, 1996, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans. The rate of increase would follow Social Security Administration figures (predicted to be about 2.8%). The amount will be rounded down to the next lower dollar amount for all compensation and DIC benefits when the amount is not a whole dollar amount. This measure passed the full committee on June 20, 1996, and will be voted on by the full House in the near future. The Senate Veterans Affairs Committee will be marking up similar legislation on June 25, 1996.

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

On June 6, 1996, the Senate again defeated the constitutional amendment to balance the budget. The vote was 64–35—two votes short of the needed two-thirds vote.

* * * * *

This completes the annual report of the National Legislative Department

As evidenced by this report, the past year has been anything but routine. We’ve experienced a protracted federal budget battle, government shutdowns, and continued threats that the worst is yet to come for veterans, their dependents and survivors who depend upon the VA for benefits and services. United we can weather this “storm.” In the past, the Legislative Department has relied heavily upon the grassroots efforts of DAV and DAVA members and families and each time you have answered the call. I would again like to acknowledge the support of all those associated with DAV legislative grassroots actions. The men and women of the DAV and DAVA have been instrumental in making DAV’s position known to our elected offi-

cials. It is this unhesitant and unselfish support and involvement of the membership of this great organization that continues our leadership role in veterans' affairs. Always be mindful of the fact that the American public continues to support veterans and programs and services designed to provide for the well being of the defenders of America's freedoms. Make sure that you continue to remind our elected representatives in Congress and the President of this important fact.

[Report closed June 27, 1996.]

Commander McMASTERS. At this time, I'll call on Mr. Tanner so we can correct that technical problem we had with the adoption of the Rules. Mike 3. Will you please restate your motion to adopt the Convention Rules as amended.

Mr. JAMES H. TANNER. Okay. I made the original motion to adopt the Rules. I'd like to adopt the Rules as amended. James Tanner, Joseph R. Harold Chapter 10, Massachusetts.

Commander McMASTERS. Do we have support for that? Mike 1.

Mr. SALVATORE LO SAURO. Sal Lo Sauro, Chapter 15, New Jersey, seconds.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you. We have the motion and support to adopt the Rules as amended. Are you ready for the question? Ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. That's carried.

At this time, I'd like to call on Commander Bob Quattlebaum, Department of Louisiana, and Mr. Ed Figueron, Convention Committee member for a presentation.

Mr. ROBERT QUATTLEBAUM. Commander McMasters, you should know by now, beware of things in plain brown paper, and you're about to receive it. On behalf of the Department of Louisiana and its members, we would like for you to accept this small gift that was furnished by Eddy's Painting for putting up with us for the last year and the help you gave us during the year. Thank you.

[Applause]. [Cries of, "Can't hear you."]

Mr. QUATTLEBAUM. I don't know what I said, so I can't repeat it.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you, Bob, very much. It's a nice swamp scene painted over the State of Louisiana for those of you that can't see it.

At this time, I'm going to call on the General Resolutions and Membership Committee chairman, John McCullough for the report.

Mr. JOHN F. MCCULLOUGH. Commander McMasters, delegates: The National Convention Committee on General Resolutions and Membership was called to order at its first business session on July 29th, 1996 by the committee advisors, Rick Surratt and Jerry Steelman. The first order of business was to elect a chairman of the convention committee. John McCullough was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed, and John McCullough was selected chairman.

The next order of business was the nomination and election of a secretary. Kenneth Grunwald was nominated and elected as the secretary of the committee.

The committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted, and I will now report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption by this National Convention. For the purpose of time-saving, I will read only the number and the RESOLVED portions of the resolutions.

Resolution Number 80. Seeking the immediate release of any Americans who may still be held captive following World War II,

the Korean War, the Vietnam War and return of the remains of any Americans who died during these wars.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 7, Omaha Beach, urges the U.S. Government to ensure that the POW/MIA issue be considered as one of America's highest priorities, accelerating efforts to obtain the release of any American who still may be held captive and obtain the fullest possible accounting of those still missing, and the repatriation of the remains of those who died while serving our nation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clinton Administration is urged to follow up at the policy level to ensure that the pledges made by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam are fulfilled, and that in the absence of fulfillment of these pledges, the Disabled American Veterans is opposed to further economic and political steps to improve bilateral relations between the United States and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans call on Congress to oppose further steps on this same issue.

Resolution Number 248. Opposing any legislation to erode the provisions of Missing Service Personnel Act of 1996.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28 through August 1st, 1996, oppose legislation to amend the procedures for determining the whereabouts and status of missing persons ensuring access to government information concerning the whereabouts and status of missing military personnel and safeguarding the rights of those missing personnel and their family members as contained in the Missing Service Personnel Act of 1996. Resolution Number 249. Supporting strong national defense.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28th through August 1st, 1996, go on record urging Congress to provide adequate funds for the defense of our nation, both at home and abroad.

Resolution Number 69. Restore meaningful memorial service to Veterans' Day.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the DAV Department of Connecticut meeting in the 75th Annual Convention, June 7th through 9th, 1996, go on record urging all veterans organizations to unite together and make this brief period on Veterans' Day a special and symbolic expression of our gratitude. We should also ask our town leaders and state officials to restore that minute of silence and yes, perhaps, the ringing of church bells could bring back the old but most fitting honor. With the acceptance of said resolution, the convention shall then instruct DAV Department of Connecticut adjutant to forward resolution for placement on the agenda for General Resolutions, National Security, Americanism and Membership Committee at the National Convention July 27th through August 1st, 1996 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Resolution Number 75, as amended by committee. Resolution to support a POW/MIA commemorative stamp.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Disabled American Veterans Department of Florida, Disabled American Veterans, being regularly convened at state convention and meeting on the 8th day of June in the Year of Our Lord, 1996, at the Hilton Hotel in Altamonte Springs, Florida, do hereby implore the Postmaster General of the United States of America to continue the issuing of a commemorative stamp so that all those who purchase postage stamps will never have the opportunity to forget our POW/MIAs;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we, the Department of Florida Disabled American Veterans, do also implore the national leadership of the Disabled American Veterans to endorse this resolution and likewise petition the Postmaster General of the United States.

Resolution Number 252. Condemnation of the public desecration of the flag of the United States.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28th through August 1st, 1996, shall go on record as condemning any individual or group who shall at any time publicly and wilfully desecrate the flag of the United States.

Resolution Number 250. In support of the appointment of member of the Veterans Bar as associate judge of the United States Court of Appeals.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28th through August 1st, 1996, urge President Clinton to nominate the next judge of the Court of Veterans Appeals from among those qualified and distinguished groups of veteran practitioners.

Resolution Number 251. To encourage all disabled veterans to become registered voters.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28th through August 1st, 1996, encourage 100 percent of our members to become registered to vote, and thereby strengthen our organization's ability to preserve and improve our system of veterans' benefits and services.

The next resolution has no number. It's a committee resolution. Appreciation to New Orleans Hilton Riverside for the success of the 75th National Convention.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28th through August 1st, 1996, express its sincere gratitude to the New Orleans Hilton Riverside and all its employees for their exceptional assistance in making the convention a tremendous success.

Another committee resolution. Appreciation to all who are responsible for the success of the 75th National Convention.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28th through August 1st, express its sincere appreciation to all groups and/or agencies whose dedication to our principles has made our convention successful; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we wish to extend to the citizens of New Orleans, Louisiana our deepest gratitude for their personal interest in our great organization; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we wish to extend our appreciation to all the distinguished guests who participated in our convention and support the ideals and principles of our great organization;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we extend our gratitude to the convention chairman, Paul Benoit, and his entire committee for providing personalized assistance to our friends and delegates during our convention stay.

Another committee resolution. Extend appreciation to the VA Medical Center in New Orleans, Louisiana, for the success of the 75th National Convention.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28th through August 1st, 1996, express its sincere appreciation to the VA Medical Center in New Orleans, Louisiana, whose dedication to the care and treatment of the delegates to this 75th National Convention has made our convention a successful one.

The following is a committee resolution, which I will read in its entirety. Appreciation to National Commander McMasters.

Whereas, Thomas A. McMasters, III has devoted himself to the cause of our nation's service-connected wartime disabled veterans and their families; and

Whereas, he has served the Disabled American Veterans in an exemplary fashion, rising to our organization's highest elected office, national commander; and

Whereas, during his tenure as national commander, public support for veterans' programs has remained strong; and

Whereas, under his leadership, DAV maintained a strength of more than one million members; and

Whereas, Commander McMasters has continued our commitment to service with continued recruitment and training new national service officers and with an updated, improved and enhanced structure and continued training for national service officers; and

Whereas, under his guidance, DAV has undertaken a new initiative to strengthen its management through management and leadership training for current and potential managers; and

Whereas, under his guidance, DAV has remained a vanguard in the constant fight to protect and maintain veterans' earned benefits and defeat of legislation which would have terminated compensation to certain mentally incompetent veterans; and

Whereas, during his term, DAV donated 141 vans to the DAV Transportation Network and secured a gift of 11 additional vans from the Ford Motor Company to transport veterans to and from VA medical facilities for the much-needed health care; and

Whereas, Commander McMasters traveled both home and abroad countless miles to advance the cause of disabled veterans; and

Whereas, Commander McMasters obtained respect and admiration throughout the veterans' community as an effective spokesman for the nation's service-connected wartime disabled veterans and their families;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28th through August 1st, recognizes the very special contributions of Thomas A. McMasters, III as DAV's national commander—

[Applause.]

One moment, please. I'm not finished. Please let me finish. I know I'm slow, but let me finish.

[continuing], and expresses our membership's appreciation to him and his invaluable services to the organization and disabled veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we also extend our sincere appreciation and thanks to Commander McMaster's wife, Sandra McMasters, and his entire family for their support and sacrifices during his year as national commander. Now you can get noisy. (Applause)

Commander, I would like to thank the advisors to the committee and the members of the committee for their work during these hours of deliberation. And I now move for the adoption of the report of the General Resolutions Committee.

[The above-mentioned resolutions follow.]

RESOLUTION NO. 069—ADMINISTRATIVE

TO RESTORE MEANINGFUL MEMORIAL SERVICE TO VETERANS' DAY

WHEREAS, with the change of name from Armistice Day to Veterans' Day, meaningful memorial service on November 11th seems to have been lost, and steps should be taken to restore intent; and

WHEREAS, when November 11th was celebrated as Armistice day, a solemn remembrance at 11th hour on 11th day of 11th month for all veterans was observed by citizens with a "minute of silence" and church bells; and

WHEREAS, if we do not continue the tradition of remembering our departed comrades, future generations will not remember us; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28-August 1, 1996, goes on record urging all veterans' organizations to unite together to make this brief period on Veterans' Day a special and symbolic expression of our gratitude and urging that our leaders and state officials restore that "minute of silence" and other fitting honors such as the ringing of church bells.

RESOLUTION NO. 075—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING CONTINUATION OF THE POW-MIA COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

WHEREAS, the United States Postal Service, on May 29, 1995, issued a commemorative stamp on the face of which appears the statement, "P.O.W.—M.I.A. NEVER FORGOTTEN"; and

WHEREAS, this stamp will only be issued for one year or until the current supply is exhausted, whichever occurs first; and

WHEREAS, it is inconsistent with the principle that our prisoners of war and missing in action should "never" be forgotten to issue this stamp for such a temporary and short period; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28-August 1, 1996, urges the continuing issue of the POW-MIA commemorative stamp to help assure that our prisoners of war and missing in action are not forgotten.

RESOLUTION NO. 080—LEGISLATIVE

SEEKING THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF ANY AMERICANS WHO MAY STILL BE HELD CAPTIVE FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II, THE KOREAN WAR AND VIETNAM WAR AND THE RETURN OF THE REMAINS OF ANY AMERICANS WHO DIED DURING THESE WARS

WHEREAS, the members of the Disabled American Veterans are deeply concerned for the thousands of American servicemen still unaccounted for in the aftermath of World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, there are still today more than 78,000 unaccounted for following World War II, some 8,000 from the Korean War and over 2,100 in Southeast Asia from the Vietnam War who have not been forgotten; and

WHEREAS, numerous efforts by high level American delegations including members of Congress have visited Southeast Asia in continuing efforts to solve the mystery of the whereabouts and fate of these brave men without success; and

WHEREAS, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam made commitments to the March 1996 Presidential Delegation on POW/MIA to renew and increase their unilateral, as well as joint efforts to account for America's POW/MIAs' and

WHEREAS, the brave families of missing Americans continue to live in uncertainty and anguish regarding their missing sons and husbands; and

WHEREAS, the Clinton Administration has repeatedly stated that accounting as fully as possible for all Americans still missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War is the highest priority of U.S. bilateral relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28-August 1, 1996, urges the U.S. government to ensure that the POW/MIA issue be considered as one of America's highest priorities, accelerating efforts to obtain the release of any American who still may be held captive and obtain the fullest possible accounting of those still missing and the repatriation of the remains of those who died while serving our nation; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clinton Administration is urged to follow-up at the policy level to ensure that the pledges made by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam are fulfilled; and that in the absence of fulfillment of these pledges, the Disabled American Veterans is opposed to further economic and political steps to improve bilateral relations between the United States and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans calls on Congress to oppose further steps on this same basis.

RESOLUTION NO. 248—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING ANY LEGISLATION TO ERODE THE PROVISIONS OF THE MISSING SERVICE PERSONNEL ACT OF 1996

WHEREAS, there are nearly 100,000 American Servicemen and women still unaccounted for in the aftermath of World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and Subsequent military engagements; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Disabled American Veterans are deeply concerned for those servicemen and women still unaccounted for from those wars and military engagements and for those who may be classified as missing-in-action in future wars or military engagements; and

WHEREAS, the families of the missing Americans must live in uncertainty and anguish regarding the fate of their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, there is a deterioration in the trust and credibility placed in some of the government officials involved in accounting for these missing Americans; and

WHEREAS, Congress passed the Missing Service Personnel Act of 1996 to provide guidelines for accounting for missing service personnel and for establishing procedures and safeguards to ensure that the next-of-kin of missing service personnel are kept informed; and

WHEREAS, some members of Congress continue to attempt to amend this new law to strike certain important provisions necessary to ensure a proper accounting of missing service personnel; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28-August 1, 1996, opposes legislation to amend the procedures for determining the whereabouts and status of missing persons, ensuring access to government information concerning the whereabouts and status of missing military personnel, and safeguarding the

rights of these missing personnel and their family members as contained in the Missing Service Personnel Act of 1996.

RESOLUTION NO. 249—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING A STRONG NATIONAL DEFENSE

WHEREAS, the United States military forces are responsible for the defense of this Nation and its interest abroad; and

WHEREAS, the United States has recently been called upon to intervene in various conflicts; and

WHEREAS, a strong national defense led to the defeat of Communism in Eastern Europe; and

WHEREAS, U.S. interests continue to be challenged throughout the world, requiring our military forces to be deployed in protection of world freedom; and

WHEREAS, we can never let our guard down; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28-August 1, 1996, goes on record urging Congress to provide adequate funds for the defense of our Nation both at home and abroad.

RESOLUTION NO. 250—LEGISLATIVE

IN SUPPORT OF THE APPOINTMENT OF A MEMBER OF THE VETERANS' BAR AS ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF VETERANS APPEALS

WHEREAS, the United States Court of Veterans Appeals (the Court) was established on November 18, 1988, for the sole purpose of providing judicial review of decisions on claims for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for millions of veterans, their dependents and survivors and active duty military personnel; and

WHEREAS, litigation before the Court is controlled by the VA, inasmuch as the VA and the military control the record upon which the case is decided, VA writes the regulations under which the claim is adjudicated, VA physicians evaluate the veteran's disability, VA employs the adjudicators and hearing officers who decide the claim, and VA convenes the Board of Veterans' Appeals that reviews the original department decision; and

WHEREAS, when the seven original judges were appointed in 1989 and 1990, no pool of qualified veterans' advocates existed from which potential judges could be selected, resulting in an original selection process which was comprised of a former VA General Counsel, a former Department of Justice official, and representatives from the Department of Defense, among other former government personnel; and

WHEREAS, the Court's bar has increased to more than 1,200 attorneys since 1989, with a number of these members specializing in veterans' law, and who have distinguished themselves in this area of practice and demonstrated their qualifications to serve on the Court; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28-August 1, 1996, urges President Clinton to nominate the next judge of the Court of Veterans Appeals from among this qualified and distinguished group of veterans' practitioners.

RESOLUTION NO. 251—LEGISLATIVE

TO ENCOURAGE ALL DISABLED VETERANS TO BECOME REGISTERED VOTERS

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans served their country during time of war in order to preserve the rights and privileges of life in this land of the free; and

WHEREAS, one of the most precious of these rights is the right to vote; and

WHEREAS, the failure of all disabled veterans to register and vote will result in diminution of their influence on their elected representatives, further resulting in a corresponding erosion of their VA benefits and services; and

WHEREAS, because of their disabilities, disabled veterans have more difficulty than their nondisabled peers in complying with some of the stricter requirements in voter registration laws; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28-August 1, 1996,

encourage 100 percent of our members to become registered to vote and thereby strengthen our organization's ability to preserve and improve our system of veterans' benefits and services.

RESOLUTION NO. 252—LEGISLATIVE

CONDEMNATION OF PUBLIC DESECRATION OF THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES

WHEREAS, the U.S. Supreme Court, by a 5-4 decision, has ruled that public desecration of the American Flag, as a form of free speech and expression, is legal and permissible; and

WHEREAS, the American Flag—"Old Glory"—is our National Ensign, the proud, courageous and beautiful symbol of our country's precious, free heritage; and

WHEREAS, this symbol, in the form of our irreplaceable "Stars and Stripes," has been carried and defended in battle, revered and cherished by its citizens and viewed as a beacon of hope and fulfillment by all the world since it was first unfurled at the birth of our Nation; and

WHEREAS, the Constitutional First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech was not intended by our Founding Fathers to enable individuals—who do enjoy unfettered freedom to express their views, no matter how abhorrent, in both oral and written form—to publicly and contemptuously desecrate our beloved flag; **NOW**

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, shall go on record as condemning any individual or group who shall at any time publicly and willfully desecrate the flag of the United States.

RESOLUTION NO. 276—ADMINISTRATIVE

APPRECIATION TO NATIONAL COMMANDER MCMASTERS

WHEREAS, Thomas A. McMasters, III, has devoted himself to the cause of our Nation's service-connected wartime disabled veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, he has served the Disabled American Veterans in an exemplary fashion, rising to our organization's highest elected office, National Commander; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure as National Commander, public support for veterans' programs has remained strong; and

WHEREAS, under his leadership DAV maintained its strength of more than one million members; and

WHEREAS, Commander McMasters has continued our commitment to service, with continued recruitment and training of new National Service Officers and with an updated, improved, and enhanced Structured and Continuing Training for National Service Officers; and

WHEREAS, under his guidance, DAV has undertaken a new initiative to strengthen its management through Management and Leadership Training for current and potential managers; and

WHEREAS, under his guidance DAV has remained a vanguard in the constant fight to protect and maintain veterans' earned benefits and defeated legislation which would have terminated compensation to certain mentally incompetent service-connected veterans; and

WHEREAS, during his term, DAV donated 141 vans to the DAV Transportation Network and secured a gift of 11 additional vans from Ford Motor Company to transport veterans to and from VA medical facilities for much needed health care; and

WHEREAS, Commander McMasters traveled, both home and abroad, countless miles to advance the cause of disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, Commander McMasters obtained respect and admiration throughout the veterans' community as an effective spokesman for this Nation's service-connected wartime disabled veterans and their families; **NOW**

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, recognizes the very special contributions of Thomas A. McMasters, III as DAV's National Commander and expresses our membership's appreciation to him for his invaluable services to the organization and disabled veterans; **AND**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we also extend our sincere appreciation and thanks to Commander McMasters' wife, Sandra McMasters, and his entire family for their support and sacrifices during his year as our National Commander.

RESOLUTION NO. 277—ADMINISTRATIVE

APPRECIATION TO ALL WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 75TH
NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the success for the 75th DAV National Convention convened in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, depends on the total cooperation and unselfish devotion of the State, county and local officials; and

WHEREAS, the success of this National Convention is also attributed to the Department and local Chapters and Units of the DAV and DAVA, particularly to Convention Chairman Paul Benoit; and

WHEREAS, we wish to commend all the news media for their encouragement and assistance at all of our Convention activities; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, expresses its sincere appreciation to all groups and/or agencies whose dedication to our principles has made our Convention a successful one; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we wish to extend to the citizens of New Orleans, Louisiana, our deepest gratitude for their personal interest in our great organization; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we wish to extend our appreciation to all of the distinguished guests who participated in our convention and support the ideals and principles of our great organization; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we extend our gratitude to the Convention Chairman, Paul Benoit, and his entire Committee for providing personalized assistance to our friends and delegates during our Convention stay.

RESOLUTION NO. 278—ADMINISTRATIVE

EXTEND APPRECIATION TO THE VA MEDICAL CENTER, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA, FOR
THE SUCCESS OF THE 75TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the success of the 75th National Convention convened in New Orleans, Louisiana, depended on the total cooperation and unselfish devotion of VA officials in Washington, D.C., and New Orleans, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, many delegates to our National Convention were in need of medical treatment and required the assistance of prosthetic equipment to attend the National Convention; and

WHEREAS, in response to this, the health care officials from the VA Medical Center, New Orleans, Louisiana, have staffed and maintained in the Convention hotel an excellent outpatient clinic and prosthetic service; and

WHEREAS, the medical care and prosthetic services rendered to the delegates to this 75th National Convention have been extended to a most compassionate manner and has been of the highest quality; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, expresses its sincere appreciation to the VA Medical Center, New Orleans, Louisiana, whose dedication to the care and treatment of the delegates to this 75th National Convention has made our Convention a successful one.

RESOLUTION NO. 279—ADMINISTRATIVE

APPRECIATION TO THE NEW ORLEANS HILTON RIVERSIDE FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE
75TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the assistance and cooperation of the New Orleans Hilton Riverside was essential to the success of the 75th DAV National Convention, convened in New Orleans, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the responsiveness of the hotel's employees to the requirements of the Convention was beyond compare, meriting the gratitude of the DAV's officers, delegates and staff; and

WHEREAS, the courtesy of the hotel staff to the delegates and guests at the Convention was superb throughout the entire course of the National Convention; and

WHEREAS, everyone associated with the hotel exhibited the highest degree of professionalism in all areas of their association with the National Convention; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, expresses its sincere gratitude to the New Orleans Hilton Riverside and all of its

employees for their exceptional assistance in making the convention a tremendous success.

Commander McMASTERS. Microphone 3. I recognize Microphone 3.

Mr. HERBERT A. PARKER. Point of information. My name is Herbert Parker. I'm commander, Chapter 81, North Miami Beach, Florida. There was a proposal, 076, that was passed, refused on the floor in this meeting. It was passed by the State of Florida, March on Washington. Let met elaborate very quickly. I'll not take too much of your time.

We have all heard, since we've been here, of the bashing that we have been taking for years, especially from 1965 on, and what was going on, and what they propose to do now. Our proposal was to obtain the coordination and cooperation of all the veterans organizations in the United States for a march on Washington, not this moment.

The reason for that is this: They said, "Well, you're going with an atom bomb when you should use an M1." That's wrong, because comes the end of this election, we can rest assured that a lot of things are going to happen that we wished that we had done something.

I'd like to explain one thing. I personally wrote 81 letters to members of Congress. Do you know how many answers I got? Three! My one state senator, my local congressman and Jesse Helms. Incidentally, he's a Navy veteran.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay, sir. Let me just do something first. I don't want to rule you out of order, because I can see definitely there's a lot of emotion in this.

Mr. PARKER. There is.

Commander McMASTERS. What I do need, though, is I do need a motion to accept the report and support for that, and then we can get into discussion, and then I will allow some remarks.

Mr. McCULLOUGH. I would like to discharge the committee also.

Commander McMASTERS. And a motion, yes, to discharge the committee. I have the motion. I need the support. Mike 1.

Mr. HAROLD WILEY. Harold Wiley, Department of Washington, Delegate 46, seconds it.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you. We have a motion and a support. We're ready for discussion. Mike 2.

Mr. GEORGE NICKOLAS. George Nickolas, Scott County Chapter 2, Iowa. Under national security, there were two resolutions that were rejected as indicated as duplicate. They are in no way duplicate. One dealing with the maintenance of the National Guard at the strength prior to Desert Storm, not as it has been emasculated under the current administration. And the second one deals with peace through strength also dealing with the maintenance of our defense service at a reasonable level.

They established a benchmark as opposed to a general statement of maintenance of strength. We are now in the muscle, not the fat of defense, and we're cutting deeper. The aspects of these things, I think, become a benchmark and not necessarily a duplicative effort.

And I would request that they be set aside from the motion and be voted on separately. I so move to amend the motion to pull these out and vote on them separately.

Commander McMASTERS. For Mike Number 2, do you know the numbers of those motions?

Mr. NICKOLAS. I sure do: 058 and 059, titled one, "Peace Through Strength," the second, "Maintenance"—and I think misnomer of the person that wrote this up. It says "current size." It is the size at the beginning of the Persian Gulf War.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. What I need you to do is to read the RESOLVED portion—oh, I'm sorry. The chairman will read that for you. He will read the RESOLVED portion. We will set those aside and consider the remainder of the report.

Mr. McCULLOUGH. Are we doing this with the motion or—

Commander McMASTERS. You're going to do it, but what we're going to do is set those particular resolutions aside, but we need you to read the RESOLVED portion of those particular resolutions.

Mr. McCULLOUGH. Resolution 58. National Defense, Subject, Peace Through Strength.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, adopt this resolution calling upon the President, the Secretary of Defense and the Congress to maintain a strong military and to increase the air and sea lift capabilities of our military service in order that America can respond to any demand for conventional military force in a short period of time; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be provided to the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, president of the U.S. Senate, chairmen of the House and Senate Ways and Means Committees, Armed Services Committees and the President of the United States.

MEMBER. Point of order. Mike 1. Shouldn't we be finishing up with the ones already accepted, finish that off and then go by one by one, because there is a motion on the floor and there's been a second?

Commander McMASTERS. No, sir. At this point, I'm not considering this to be out of order. We're setting up what's called a minority report.

MEMBER. Is this part of the total resolutions?

Commander McMASTERS. This will be part of normal procedure. What will happen is these particular resolutions will be set aside from consideration by the main motion. We will then consider the main motion and then consider the minority reports that we're setting up at this point.

MEMBER. Thank you.

Commander McMASTERS. Continue, John, please.

Mr. McCULLOUGH. Resolution 59. National Defense, Subject, To Maintain the Current Size of the Federal Reserve and National Guard.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans urge Congress to build and maintain the Federal Reserve and National Guard Units at the level in existence at the beginning of the Persian Gulf War, and to modernize them with the latest and best equipment, aircraft, artillery, missiles; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be provided to the President of the United States, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, president of the United States Senate, and chairmen of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees.

Now, do I read the original motion that we approved to make this comparison?

Commander McMASTERS. Not at this point.

I'm going to go back now to Mike 3, the gentleman from Florida. Would you continue along the same lines? What we're doing is basically setting up a minority report for consideration of that resolution separately from the motion that's on the floor at this point.

Mr. PARKER. I was going to have this request and also, as the others were considered as a motion, that this would be reconsidered also as a motion. Now, very quickly, let me say this—

Commander McMASTERS. No. What I want done now is give me the number. I will have the chairman read the *THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED* part of the resolution, for lack of a better way to describe it.

Mr. PARKER. 076.

Commander McMASTERS. 076. Okay, John, would you please read that portion that calls for action.

Mr. McCULLOUGH. Is this Resolution Number 76?

Commander McMASTERS. Yes.

Mr. McCULLOUGH.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that this convention go on record that it recommends to the National Disabled American Veterans to explore the possibility of organizing a march on Washington. Such a march should be coordinated with other concerned and interested veterans groups. Adopted at the Department of Florida State Convention, June 8, 1996.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. Thank you, John.

Now, what we're going to do is we're going to consider the main motion that was offered by John McCullough to adopt the report, and we're going to set aside those three resolutions that we've set up minority reports for and consider them separately after this. Are you ready for the questions?

Mr. NICKOLAS. Point of order. Your main motion indicates that the committee will be dismissed. If the committee is dismissed, I believe it would be out of order to consider the three that are set aside.

Commander McMASTERS. What's going to happen at that point is the committee is going to be dismissed. Your resolutions are going to then be considered by the convention floor. Okay?

Are we ready for the main motion? Ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. It's carried.

Now, I'm going to ask for discussion on Resolution 58. I'm going to ask for a report from one of the members of the committee to help us understand what the committee went through when they considered this particular resolution.

Mr. McCULLOUGH. At this time, I would defer to the advisors on the discussion we had regarding these resolutions at committee.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you and your committee for the work that you've done, John. [Applause.]

Mr. Surratt. Okay. As I understand it, Commander, you want an explanation of Resolution Number 58?

Commander McMASTERS. Number 58. We're going to discuss 58 at this point.

Mr. Surratt. I'm Rick Surratt, assistant national legislative director and an advisor to this committee. [Cries of "Can't hear you."]

Commander McMASTERS. You know, Rick, before we do this, I think what we'd better do is get a motion on the floor.

At this time, I'm going to entertain a motion to consider—Mike Number 2.

Mr. NICKOLAS. I move to adopt the Peace Through Strength, 058 resolution. George Nickolas, Scott County Chapter Number 2.

Commander McMASTERS. Is there support? Mike Number 3.

NEC 10th District LOWELL G. McKEEHAN. Lowell McKeehan, past department commander of Michigan, supports.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. We have a motion and support to adopt the Resolution 58. I'm going to start the discussion with one of the committee advisors, Rick Surratt. Rick.

Mr. SURRATT. Again, I'm Rick Surratt, assistant national legislative director and one of the committee advisors on this committee. We actually had three resolutions dealing with national security. We had 58; another resolution which was adopted by our Interim Legislative Committee, and that was supporting a strong national defense. That's the one we have virtually every year. We had a third resolution on this area maintaining the current size of the Federal Reserve and the National Guard.

Number 58 was rejected merely because it was a duplicate of the one that the Interim Legislative Committee forwarded to this convention committee.

Commander McMASTERS. Mike Number 2, I'm going to give you a chance for rebuttal.

Mr. NICKOLAS. Mike Number 2, Scott County Chapter 2, Davenport, Iowa, George Nickolas. The point is, I think that it's ambiguous to say support a national defense, but of what size? And I'm being specific about enlarging the air lift capability and the merchant fleet. You know, during the Gulf War, our reserve fleet kind of broke down going out of port. So what I'm saying is, let's look at that from a standpoint of being able to deliver the goods and services to the troops in the field. And we need to rebuild that capability. We don't have it today.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. is there any further discussion on Resolution 58? Any further discussion on Resolution Number 58? Are we ready for the question? The question is to adopt Resolution Number 58. All in favor, signify by Aye; all opposed. The motion fails.

The Chair will now entertain a motion on Resolution Number 59. Mike number 2.

Mr. NICKOLAS. George Nickolas, Scott County Chapter 2 moves the adoption of 059 dealing with the maintenance of the National Guard and the Reserve units at the level in existence on the day the Persian Gulf War began.

Commander McMASTERS. Do we have a support for the motion?

Mr. RUSS BAIN. Bain, Scott County Chapter 2, seconds, from Iowa.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. We have a motion and support. I'm going to again ask one of the committee advisors for the discussion of the committee.

Mr. SURRATT. Okay. Again, we adopted Resolution Number 249 which supports a strong national defense. Resolution Number 59, which speaks specifically to the Reserves and National Guard

would be subsumed in the broader resolution. Another reason that we usually don't adopt these types of resolutions in the committee is because they are targeted to specific defense actions, like supporting the B1 bomber or certain ships, or things of that nature. We're not experts in national defense in the DAV.

Our primary mission is to work for service-connected disabled veterans and their benefits, although we are a patriotic organization, and we do have a general stance to support a strong national defense.

But again, 59 was rejected as a duplicate because it would be subsumed in the broader resolution that we adopted. That again was an interim committee resolution.

Commander McMASTERS. Mike Number 2.

Mr. NICKOLAS. General Somerville, after World War II, made a statement, I think, that's profound and applies. He says that to defend your country, one must maintain in a period of peacetime a force sufficient to deter an enemy act. The aspect of cutting the Reserve units down—and they are being cut down—to a level pre-World War II, pre-Persian gulf, to me is unconscionable.

I think that we as an organization must maintain a strong defense which includes the Reserve, but by making a general statement, you give no benchmark as to the level of a defense that's necessary. You know, the bottom-up review that was done by the President said we should have 14 divisions to maintain a two and a half front war. We are at ten, and those divisions are not full strength. They don't even have adequate equipment.

During the Persian Gulf, we begged Japan to supply components for our F15 to keep them flying. You know, what we've done in fact is disarmed America while some other countries have not disarmed. If you don't read the right publications, Defense News, International Armed Services, and etcetera, you don't get the flavor of this. But the Russians are still modernizing; we're not.

Commander McMASTERS. Is there any further discussion on Resolution 59? Any further discussion on Resolution 59? Are we ready for the question? Okay. The question is to adopt Resolution Number 59. All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. The motion fails.

The Chair will now entertain a motion concerning Resolution Number 76. Mike 3.

NEC McKEEHAN. Lowell McKeehan, past Department of Michigan, so moves.

Commander McMASTERS. I'm sorry. I need a definite action what you want us to take. I'm entertaining a motion concerning Resolution Number 76. I didn't ask for any direction whether to adopt or reject, and that's what we're looking for.

NEC McKEEHAN. Adopt. For the march on Washington?

Commander McMASTERS. Are you going to make the motion, sir?

NEC McKEEHAN. Did you want a motion to adopt that or—

Commander McMASTERS. What I'm asking for is a motion to direct us to take some kind of action on Resolution 76, whether to adopt or reject. Which way would you prefer to be, sir?

NEC McKEEHAN. I make a motion—Lowell McKeehan, past department commander of Michigan, make a motion that we reject.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. Lowell, just as a matter of record, what I actually need is your chapter that you're representing.

NEC MCKEEHAN. Lavonia Chapter 114, Michigan.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. Thank you. That was a motion to reject. Is there support? Is there support? There is a motion to reject. Is there support? Okay. The motion dies for lack of support. Is there a motion to consider?

Mr. ALFRED L. HINDES. Hindes of Michigan will make that motion to adopt.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. Can I have your—state your full credentials, Al.

Mr. HINDES. Chapter 3, Michigan.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. Al Hines, Chapter 3, Michigan, moves to adopt Resolution 76. Is that what I heard? That's correct. Is there support?

Mr. PARKER. I second it.

Commander McMASTERS. Can I have a name, please?

Mr. PARKER. North Miami Beach Chapter 81, Herb Parker.

Commander McMASTERS. We have a motion with a support to adopt Resolution 76. At this time, I'm going to ask Rick Surratt to provide discussion from the committee's viewpoint.

Mr. SURRATT. Your Committee on General Resolutions rejected this resolution because—many reasons. Those of you that were in here earlier today and heard Mr. Gorman's, the executive director's report, heard him say that we have a lot of credibility in Washington. We have that because we only fight when we have a real fight. We don't get involved in things that don't warrant putting the credibility of the organization behind, and a march on Washington right now, in the committee's view, is unwarranted.

One of the major problems with a march on Washington is, first of all, we don't really have any issue that is so drastic that we need to do that. That's something that we need to reserve for the darkest day. While things are not as good as they could be, we don't have that situation right now. We would be crying wolf, in our view, if we marched on Washington.

Beyond that, it would not be solely a DAV move. Many organizations could be involved in that. Many things that could happen in Washington wouldn't necessarily reflect well on the DAV. If you had, for example, a very radical veterans movement, there could be flag burning. There could be all kinds of acts that wouldn't reflect well on veterans.

So a march is something that could have adverse consequences. In other words, we could turn the tide of public opinion against us, rather than our favor, if it wasn't handled properly. And since it wouldn't be handled by the DAV alone, we don't have control over what could happen. So I think we would be well advised to be very careful to do anything like that, especially as long as we're doing fairly well on the legislative front, and it's just not warranted.

If they were to say—if Congress were to attempt to take away our compensation or something of that nature, then we might revisit that issue. But today a march on Washington is just not warranted. And that's what your committee that you elected, your

General Resolutions Committee, almost overwhelmingly—I think there was one vote in favor of this motion—rejected it.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay, thank you.

Mike Number 3. Any further discussion, sir?

Mr. PARKER. Well, the only thing I'm going to say is this: When I cry wolf, it's just the idea, it's just the idea of this, of making them cognizant of the fact we're just not laying on our backs, that there is a tentative feeling amongst the veterans of America that this can be done and will be done, should the day come that we have to do it. And that alone, I'm sure, can get back to them to know that the veterans, when push comes to shoving, we're there, and we will be there.

You know, five million veterans marching is a lot more than what the others have done. And this is what we intended to bring to mind. It wasn't the intent to march like now. It was just the sense of knowing that the veterans organizations are united, should it ever come, and it may come to it yet. We don't know what's going to happen after this election or the next. Because we all know what's been happening over the years. They've been cutting down, cutting down.

And we know what's in the books right now, what they're going to do to the veterans hospitals.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. For the purpose of the record, will you please state your name and your credentials again.

Mr. PARKER. Herbert A. Parker, North Miami Beach Chapter, Florida 81.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you very much.

Is there any further discussion? Mike Number 3.

Mr. EDUARDO POSADA. Yes, Comrade Chairman. Ed Posada from Florida, Chapter 3. As the adjutant for District 12, I had the responsibility of drafting the resolution. I apologize it wasn't clear enough, but I think we're going to make it clearer if it's necessary. But as the recipient of benefits at the VA hospital in Miami, let me tell you something. The other day, for instance, I have to get medication. Well, they couldn't give me—

Commander McMASTERS. Okay, sir, we understand that, but that's not the resolution.

Mr. POSADA. Let me give you an idea, please. Let me finish. I've got five minutes, right? I'm not going to take the five minutes, sir. I just want to tell you this much. When the lady, the pharmacist, told me look, "They cut us \$700,000 in this hospital," just to give you an example of what's happening across the country—when Jesse Brown stood here yesterday and told us about changes like taxing compensation, pensions and terminating compensation for veterans rated 10 and 20 percent disabled, all of those things have been on the floor. This may still happen.

Commander, you yourself here yesterday, when you had those things up there, what you had on the Internet, which is half joke, half serious, things may happen.

We're not asking that we get on the buses tomorrow morning. We're simply saying we should get ready in case we have to. It doesn't say we have to go tomorrow. We say if it's feasible. You look at the resolution—I think it wasn't read correctly. If feasible.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. Thank you for your thoughts on that.

Is there anyone that wants to speak opposing the resolution, opposing the adoption of the resolution? Okay. The motion that we're going to consider, the motion on the floor, is a motion to adopt Resolution Number 76. Do we all understand what we're voting on? Are we ready for the question? We're ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; all opposed. The motion fails.

Thank you very much.

For the record, the convention has already discharged the General Resolutions Committee by their motion to adopt the report of the committee.

At this time, I'm going to call on our National Employment Director, Ronald Drach for his presentation of Employment Awards.

Mr. RONALD W. DRACH. Thank you, Commander. Good afternoon. It's my honor and pleasure to be able to again recognize the Outstanding Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, commonly called DVOP, for the year 1996. These DVOP specialists provide intense one-on-one employment assistance to men and women who became disabled as a result of their military service.

Our recipient this year is a retired U.S. Army major who served tours of duty in Europe and Vietnam and was awarded the Purple Heart, two bronze stars, and several other military decorations.

He began his second career as a DVOP specialist in Pennsylvania in 1993. Our recipient provides both individualized employment and training services to veterans and has established job-hunting seminars and workshops throughout the Upper Lackawanna and all of Susquehanna Counties. Only us Pennsylvanians can pronounce those two names.

Additionally, he does extensive outreach to include visiting employers and encourages them to contact the Carbondale Job Center if job opportunities for veterans become available.

During 1995, he worked with the Governor's Outreach Center, the Federal and State Veterans Affairs Departments and veterans service organizations to develop the first Veterans Outreach Program at the Montrose Job Center.

He is a life member of DAV Chapter Number 11 in Dixon, Pennsylvania.

National Commander McMasters, delegates and guests, I am pleased to present to you our Outstanding DVOP Specialist for this year from Carbondale, Pennsylvania, Francis J. "Frank" Paris. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. The inscription is, "Disabled American Veterans proudly recognizes the contributions made by Francis Paris, DVOP, Carbondale, Pennsylvania, for your outstanding accomplishments and your dedication in assisting disabled veterans to obtain employment and training opportunities and for your contributions to the Disabled Veterans Outreach program. July 29th, 1996." This is signed by both myself and National Adjutant Arthur Wilson. [Applause.]

Mr. FRANK J. PARIS. I'm going to make this real short. Isn't this great? This is the most outstanding award I've received in my life, and I just think we all go back home with one thing in mind: Let's

make every day veterans' day and let's get those vets employed. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Mr. DRACH. We also recognize the office which employs the nation's Outstanding Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Specialist. Like the LVER, it is virtually impossible for the DVOP to do an outstanding job of assisting disabled veterans without the complete support of all the employees. So again, we will recognize the office which employs Mr. Paris.

Regrettably, no one from the office could be here to accept the award, so Mr. Paris will accept it on behalf of the entire office also. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. The inscription reads, "The Disabled American Veterans proudly recognizes the Carbondale Job Center, Carbondale, Pennsylvania for distinguished service to our nation's disabled veterans in ensuring them the opportunity to lead productive lives by pursuing meaningful careers. July 29th, 1996." Signed by myself and again, National Adjutant Arthur Wilson. [Applause.]

Mr. PARIS. We may be a small office in a rural community, in a coal cracking community, but we have the heart and the desire of a lion. Again, thank you very much. [Applause.]

Mr. DRACH. Our top local veterans employment representative for 1996 works in the State of Washington at the Tri-City's Job Service Center. He is being recognized for his key role in the community as an advocate for veterans and for helping them find suitable jobs and training. LVERs are responsible for assuring that job-seeking veterans receive needed services to improve their employment prospects.

Our recipient this year served on active duty in the Navy for 30 years, and prior to his recent retirement, was head of the Job Center's Veterans Unit Team which consistently met or exceeded all federal performance standards in assisting veterans in their job search efforts. During the past four years, 70 percent of all veterans registered with the Job Center found employment. A 50 percent service-connected disabled veteran himself, he has worked closely with other disabled veterans, finding employment or job opportunities for more than 100 disabled veterans a year.

Part of his success comes from his continued contacts with employers and civic, fraternal and veterans organizations to publicize the center's services and find new employment opportunities for veterans. He also chaired the State Veterans Training Conference.

His dedication to his fellow veterans also earned him an award in 1995 as the Outstanding Employee of the Year from the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, primarily for his work with the Benton/Franklin Veterans Service Coalition's "Stand Down" for homeless veterans.

Our recipient this year is a life member of DAV Chapter Number 46, Tri-Cities, Washington.

National Commander McMasters, delegates and guests, it is my pleasure to present to you the nation's Outstanding LVER for 1996, James E. McCormick of Pasco, Washington. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. "The Disabled American Veterans proudly presents the National Commander's Ward to the nation's Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative, James E. McCormick, Pasco, Washington, for your outstanding dedication

and distinguished employment assistance to our nation's service-connected disabled veterans and other veterans. Dated July 29, 1996." Signed by myself and National Adjutant Arthur Wilson. [Applause.]

Mr. JAMES E. MCCORMICK. I'm usually not at a loss for words, but this is a tremendous award, and I wish to thank Ron and the members of the Awards Committee for the selection. I appreciate it. Thank you much. [Applause.]

Mr. DRACH. As we have done in the past, we wish to recognize the entire office where the local veterans employment representative is employed. We all know that the LVER cannot accomplish the goals and objectives without support of the entire office staff. Working together as a cohesive unit assures job-seeking veterans, especially disabled veterans, receive needed services.

Here to accept the award is Mr. J.C. Cordero. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. The inscription reads, "The Disabled American Veterans proudly recognizes the Tri-Cities Job Service Center at Pasco, Washington for distinguished service to our nation's disabled veterans in ensuring them the opportunity to lead productive lives by pursuing meaningful careers. Dated July 29th, 1996." Signed by myself and again National Adjutant Arthur Wilson. [Applause.]

Mr. J.C. CORDERO. It's a privilege and an honor to be with you here today, and already I can tell you Jim's been retired about one month today, and I just wanted to say that with his retirement, our commitment to veterans' programs has not been retired. So I am here to promise to you our continued commitment and support of veterans' services in our local community of Tri-Cities in the State of Washington. Thank you. [Applause.]

Mr. DRACH. Of course, the work of the LVERs and DVOPs would not be complete if there weren't employers out there who were willing and able to hire disabled veterans. For that reason, we recognize employers.

Our Outstanding Large Employer of the Year comes to us from Fort Hood, Texas. The recipient this year is a large employer with sites throughout the country. When they were awarded a large government contract in June of 1995 to provide aircraft maintenance, logistics and modification services to the U.S. Army, they had only one month to begin operations at Fort Hood. Despite this short time frame, this firm, headquartered in Reston, Virginia, demonstrated its commitment to hiring disabled veterans. Its Fort Hood work force includes 49 disabled veterans, 12 of whom have conditions rated at 30 percent or more disabling. More than 200 Vietnam Era veterans were hired during that same time.

Disabled veterans were not given just entry-level jobs; they were put into positions at all levels in the organization, upper and middle management, direct-line supervisors, maintenance operations crew and support staff. This firm clearly recognizes that disabled veterans can and do make a significant contribution to its operations and has set a high standard for hiring disabled veterans.

Commander McMasters, delegates and guests, our recipient of the Large Employer of the Year Award is Dyncorp, Fort Hood, Texas, and here to accept the award is Jim Herbert, branch manager. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. I'll read the inscription. "The Disabled American Veterans National Commander's Award is presented to the Outstanding Large Employer of the Year, Dyncorp, Fort Hood, Texas, for conspicuous and meritorious effort in providing employment opportunities for disabled veterans; further, that consistent and noteworthy efforts will serve as an inspiration and challenge to other employers. Dated July 29th, 1996." Signed by myself and National Adjutant Arthur Wilson. [Applause.]

Mr. JIM HEBERT. I've only three quick things I'd like to say. Number 1, any organization that does not look into the veterans and disabled veterans as a place to find the top-notch help that they need is either doing it voluntarily or involuntarily, and they don't know what they're missing. [Applause.]

Number 2, I'll take this back to Fort Hood and let our employees see it, and it'll be displayed in a very prominent place.

And Number 3, while my fellow employees at Fort Hood will be very receptive and very proud of this, they do not have the heart-felt feeling that I feel at this moment, looking on the faces of all of you.

Thank you very much for you and your commanders. [Applause.]

Mr. DRACH. A Department of Veterans Affairs VA Regional Office has been selected as our Outstanding Small Employer of the Year for 1996.

Many would expect the VA to be a leader in the employment of veterans and disabled veterans. This is true, because the VA leads the nation in employment of veterans. However, what makes this particular regional office unique is that of their 165 employees, 50, 30 percent, are disabled veterans. As I said, that represents more than 30 percent of their total work force.

We all know that over the last couple of years, there have been hiring freezes on federal agencies, and most recently because of down-sizing efforts there has not been a lot of new hiring. However, during the last half of 1995 before a hiring freeze was imposed on the office, 50 percent of all the new employees were disabled veterans. One out of every five of these new hires had a disability rating of more than 30 percent.

By the very nature of its mission, this VA office is a community leader in advancing the interests and promoting the hiring of veterans and disabled veterans. Disabled veterans employed at this regional office occupy positions at all levels of responsibility and in a wide variety of occupations.

Success in disabled veterans' employment comes in part from federal requirements that all federal agencies give priority to employing disabled veterans. But, administrators and staff over time at this VA office have demonstrated a clear pattern of exceptional effort and accomplishments in considering and hiring disabled veterans.

National Commander McMasters, delegates and guests, our recipient of the Small Employer of the Year Award is the VA Regional Office, Columbia, South Carolina. Here to accept the award is the regional office director, Mr. R. Stedman Sloan, Jr. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. The inscription: "The Disabled American Veterans National Commander's Award is presented to the

Outstanding Small Employer of the Year, the Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office, Columbia, South Carolina for conspicuous and meritorious effort in providing employment opportunities for disabled veterans; further, that such consistent and noteworthy efforts will serve as an inspiration and challenge to other employers. Dated July 29th, 1996." Thank you, sir. [Applause.]

Mr. R. STEDMAN SLOAN, Jr. Commander McMasters, Chairman Drach, delegates to the National Convention: I feel particularly privileged to attend your convention in New Orleans this year, and honored to receive this award, which I do on behalf of the employees of the regional office in Columbia, and particularly those disabled veterans who are at this very moment providing service to their fellow veterans in a variety of programs meeting their needs.

I'd like to recognize at this time the human resource officer for the Columbia office who has played a major role in our success in hiring disabled veterans, Bill Wykert. [Applause.]

I can tell you this afternoon that we hire disabled veterans because of their personal characteristics of a great sense of responsibility, a dedication to serving their nation, and compassion for their fellow veterans. But the real reason that we hire disabled veterans in our office is because it's the right thing to do. We've done it over the years. We'll do it in the future.

They provide a valuable resource to our nation, and we recognize it in Columbia, and we feel privileged that we have the opportunity to put meaning to those words, putting veterans first.

Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Mr. DRACH. Mr. Commander, that completes the awards, but if I may just for a second, for purposes of recognition, I would like to have stand the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training, Preston Taylor. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you, Ron.

It is now my great pleasure to introduce a man who I once called National Commander, a man who distinguished himself during his 1983-84 term as commander. He is a man who epitomizes the very best of the DAV, a man who has always reached out in friendship to disabled veterans and their families.

And today he serves as the president of the Board of the DAV Vietnam Veterans National Memorial at Angel Fire, New Mexico. As such, he has eloquently led the affairs of the memorial, which stands as a moving tribute to the dignity of the men and women who fought and sacrificed so much in Vietnam. This moving memorial reflects not only the grief of those who died in war, but the prayer for peace in all of us, and a promise of hope for America's future.

Please join me in welcoming Past National Commander and DAV Vietnam Veterans National Memorial President Dennis Joyner. [Applause.]

Mr. DENNIS JOYNER. Thank you, Commander McMasters. National Commander Tom McMasters, Adjutant Art Wilson, distinguished guests, delegates and friends: It is my pleasure to speak with you here today about the DAV Vietnam Veterans National Memorial.

But before I present my remarks, I'd first like to introduce our Board of Directors. In addition to myself, there's Bruce Hansen,

who serves as vice-president. I believe Bruce is up here. We have Al Linden, who's secretary-treasurer; Enid Zysk; and Ray Hall. And in addition, Nancy O'Brien from National Headquarters in Cincinnati serves as our administrator. We want to thank her.

Rather than present a prolonged report, though, I thought I'd like to show you a film that we have prepared since our last national convention. I'm sure that you'll find the film speaks very powerfully of the memorial, its mission and its meaning to America's veterans. Would you please lower the lights?

[Video presentation.]

Mr. JOYNER. I would just say that that's a very, moving film, and those letters that were read in the film were letters that have been sent to the memorial, just a few of the many, many letters and photos that we have on hand.

We on the memorial's Board of Directors are particularly proud of that film and hope that it will help to spread the memorial's message throughout the nation.

And here today we would like to ask you, our members, for a little bit of help. The memorial's archives still need to find more photographs of men and women who died in Vietnam. We need those photos to carry out that part of our mission that involves the war's dead. So if any of you know any families in your communities who have lost a loved one in Vietnam who has given that ultimate sacrifice, maybe you could help us by contacting them and see if they would be willing to provide a photo for us to display at the memorial.

However, at the memorial we've always seen it as a mission, a living mission also, not only a mission to those who lived to come home from Southeast Asia, but to our society as a whole. That's why I'm pleased to report that we've completed some very necessary upgrades for our interactive educational exhibit in the memorial's visitors center. You just can't believe how much this exhibit, and indeed our whole visitors center, means to those who come to see us in Angel Fire.

It's a moving experience, almost as moving as the chapel itself, for veterans and their families. And for those who don't know much about the war and its consequences, we provide an experience that they'll never forget.

Highlights of this past year included our Memorial Day program that featured an eloquent keynote address by Bill Demby, who many of you may remember as a Vietnam veteran who lost a leg there, and he was in a DuPont commercial that was seen playing on TV where he was playing basketball on his prosthesis.

It's been a very good year for the memorial, and I want to thank all of you in the DAV and the Auxiliary for that success.

Commander McMasters, this concludes my report. But at this time, there are two things I would like to do. First, I would like to make just a small presentation to a member of our Board that has been very helpful, especially to Nancy O'Brien and I over the years. As you can imagine, managing a memorial that is a couple of thousand miles away from Headquarters takes an extreme effort, and at times we've had to send our secretary-treasurer, Al Linden, out to the memorial. And each time that he goes out, he never fails to talk to us—Al, maybe you could come forward—about

a special place that he passes on the way up to Angel Fire called Camel Rock.

And Al, we happened to find this picture and memorial of you standing in front of Camel Rock, and we'd like to present this, Nancy and I and the entire Board. Congratulations. [Applause.]

As you know, many of our members like to make contributions to the memorial following this report. I'd like to begin that process here today by inviting Ms. June Springer, the commander of the DAV Department of Virginia, to the podium with the department adjutant, Mr. Dave Tannenbaum. The chapters in Virginia, as well as the department itself have been busy at work building support for the DAV Vietnam Veterans National Memorial, and I've been told that they have quite a surprise for us. Commander Springer.

Ms. JUNE SPRINGER. Last year, many members of the Department of Virginia visited the Angel Fire memorial, and when they came back, it was with solitude and majesty and the aura that the memorial provided them. Also after all of these visits, the Department of Virginia asked many of the chapters if they would support and have a fund-raising effort to support the memorial.

The response was overwhelming. I would like to take just a moment to read into the record the following contributions that were received. From the Lester Gordon Chapter 2, \$300; from Norfolk Chapter 4, \$25; from the Murray Ray Peninsula Chapter Number 6, \$855; from the Campbell Lynchburg Chapter Number 8, \$540; from Arlington Fairfax Chapter 10, \$750; from Mount Vernon Chapter 11, \$100; from the York County Victory Chapter 13, \$200; from Salem Vietnam Veterans Chapter 14, \$400; Prince William County Chapter Number 15, \$500; Archer Gannon Chapter Number 19, \$500; Virginia Beach Chapter 20, \$100; Portsmouth Chapter 27, \$160; Galax Chapter 37, \$120; Craddock Chapter 41, \$300; Paul Love Chapter 44, \$400; Grayson County Chapter 49, \$40; General Anthony Wayne Chapter 58, \$125; and the Department of Virginia, \$4,000.

We propose that this contribution be used as the seed for an endowment fund designed to make the memorial self-sufficient, and we would like to challenge all other departments to join us in this worthy effort. Will you all help us?

I would like to ask Past Department Commander Melton, also Enid Zysk, the Board member, and the department adjutant, Dave Tannenbaum, to assist in making this presentation of this check in the amount of \$10,000. [Applause.]

Mr. JOYNER. Thank you.

I have also been given checks from Don Pouliot from California for \$50; Tri-County Chapter 67 in Pennsylvania, which is the home chapter of our 3rd National Junior Vice-Commander Andy Kistler, \$500; and over 4th National Junior Vice-Commander Dobmeier, \$50.

Are there any other?

Judge Advocate EDWARD G. GALIAN. The Department of New York most humbly offers and donates to you at this time from its meager assets \$1,000.

Mr. JOYNER. Thank you very much.

MEMBER. Dennis, on behalf of the Department of California, it gives me great pleasure to present to you a check for \$1,000 from California.

Mr. JOYNER. Thank you very much.

MEMBER. On behalf of the officers and members of DAV Chapter Number 1, St. Louis, Missouri and the DAV Ladies Auxiliary, we're happy to present to the DAV Vietnam Memorial Veterans Fund \$100.

Mr. JOYNER. Thank you very much.

MEMBER. On behalf of the Department of Maryland, we wish to present a check to you, president, for your support of \$1,000.

Mr. JOYNER. Thank you.

Mr. WALTER H. WESSING. National Commander, Past National Commander Dennis Joyner, I'm a little bitty guy. I don't know my name, but I'm a Missouri boy. This money I give comes from my heart. It don't come from the chapter. It comes from me. So now I'm going to give the taxes first—I generally do—and give you the money later on. So here's four quarters, and I've got some more. Don't spend it in the gambling club. One hundred dollars, \$200. Commander and Past Dennis, that's my every year. If I can next year, I'll maybe give a little bit more, because I'll be in Vegas, and that's where I hit the money. Walter Wessing, Chapter Number 2, Kansas City, Missouri.

Mr. JOYNER. Thank you, Walter.

Mr. RICHARD CHRISTOPHER. Richard Christopher, Chapter 115, Saugus, Mass., would like to make a personal donation of \$300.

Mr. JOYNER. Thank you.

MEMBER. Chapter Number 1, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, would like to donate a hundred dollars.

Mr. JOYNER. Thank you.

MEMBER. On behalf of the State Department of Missouri, I'd like to donate \$200.

Mr. JOYNER. Thank you.

MEMBER. On behalf of the State of Kansas, this is Chapter 4, I'd like to donate \$500; on the Department of the State of Kansas, I'd like to donate another \$500.

Mr. JOYNER. Thank you very much.

Mr. H. G. KROSSCHELL. The State of South Dakota Department, \$250. H. G. Krosschell, Department of South Dakota.

Mr. JOYNER. Thank you.

Mr. EDWARD M. SWAN. My name is Commander Edward Swan from DAV Chapter Keene-Rankin in Metro Detroit, Chapter 1. I would like to give a hundred dollars. And somebody lost their son for me to be able to make it back home to Detroit, and I just keep praying that we all keep trying to help as much as we can. I made it back because someone lost their life.

Mr. JOYNER. Thank you.

MEMBER. Commander, Past Commander, on behalf of Chapter 32 from the State of Oklahoma, I give you \$100.

Mr. JOYNER. Thank you very much.

I thank each and every one of you for your continued support, not only today but throughout the year to the memorial.

Mr. JOHN F. HOUSTON. Comrade Commander, John Houston, past department commander, Chapter 19, Indiana. I'd also like to

make a comment on that, that the shirts that they have on sale, also the jackets, the pins and the copies of the tapes you've just seen, which I bought one, the proceeds also go towards this memorial.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you.

We'll now entertain a motion to accept the report of the president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Angel Fire. Mike Number 1.

Mr. RICHARD J. HENNESEY. PDC Hennesey, Department of Connecticut, moves acceptance of the report.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you. Is there support? Mike Number 3.

Mr. ROBERT MELCHER. Bob Melcher, senior vice-commander of the State of Florida, seconds that.

Commander McMASTERS. Are you ready for the question? Ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. That's carried.

At this time, I'll call on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for the first reading of the amendments to the National Constitution and Bylaws. Tom Daley.

Mr. THOMAS J. DALEY. This is the report for the National Convention Committee on Constitution and Bylaws. Comrade Commander and delegates: The National Convention Committee on Constitution and Bylaws was called to order at its first business session on July 29th, 1996 by the committee advisors, Fred Bristol and Edward Galian.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. Thomas J. Daley was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed, and Thomas J. Daley was elected chairman. The next order of business was the nomination and election of secretary. Sally Wilson was nominated and elected as secretary of the committee.

The committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted, and I will report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption by this national convention. For the purpose of saving time, I will read only the number and resolved portions of the resolutions. This is the first reading. There will be no voting today.

Resolution Number 197. I'd just like to direct everybody's attention to the RESOLVED. I'm only going to read it once. These resolutions will be placed on your chairs tomorrow when you come in the morning. So please pay attention to the RESOLVED portion of this resolution.

RESOLVED to amend the indicated sections of the National Bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans by adding/omitting text as follows. Omissions are indicated by lining through and additions are indicated by underlining:

Section 3.10. Rules of the Convention.

(b) If such resolution proposes to amend the Constitution or Bylaws, it may not be considered unless the proponent had it read at the time the resolutions favorably reported by the Convention Constitution and Bylaws Committee were read to the convention in accordance with Section 3.10, Rule 21(d).

Resolution 200, Section 6.4, Suspension and Revocation of Charters.

Paragraph 4. When the charter of any chapter has been revoked, all members of the chapter shall be transferred by the national adjutant to the state at-large chapter. In the absence of a state at-large chapter, the members shall be transferred to the Nomad National At-Large Chapter.

Paragraph 5. Upon revocation of the charter of any chapter or county or district council where no state department exists, or upon revocation of any charter of a state department, all property, money and effects of said state department, chapter or county or district council shall revert to the national organization, there to be held in trust for 18 months. In the event the state department, chapter or county or district council's charter is not reissued within the 18-month period, the said property, money and effects shall become the absolute property of the national organization. Disposition of assets of units of the DAV Women's Auxiliary are controlled by the appropriate provisions of their Constitution and Bylaws.

Paragraph 6. Upon revocation of the charter of a chapter or county or district council under the jurisdiction of a state department, all property, money and effects of the chapter or county or district council shall become the property of the state department. Disposition of assets of units of the DAV Women's Auxiliary are controlled by the appropriate provisions of their Constitution and Bylaws. Resolution 201. Term of Office of Certain Appointees.

Paragraph 1. The term of office of persons appointed by the national commander under Section 7.2 of these Bylaws and of persons appointed by the national adjutant under Section 7.4 of these Bylaws shall not exceed that of the appointing power and may be terminated at any time by the appointing power, provided, however, that the removal of the national adjutant by the national commander is subject to approval by a two-thirds vote of the National Executive Committee. The National Executive Committee may, by a two-thirds vote of its members, remove the national adjutant from office for cause.

Paragraph 2. The term of office of all persons appointed by the national commander under Section 7.2 of these Bylaws and of all persons appointed by the national adjutant under Section 7.4 of these Bylaws terminates automatically at the adjournment of each convention, except that such appointees who are not employees of the national organization may continue to serve until their successors are installed. There is no right whatsoever to reappointment to any position held by appointment under Section 7.2 or under Section 7.4 of these Bylaws.

Resolution 202. Section 8.4, Financial Records and Reports.

Paragraph 2. The financial statements as required by these Bylaws must be audited by an independent public accountant if the gross annual income excluding membership per capita, exceeds \$300,000 from all sources.

Resolution Number 203. Section 8.5, Department Constitution, Bylaws and Regulations.

Paragraph 2. Each state department shall include the following provision in its Bylaws unless prohibited by the charitable trust laws of its particular state: "This department recognizes the national organization known as Disabled American Veterans, incorporated by Act of Congress, and affirms its allegiance and subordination to the national organization, its Constitution, Bylaws and all rules, mandates and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto. Upon dissolution of the department, the assets remaining after the payment of its debts shall be distributed as provided in Article 6, Section 6.4, Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the National Bylaws."

Resolution Number 204. Section 8.6, Annual State Convention.

Paragraph 2. There shall be no form of unit rule or voting by proxy.

Resolution 205. Article 9, Chapters. 9.1: Chapter Constitution; Bylaws; Regulations.

Paragraph 2. Each chapter shall include the following provision in its Bylaws unless prohibited by the charitable trust laws of its particular state:

"This chapter recognizes the national organization known as Disabled American Veterans, incorporated by Act of Congress, and affirms its allegiance and subordination to the national organization, its Constitution, Bylaws and all rules, mandates and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto. Upon dissolution of the chapter, the assets remaining after the payment of its debts shall be distributed as provided in Article 6, Section 6.4, Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the National Bylaws."

Resolution 206. Section 9.3, Financial Records and Reports.

Paragraph 2. The financial statements as required by these Bylaws must be audited by an independent public accountant if the gross annual income, excluding membership per capita, exceeds \$300,000 from all sources.

Resolution Number 207. Section 10.2, Financial Records; Officer Reports—Women’s Auxiliary and NOTR.

Paragraph 3. The financial statements as required by these Bylaws must be audited by an independent public accountant if the gross annual income, excluding membership per capita, exceeds \$300,000 from all sources.

Resolution Number 208. Section 10.3, Limitation of Powers.

Paragraph 2. Each auxiliary and its subordinate units shall include the following provision in its bylaws unless prohibited by the charitable trust laws of its particular state:

“This [type of unit] recognizes the national organization known as Disabled American Veterans, incorporated by Act of Congress, and affirms its allegiance and subordination to the national organization, its Constitution, Bylaws and all rules, mandates and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto. Upon dissolution of the [type of unit], the assets remaining after the payment of its debts shall be distributed as provided in Article 6, Section 6.4, Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the National Bylaws.”

Resolution Number 209. Section 11.5, Membership Dues.

Paragraph 1. Membership dues shall be \$20, and shall be for the membership year or any part thereof. The membership year starts July 1 and ends the following June 30th. All membership dues will be applied toward becoming a member for life and will be deposited directly in the individual’s membership account as established under Paragraph 2 below. Once the appropriate full membership amount has been paid into the member’s account, he or she will no longer be required to pay dues.

Paragraph 2. Those eligible who have not attained the age of 41 before July 1 of the current year may become a member for life upon payment of \$150. Those who are between the ages of 41 and 60, upon payment of \$125; those who are between the ages of 61 and 70, upon payment of \$100; and those who have attained the age of 71 or over, upon payment of \$75.

Section 11.7, Duration of Membership.

All memberships will extend for three full membership years from the date of the most recent payment, or (if and when paid in full) throughout the member’s lifetime. If membership is paid in installments, payment notices will be sent to the member as a reminder. However, the member may pay the balance, or any part thereof, at any time. Distribution under Section 11.8 will only occur when there are sufficient funds in the member’s account. If no payment is made during three full membership years, he or she is not thereafter a member. He or she may reinstate their membership at any time by initiating additional payments. Such payments will be applied to the previous balance and be counted toward a fully paid membership.

Resolution Number 210. Section 11.10, Multiple Memberships.

No member shall hold membership simultaneously in more than one chapter within the same state unless such other chapter is composed exclusively of blind veterans or amputee veterans.

Resolution Number 211. Article 12, National Employees. Section 12.1, Employment Policy.

Paragraph 2. No paid employee of the national organization, hereafter referred to as “the employer”, who is a member of the DAV or its Women’s Auxiliary and who has been so employed continuously for a period of five years, shall be discharged except for cause.

12.2, Procedure.

Paragraph 1. An employee described in Section 12.1, Paragraph 2 of these Bylaws may, within 31 days of receiving from the national adjutant a written notice of discharge, make written demand upon the national adjutant for a hearing before a Hearing Board, as herein provided.

Paragraph 10. Upon conclusion of the hearing, the Hearing Board, by a majority vote, shall, after deliberation, render a decision either that the former employee's discharge be upheld or that he be reinstated with all pay and benefits retroactive to the date of his termination. The decision of the Hearing Board shall be final for all purposes and shall constitute a binding arbitration, which the parties shall acknowledge by executing an appropriate agreement in advance of the hearing.

Resolution Number 212. Section 14.4, Depositories.

The National Finance Committee shall, by regulation, designate one or more depositories for all revenue of this organization.

Resolution Number 213. Section 14.5, National Revenue; Deposit and Investment.

Paragraph 1. All monies received in payment for membership shall be deposited in a separate account in one of these depositories and all membership monies and securities shall be kept separate from the general funds of the organization, subject only to withdrawals to carry out the Life Membership Program. The National Finance Committee, with the concurrence of a two-thirds majority of the National Executive Committee, shall authorize the investment and reinvestment of such portions of the Life membership Fund as it may determine to be in the best interests of the membership program.

Paragraph 3. The National Finance Committee shall provide in its regulations that access to any safety deposit box can be had only by the national adjutant and/or national comptroller in company with one additional bonded employee designated by the National Finance Committee. Disbursement of membership monies from the checking account of the Life membership Fund shall be made upon life membership checks bearing the signatures of the national adjutant and national comptroller.

Resolution Number 214 is Section 15.3, For Chapters, Women's Auxiliaries and NOTR. It's Paragraph 1.

The revenue of chapters, women's auxiliary units and subordinate units of the NOTR shall be derived from dues, contributions and such other sources as maybe approved by the state department within which the same is located. Where no commissions are to be paid, and solicitation of funds shall be only by personal contact of members, or friends of members, no prior approval shall be required for a fund-raising project where the gross receipts will be less than \$5,000, provided, however, that advance written notice of 30 days to the state department shall be required on all such fund-raising projects. (Such fund-raising must be in compliance with federal, state and local laws.) All monies received by local chapters on fund-raising activities, except as may lawfully be required to be paid to the state department having jurisdiction over such chapters, shall be retained by such chapter. If there is no state department, approval must be obtained from the National Executive Committee.

Resolution Number 215. Section 15.4, Women's Auxiliary National Organization.

Paragraph 2. No state department of the DAV women's auxiliary shall conduct any fund-raising project without the prior consent of the DAV state department and the DAV National Executive Committee.

Paragraph 4. If any dugout or other subordinate unit of the National Order of Trench Rats, or if any local unit or other subordinate unit of the DAV women's auxiliary desires to hold any fund-raising drive or fund-raising activity in the territory of more than one chapter, such subordinate unit, before asking for

the required approval, shall give written notice of its intention to ask such approval, with reasonably detailed information about the proposed drive or activity, to all chapters within such territory not less than two weeks before seeking approval, and all such chapters shall have the right to protest promptly to the state department or to the National Executive Committee, whichever may have the power of approval as set out above.

Section 15.5, National Order of Trench Rats.

The national organization of the National Order of Trench Rats shall not conduct any fund-raising project or fund-raising activity without the prior consent of the National Executive Committee.

Resolution Number 216. Section 15.7, Supervision and Enforcement.

Paragraph 2. Without limiting the remedies elsewhere provided in these Bylaws, the national commander may, in his sole discretion, direct an audit of the books and records of any such subordinate unit. The national organization, an independent accountant, or a certified public accountant shall conduct such audit. The expense of such audit shall be borne by the subordinate unit.

Paragraph 3. Each subordinate unit subject to the provisions hereof shall make available to the national commander or his designee all books and records for inspection at any reasonable time at its principal headquarters.

Paragraph 4. Each subordinate unit subject to the provisions hereof shall hold the national organization harmless from any claims arising from approval granted or withheld by any governing body hereunder, and the approval of such body is specifically limited to the project submitted as a means of fund-raising and may not be construed so as to make the approving body a party to any contract or obligation arising out of the project.

Paragraph 5. The national commander, acting pursuant to Paragraph 2 above, in his sole discretion may order any subordinate unit subject to the provisions hereof to cease and desist from any fund-raising project deemed by him not to be in the best interest of the Disabled American Veterans.

Paragraph 6. This section shall be applicable to, and shall be incorporated by reference into, all contracts entered into pursuant to this Article. It shall be applicable to all parties to such contracts. If projects are conducted without written contracts but nevertheless pursuant to authority granted under this Article, the rights, duties and obligations of the subordinate unit and all parties thereto shall also be subject to the provisions of this section.

Resolution Number 217. Section 17.1, Approval Required.

“This corporation recognizes the national organization known as Disabled American Veterans, incorporated by Act of Congress, and affirms its allegiance and subordination to the national organization, its Constitution, Bylaws and all rules, mandates and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto. Upon dissolution of the corporation, the assets remaining after the payment of its debts shall be distributed as provided in Article 6, Section 6.4, Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the National Bylaws.”

Resolution Number 218. This is Article 18, Accumulation of Funds. Section 18.1, Definition of Terms.

Paragraph 1. The “funds” referred to in this Article are the liquid assets of subordinate units.

Paragraph 2. “Service purposes” are budgetary projects recognized as service under these Bylaws and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto. Section 18.2 Restriction on Accumulation.

Subordinate units may not accumulate funds, whether for service purposes or otherwise, in excess of twice the expenses of their last fiscal year. Section 18.3, Expenditure of Excess Funds.

Paragraph 1. Subordinate units whose accumulated funds exceed the amount referred to in Section 18.2 above must comply with this Article by expending such excess within a reasonable time.

Paragraph 2. The expenditure of funds by subordinate units to accomplish compliance with this Article must be for service purposes.

Resolution Number 254. Section 19.1, Corporate Organization; Dissolution; Nomenclature—this is a housekeeping change, and

we're just renumbering the sections: 19.1; 19.2, Use of Members' Names; Section 19.3, Rules of Order; Section 19.4, Certificate of Merit; Section 19.5, Amendments of Bylaws; Section 19.6, Captions; and Section 19.7, Definitions and Interpretation.

That completes the resolutions, Comrade Commander.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you, Mr. Daley. Appreciate your hard work.

Mr. DALEY. Comrade Commander, I'd like to read three resolutions that were rejected by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. I'm just going to read the numbers of the resolutions.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay.

Mr. DALEY. These resolutions were rejected by the committee this morning: Resolution Number 66, Resolution Number 83, and Resolution Number 81.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws, and the first reading of recommended changes to the Constitution and Bylaws.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, please rise and I will ask Chaplain Wilkie to lead us in a closing prayer.

Chaplain WILKIE. Let us pray. We thank You, Father, for all the information we've received today. It seemed a little overwhelming. But with Your help as we go now to refreshment and sleep, we know we'll come back tomorrow with our minds clear that we may be able to do those things which are pleasing in Thy sight. Amen.

Commander McMASTERS. The convention stands in recess until 9:00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

[Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 4:00 o'clock p.m., July 29, 1996.]

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION

July 30, 1996

The Third Business Session of the 75th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans convened in the Grand Ballroom of the New Orleans Hilton Riverside, New Orleans, Louisiana, Tuesday morning, July 30, 1996, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by Commander Thomas A. McMasters III.

Commander THOMAS A. McMASTERS III. The convention will please come to order.

Would you please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our country?

[Pledge of Allegiance.]

Commander McMASTERS. Chaplain Wilkie, will you please lead us in prayer?

Chaplain WILKIE. Before we pray again this morning, I ask you to share with me again a moment of silence for all of those who could not be here. I've been made aware of others who have become ill during our convention and others who have heard of illness back home. Let's lift all of these before God in our thoughts and in our prayers in a moment of silence.

[Moment of silence.]

Chaplain WILKIE. Once again, O God, we come before You to thank You for the events of last evening. What a fun time we had!

What an opportunity we had of fellowship, and what a refreshment of sleep You have allowed to us, so that our minds and our bodies might be ready for the events and the tasks of this day.

Again, I ask Your Divine wisdom, influence and strength to surround our commander that he may lead us in such fashion that the decisions made this day on behalf of disabled American veterans and their families will be that which will be beneficial to them and pleasing in Thy sight. Amen.

Commander McMASTERS. Please be seated.

In order for a delegate to be heard at this convention, he must be recognized by the Chair. Only those delegates at a microphone will be recognized. Upon being so recognized, the delegate must state his name, chapter number and the state he represents.

At this time, we'll call on the Credentials Committee for their report.

Mr. BARNETT. I'm going to do a little better this morning. Can you hear me this time? All right. The Credentials Committee met this morning in the Jasperwood Room at the New Orleans Hilton Riverside. The roll call showed 1,344 delegates and 50 alternates. This is a partial report for informational purposes only and reflects the registration at the close of registration at 4:00 o'clock, July 29th, 1996.

At the present time, we have 584 chapters, 50 departments, 27 national officers, 10 past national commanders, for a total of 1,344 delegates and 50 alternates, and a total vote of 10,698.

This completes the partial report of the Credentials Committee, Commander, Thank you.

Commander McMASTERS. Will you please join me in welcoming Imperial Golden Rodent Alfred W. Nowak, Imperial Red-Eyed Gnawer John Engwiller, and the Imperial Council of the National Order of Trench Rats.

Mr. JOHN D. ENGWILLER, SR. Good morning. I guess we're in New Orleans. If you'd asked me last night, I wouldn't have been able to tell you. For the purpose of a short introduction from our Imperial Golden Rodent Al Nowak.

Mr. ALFRED W. NOWAK. Greetings from the National Order of Trench Rats, and Welcome to the Year of the Rat. (Applause) It may be the Chinese Year of the Rat, but we are rats also.

Our purpose being here today is to welcome you all as friends of the National Order of Trench Rats as we are friends of the Disabled American Veterans. We must first be Disabled American Veterans before we can be Trench Rats.

The Trench Rats originally were organized back in 1924 by a group of disabled veterans who were packed away in an obscure hospital back in the hills of California. Having nothing to do, they got together and decided to form an organization. They decided on the National Order of Trench Rats, which reverts back to the troops who were in the rat-infested trenches, and thereby the name became effective.

I have traveled throughout this country, but I do not intend to give you a travelogue today. Those who have seen me, know where I've been.

And now without further ado, I would like to introduce our Imperial Red-Eyed Gnawer for the purposes of introducing our royal family. Imperial Red-Eyed Gnawer John Engwiller.

Mr. ENGWILLER. You can applaud. You can applaud. [Booing] Thank you. Okay.

We have a few gifts here that we'd like to pass out. This is our Year of the Rat hat with the Year of the Rat pin. The Imperial Golden Rodent would like to present one to National Adjutant Art Wilson, our National Commander Tom McMasters, our National Executive Director in Washington Dave Gorman, and our National Executive Director Rich Patterson. If somebody would take these to those gentlemen.

From all over the United States—I've already introduced him, but he's from New York, Imperial Golden Rodent Al Nowak; our Imperial Silver Rodent Curt Guiglaar from Michigan; our Imperial Turquoise Rodent from Florida, Harry Warburton; our Imperial Bubonic Plague from California, Larry Polzin; our Imperial Black Plague from Oklahoma, Jimmie Foster; Imperial Iron Claw from Pennsylvania, James Turner; our Imperial Hole-y Rodent, Dave Oglesby; Imperial Red-Eyed Gnawer, that's me. That's the one you're all happy to see. Thank you. Imperial Bench Rat, the big bench rat, Vinny Reed.

Our Imperial Executive Rodent Richard Stentiford; Imperial Executive Rodent Vernon Christian; Imperial Executive Rodent William Phillips; Imperial Executive Rodent George Ford, Sr.; from Florida, Imperial Executive Rodent Albert Sorrentino; Imperial Executive Rat Frank Cummings; Imperial Executive Rat John Ferguson; Imperial Executive Rat Charles Sirhal; Imperial Executive Rodent Newland Crutcher; Imperial Executive Rodent Harry Mulligan; Imperial Executive Rodent Robert Brown; Imperial Executive Rodent Charles Johns; Imperial Executive Rodent Joel Devenish; Imperial Executive Rodent McKinley Norman; Imperial Executive Rodent Henry Reeding, III; Imperial Executive Rodent Frank Webb; Imperial Executive Rodent Chesley Rutledge.

Now, our elite, our Imperial Rodents: Paul Bailey; Imperial Rodent Fred Sutton; Imperial Rodent Ernest Balcom; Imperial Rodent George Zoscsak; Imperial Rodent Oswald Pederson; Imperial Rodent Vinny Reed; Imperial Rodent Johnny Dilaurenzio; Imperial Rodent Sam Vigil.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to come before you. As you know, we're the fun group. It's always a pleasure. And this year on Thursday morning, we will present some money to the service organization, and we will tell you then what we've done for this year. To do it now would only be repeating it on Thursday.

Again, we dedicate ourselves for what we were chartered for, to aid and assist the disabled American veterans. Thank you. [Applause.]

Commander MCMASTERS. Thank you, Imperial Rodent Nowak, for that awesome display.

At this time, we're going to call on the Reverend Oscar Wilkie.

Chaplain WILKIE. After a display like that, we may be in need of a chaplain, I'm not sure. [Laughter.]

Once again, I have the very distinct honor and privilege of coming to you to represent the Chapel of Four Chaplains. Many of you

are aware of the Chapel of Four Chaplains. It's an organization that was established back a long time ago. It's had its offices in Valley Forge.

But on February 2nd, 1943, the USAT Dorchester was sailing the icy waters around Greenland with 902 men aboard. A U-boat spotted the troopship and fired torpedoes, five of which hit directly below the water line, and the ship began to sink. In 27 minutes, the ship was under water. There were 902 men aboard that ship; 672 of them died, and 230 survived.

Among those that survived, four of them at least were young men who were given an opportunity for life by four chaplains that were aboard that ill-fated ship: Lieutenant Alexander B. Good, a Jewish rabbi; Lieutenant Clark V. Polling of the Dutch Reformed Church; Lieutenant John P. Washington, a Roman Catholic priest; and Lieutenant George L. Fox, a Methodist minister. Those were the four chaplains aboard the USAT Dorchester on that fateful morning.

As the chaplains helped the men to board lifeboats, as the very last ones were about to get aboard a lifeboat and they had run out of lifejackets, these our chaplains took their own jackets off, gave them to young men who had none, and as the ship went down, those who survived saw them standing on the deck, arms linked, giving their last measure of devotion so that others might live.

In order to commemorate that act of selfless devotion, the Chapel of Four Chaplains has created an award that it gives to people who do acts of volunteerism, who do things that promote and promulgate brotherhood amongst all people, and sacrifice, really, of their own time and effort for the good of Americans of every age, every station in life. This Legion of Honor Program is one of the most prestigious awards that is given.

It is my high honor to represent them this morning and come to recognize and to pay tribute to one of our own who meets all of these requirements very well. Our own commander, Tom McMasters, has been chosen to receive the Medal of Honor Award. Commander McMasters, if you would come, it is my honor to present you this medal and this plaque with reads:

This Legion of Honor bronze medallion is presented to Thomas A. McMasters III, National Commander of Disabled American Veterans, 1995-96, by the Chapel of Four Chaplains, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, in recognition of outstanding service to people, all people, regardless of race or faith. This award symbolizes for all Americans and for all time the unity of this nation, founded upon the fatherhood of one God.

It's an honor, sir, to present this to you on behalf of the Chapel. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you very much. Thank you, Chaplain Wilkie, for this extraordinary honor.

At this time, I'm going to call on the Finance and Dues Committee for their report.

2nd Junior Vice-Commander WILLIAM D. WIGGINS. Thank you, Commander. Comrade Commander and delegates to this 75th Annual Convention of the DAV: The National Convention Committee on Finance and Dues was called to order for its first business session on July the 29th, 1996 by the committee advisor, Earl Dean Walker.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. William D. Wiggins and William D. Brzezinski were nominated for chairman. William D. Wiggins was elected chairman. The next order of business was the nomination and election of a secretary. Edward S. Lastowski was nominated and elected secretary of the committee.

There were no resolutions submitted for consideration by the Committee on Finance and Dues this year.

The committee then reviewed the proposed 1997 budget with the committee advisors, Earl Dean Walker and Richard Patterson, with the assistance of Comptroller Anita F. Blum. The proposed 1997 budget was referred to the National Convention Committee on Finance and Dues by the National Finance Committee with a recommendation for adoption. Following completion of the committee's review, the committee voted unanimously to recommend to the national convention adoption of the proposed 1997 budget. The committee then expressed its thanks to Committee Advisors Earl Dean Walker and Richard E. Patterson, who were aided by Comptroller Anita Blum, not their assistance in performing the work of this important committee.

Having no further business, the committee adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

At this time, I'd personally like to thank the members that served with me on this committee. Their help and assistance and their efforts made my job a much easier one.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Convention Committee on Finance and Dues, and I hereby move for the adoption of the report and ask that the committee be discharged with the thanks of the convention.

Commander MCMASTERS. Thank you, Bill. The motion has been made. Is there support? Is there support for the motion? Mike 3.

Mr. JOHN C. MCCARTHY. John McCarthy, delegate, Number 4, Florida, seconds the motion.

Commander MCMASTERS. Thank you, We have a motion and a support. Are we ready for the question? You're ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. It's carried.

2nd Junior Vice-Commander WIGGINS. Thank you, Commander.

Commander MCMASTERS. Thank you, Bill.

I am going to call on the president of the DAV National Service Foundation, Richard J. Cosgriff, for a report.

Mr. RICHARD COSGRIFF. Thank you, Commander. This is the report of the National Service Foundation to the 75th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans being held in New Orleans. I'd like at this time to present this report.

National Commander McMasters, National Adjutant Wilson, national officers, delegates and guests all: I'm pleased to make the annual report of the DAV National Service Foundation and its Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund. The Foundation was established to ensure the sound future of the service program of the Disabled American Veterans. We strive to make sure that the DAV remains the foremost source of assistance to our disabled service-connected veterans, their families and their survivors.

As the Foundation's president, I was assisted during the 1995-96 year by our distinguished board members: the national com-

mander, Tom McMasters; the Foundation's vice-president, National Adjutant Art Wilson; Secretary-Treasurer Bill Leach; Directors Bonnie Maile and Dick Wannemacher, and the National Finance Committee chairman, Earl Walker. I'd like to recognize Gary Burns from Maine, who has been elected to serve a two-year term beginning in 1996-97.

And we'd like to offer our gratitude and thanks to Dick Wannemacher for his many years of service on the board. I'd also like to offer our gratitude to Charitable Programs Director Nancy O'Brien and her staff in Cincinnati for their tremendous help and invaluable service to the Foundation.

We would also like to thank Tom Keller for his timely articles that he includes in the DAV National Magazine. The response of contributions from you, the members, is always very, very rewarding. Again thanks, Tom, for those articles.

As measured by our consistent trend of growth, we feel great satisfaction and encouragement as we look toward the future. This year we exceeded our goals, reporting assets with a market value of \$12,827,505. It is indeed a source of comfort for all of us to know that this sizable amount is there. If the national organization's income ever falls off at any time in the future, our Foundation will be there to assist the programs of service to you, the disabled veterans.

Today, thankfully, we don't face that problem. After three years of strong financial growth, the national organization is expanding its services. Yet we never know when the tide will turn, as it has at different points in our history, and significant help from the Foundation will be needed once again.

Even today, we're using the earnings from our Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund to provide furniture and office equipment for our national service offices. We maintain a fund for medical studies to help establish expert medical testimony in support of special claims by our national service offices, and we purchase medical and legal textbooks for the national service offices throughout the country.

The Foundation does not engage in public solicitation, relying instead on you, the members for our support. DAV and Auxiliary leaders at every level have earned our deep appreciation. Individual chapters and Auxiliary units, our departments and the Trench Rats all play a vital role in our income. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you.

And during the past year, we recongized the foremost donor through 150 awards, including; Certificates of Commitment to 25 chapters and three Auxiliary units that contributed \$1 for each member in their ranks; Certificates of Commitment to 14 departments that gave \$10 for each of their chapters; 89 Commendation Plaques for those whose total donations topped \$1,000 to one fund; and 19 donors were recognized on the Grand Memorial Honor Roll Plaque at Washington, D.C. Headquarters for contributions in excess of \$5,000.

In the year ended December 31st, 1995, DAV national service officers were responsible for donations of \$384,620, an increase of nearly \$65,000 over the previous year, and we certainly appreciate what all the national service offices do.

At this time, I'd like to call on Ken Wolfe. Ken is going to assist us—of course, as you know, he's the rehab. director, and it's through his efforts in encouraging the service officers throughout the country to support our program. So I'll ask Ken to present the trophies to the winners:

Division I, from Togus, Maine, Gary Burns. Gary's the supervisor. [Applause.]

While Gary's getting here, under Division II, Syracuse, New York, Harry Schultz, the supervisor. [Applause.]

Mr. GARY BURNS. Thank you. I'd just like to say thanks to the office staff up there, particular NSO Bruce Kaplan; Cathy Hartnett, the secretary; the Department of Maine that allows us some part-time help in the office that they fund, and allows us to work on such things as this in membership with that help; and particularly the membership and the people in Maine who plan on keeping this in Maine until at least at the time I retire.

So thank you, people. And that's five or six years at least. [Applauded.]

Mr. COSGRIFF. Harry Schultz from Syracuse, New York.

Mr. HARRY SCHULTZ: I'd like to just say thank you to Paul Breuer, because Paul was very instrumental in working towards getting this; and also to my secretary, Ann Stefanini who, without her, none of it would be possible. Thank you. [Applause.]

Mr. COSGRIFF. Division III, from Buffalo, New York, Al Giordano, supervisor.

Mr. AL GIORDANO. I'd like to thank the entire staff of the Buffalo, New York office, including Sam Sabino, who's now down in Florida, for all the effort they put into winning this award. Thank you. [Applause.]

Mr. COSGRIFF. Division IV, from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Jim Wyatt, supervisor.

Mr. JIM WYATT. I'd just like to thank all the staff in the Philadelphia Regional Office, and particularly all the great Philadelphia Regional Office, and particularly all the great residents of the State of Pennsylvania. And we'll be back. Thank you. [Applause.]

Mr. COSGRIFF. And last, Division V, from New York City, Mark Winn, supervisor.

Mr. MARK WINN. I also would like to express my appreciation to my staff. It's a reflection of the hard work and dedication they do for our veterans in the New York area. Thank you. [Applause.]

Mr. COSGRIFF. Mark said he's going to be back again next year, and for us to remember Nick Cachianes from New York City. This would have never happened if Nick was still alive, I can assure you. Nick kept all the money in his office. [Laughter.]

Please join me in thanking these officers and various officers throughout the country for their support. [Applause.]

All the funds remain invested with the Trust Division of the Cincinnati's Fifth-Third Bank. Our annual audit for the year ending December 31st was done by the accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche, and will be incorporated in the convention official record. As a charitable organization, we report to the IRS annually.

Our National Order of Trench Rats Fund shows a balance of \$184,793. We more or less administer this trust for the Trench Rats. And I'd like at this time to turn over to Commander

McMasters a check for \$10,829, which is the interest earned on this account during the past year. Commander. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you. The Service Foundations's doing an excellent job.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much. That was short and brief.

This gift from the Trench Rats, this interest, goes towards the Legislative Program of the Disabled American Veterans.

In addition, the Foundation has had a good year during the past with its investments, and are delighted to announce our pledge of \$500,000 out of these earnings of the past year, to be used as seed funding for the new Colorado Trust, which has been established within the Foundation.

This new program offers tremendous potential for the chapter and the department service programs throughout the country, and the Foundation is honored to play a prominent role in this growth. We are only too pleased to establish this new fund, the Colorado Trust, in addition to our Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund, which will continue in its current function.

As Art Wilson stated yesterday, materials will be sent to all chapters and departments following this convention, and I urge those who need to spend down their accumulated resources to give this program your fullest support.

Mr. Commander, this concludes my report, and as is traditional, the Foundation stands ready to accept contributions from the convention floor from the members and the chapters and the departments. And these donations will be placed in the Perpetual Rehabilitation or the Trench Rats Fund, as so designated.

Thank you very much. [Applause.]

MEMBER. On behalf of Chapter 2, San Diego, California, and Richard's own chapter, I'd like to donate \$2500 for the National Service Foundation. Thank you.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, Dale.

Mr. DON J. POULIOT. Don Pouliot. Dick's chapter, Chapter 2, San Diego, a personal check for a hundred dollars.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you, Don.

Mr. MICHAEL W. TEMPESTA. Mike Tempesta, Fresno, California. On behalf of our chapter, there's a check here for \$2500, Dick.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

MEMBER. Old Adobe Chapter 117, California, \$200.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you.

2nd Junior Vice-Commander WIGGINS. Bill Wiggins, Chapter 19 of Danville, Virginia, is proud to present \$1500 in honor of David Tannenbaum, the executive director of the Department of Virginia, for his outstanding work.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you.

4th Junior Vice-Commander MICHAEL E. DOBMEIER. Mike Dobmeier. Thanks for a great year; \$100.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you sir.

Mr. RALPH G. REINAGEL. Ralph Reinagel, Chapter 70, Memphis, Tennessee, proudly presents this check of \$15,000.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, sir. This check was for \$15,000. Thank you.

Mr. EDWARD D. RUSHTON. Ed Rushton, commander, DAV Post 22, Portsmouth, Virginia, \$500.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, sir

Mr. JOHN F. MCCOY. John McCoy, Chapter 19, California, \$100.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you, John.

Mr. JOHN T. FREETLY. John Freetly, commander, Department of Minnesota, would like to present this check for the Perpetual Rehab. Fund, \$10,000.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, John. This where originally our support started, back in Minnesota. Thank you very much, John.

Mr. SAM MCGARRITY. On behalf of the Department of Mississippi, we are proud to present a thousand dollar check. And I'm Sam McGarrity.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

Commander McMASTERS. Please, could we have your attention. Thank you.

Ms. JUNE R. SPRINGER. Good morning. June Springer, commander, Department of Virginia. I'm proud to present a \$1,000 check.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

Mr. DAVID L. TANNENBAUM. Dave Tannenbaum, Chapter 15, Prince William County, Manassas, Virginia, donates \$200.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

MEMBER. Shreveport-Bossier Chapter, Shreveport, Louisiana, the state that believes in having a good time, \$2,000.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, sir.

MEMBER. Department of Massachusetts, \$1,000.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you sir.

Mr. BOB WILLIAMS. Bob Williams from the National Blind Chapter, I'd like to donate a hundred dollars for those members who passed away this year.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, sir. Thank you.

Mr. WILLIAM L. TURNER. Bill Turner, commander, DAV Chapter 1, St. Louis, Missouri, would like to present \$1,000.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

MEMBER. On behalf of the National Guild of Attorneys in Fact, we have a check for \$1500 in honor of our founding member, Jack Feighner. This was raised through our first Annual Golf Tournament. I'd like to thank the Departments of Florida and Rhode Island.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

Mr. CHRISTOPHER. Richard Christopher, Chapter 115, Saugus, Mass., would like to make a personal donation of \$300.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

MEMBER. Commander of Chapter 6, Louisville, Kentucky. I present you with \$300.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, sir.

MEMBER. California, Tri-Cities Chapter 95, \$200.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you.

Mr. JOSEPH J. MALDET. Joe Maldet from Chapter 103, H. F. Grote, \$100.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you, sir.

Mr. HUGH FERGUSON. Hugh Ferguson, commander, Department of Maryland, would like to present \$1,000.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

Mr. CHARLES M. TURIK. Charles Turik, Chapter 67, Pennsylvania, \$1,000.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

MEMBER. On behalf of Tamarac, Florida Chapter 73, \$100.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Appreciate it very much. Thank you.

Mr. ROBERT V. CONNOR. Bob Connor, St. Paul Chapter 2, Minnesota. At our 14th District meeting last Saturday, as we do every year, we took up a collection for the Foundation, and I present you \$104 in memory of Past National Service Officer Hiram Fuller.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you.

MEMBER. As commander of Chapter 1, Minneapolis, Minnesota, I present this check to the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund for \$5,498, which represents a dollar per member.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, sir.

MEMBER. Chapter 1, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, \$250; Department of South Dakota, \$500.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you, sir.

Mr. MICHAEL D. GILES. Mike Giles, Chapter 14, Salem, Virginia, in memory of Hugh Huggins, \$400.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you, sir.

Mr. PHILLIP W. TURPIN. Bill Turpin, Chapter 3, from good old Roanoke, Virginia, in honor of our national service officers, would like to present you a check for a thousand dollars. Thank you.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

MEMBER. Chapter 16, Prescott, Arizona, a check for \$3,000.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

NEC 15th District Francis E. McLaskey. Francis McLaskey, Department of Iowa. I'd like to present a check for \$200 in memory of James Glouser and in honor of Clair Galloway.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you.

Mr. E. ESPINOSA-LABRADOR. From the beautiful island of Puerto Rico, Espinosa, department commander, a donation; and from Chapter Number 1, San Juan, Puerto Rico, another donation.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you, sir. That's a total of \$300.

Mr. GEORGE PASSWATER. George Passwater, Department of Florida, donating a hundred dollars in honor of Harry Warburton, past state commander.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. VICTOR J. LAMPE. Vic Lampe, commander of Cincinnati Chapter Number 1, the mother chapter of this, the Disabled American Veterans, gives you a thousand dollars.

Plus, Commander, I'd like to say that in May, our chapter gave the Vine Street Medical Center \$22,500 to upgrade their television and bring Channel Television in, cable, so that the veterans there could get something beside just the three programs they get.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much. Thank you, sir.

Mr. BOB BALEY. Bob Baley, department commander of the great State of Arkansas, proudly presents you with a check for \$1,000.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. JAMES V. MARS. James Mars, Chapter 11, Jackson, Mississippi, in the name of our NSO, Gerald Humphries, I'd like to present \$1,000.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you, sir.

Mr. GERALD A. JONES. Gerald Jones, department commander from North Carolina, proudly presents \$1,000 to the Service Foundation.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you, sir.

Mr. IRVIN L. BRABANT.. Irv Brabant, senior vice-commander, State Department of Missouri, \$500.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you, sir.

Mr. SHIRLEY R TURNER. Shirley Turner, commander, Chapter Number 2, Missouri, \$25,000.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. JAMES T. RUPPENTHAL. Jim Ruppenthal, national service officer from Houston, Texas, a hundred dollar personal check in memory of Ken Smith, the late supervisor of our Waco office.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you.

Mr. DAVID H. WILSON. David Wilson, department commander, State of New York, \$1,000.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Commander, thank you.

Mr. HARRY MANNINE. Harry Mannine, department commander of Vermont, \$1,000.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you, commander.

MEMBER. Chapter 15 of the Department of Vermont, \$300 in memory of Ken Macey.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you, sir.

Mr. BURTON E. PACKARD. Burt Packard, Department of New Hampshire, \$500 to the Service Fund.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. ROBERT C. FREITAS. Bob Freitas, Department of Hawaii. We have a check coming for \$500.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you.

Mr. THOMAS CAENEN. Tom Caenen, department commander, Nevada. I have four checks to present. Remember, next year your convention's going to be with us. The first check is \$100 from the Department of Nevada. The second check is \$100 in memory of William Norris, a departed past department commander. Another \$100 check for past department commander in memory of Carl Thomas; and \$100 from Chapter 12, Henderson.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. KEN KUEHNL. Good morning. Ken Kuehnl, department commander, from the great State of Wisconsin, makes a donation of \$1500.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, sir.

MEMBER. Chapter 19, West Allis, Wisconsin, gives a \$300 check in honor of our NSOs, Clyde Dartey, Phil Kreisa, Tony Starich and Don Savage.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

Mr. RICHARD E. MARBES. Dick, here's a check for \$500 from the Marbes family for our continued support of the Foundation.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, Commander. Thank you.

Mr. JAMES EDGE. James Edge, department commander for the State of Kansas. I'd like to present \$500 from the department; also from the State of Kansas, Chapter 4, I'd like to donate \$500.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

MEMBER. Chapter 143, Largo, Florida, would like to donate \$600 to the National Service Foundation.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, dear.

Mr. RUDY VARGAS. Rudy Vargas, State of Colorado, proudly presents a check to you from the Department of Colorado and all the members, delegates of Colorado sitting right here, for \$10,000.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

Mr. ALEXANDER B. WATSON. Alex Watson, Chapter 9, St. Petersburg, Florida, \$500.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. ROBERT T. REYNOLDS. Robert Reynolds, commander, Chapter 10, Department of Virginia, would like to present a check for \$100.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. MICHAEL J. HARMON. Mike Harmon, Chapter 84, Greater Daytona Beach Area, would like to donate \$1,250 in honor of our deceased veterans.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you, sir. Thank you very much.

Mr. JOSEPH TRULIO. Good morning. Joe Trulio, Department of New Jersey, proudly presents a check for \$5,000.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

Ms. JERRY WORTHINGTON. Jerry Worthington, Southern Caucus, \$200.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

Mr. WILLIAM R. DAVIDSON. William Davidson, Robert Flansburg Chapter 7, Lincoln, Nebraska, \$200 in the name of Past Commander Tom Morrissey.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. LARRY A. POLZIN. Larry Polzin, department commander from the State of California, \$1,000.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you, Larry.

NEC 16th District Charles Demele. Charles Demele, NEC from the 16th District and the great State of California, my check for a hundred dollars, Dick.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

Mr. BOBBY B. NORMAN. This is Bobby Norman from Chapter Number 5, Arkansas. I see the need for our continued service to our veterans, and I want to make a personal contribution of \$50 for it.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

Mr. RAYMOND SOLOMON. Raymond Solomon, Chapter Number 1, Baltimore, Maryland, would like to make a pledge of \$500. The check will be forthcoming.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

Mr. WALTER H. WESSING. Walter Wessing, Kansas City, Missouri, Chapter Number 2, a hundred dollars in memory of Past National Commander Paul Thompson. Here's a hundred dollars.

Commander, I told you I would get you. Here's a 20. You've got to match it. Please, would you please do that for me? There! Now, you give it to him.

Now, Past National Ed Galian, you have to match this, too. Would you please put that \$10 with that there? Would you please do that?

Judge Advocate GALIAN. Ed Galian, \$100. You match that!

Mr. WESSING. No! And by the way, Commander, I took a collection up, and I've got a little extra money here. I don't know how

much. But it does there, whatever it is. Great, Commander! You've done a good job.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you.

MEMBER. On behalf of the Department of Maine, we'd like to donate \$500.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much, sir.

1st Junior Vice-Commander HARRY R. McDONALD. Harry McDonald, national 1st junior vice-commander. I want to give you a check in the amount of \$500; \$250 in memory of my in-laws, Fred and Anna Dulla and \$250 in memory of my stepfather and mother, Frank and Esther Lowiselle.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you very much.

I am proud to announce to you that—this is only temporary, but it's approximately \$110,000 has been contributed from the floor at this particular time. And again I want to say, this all comes from the membership, from the chapters and from the departments, and we appreciate it very, very much. We will give you a final accounting of it as soon as it's all tabulated. Thank you.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. COSGRIFF. Thank you, Commander. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. I will entertain a motion to accept the report of the National Service Foundation. Mike 3.

Mr. CLYDE E. DARTEY. Clyde Dartye, West Allis Number 19, Wisconsin, so move.

Commander McMASTERS. Is there support? Mike 1.

Mr. ALFRD FATICONI. Faticoni from Connecticut, past department commander, second the motion.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you. We have a motion and a second to accept the report of the National Service Foundation. Are we ready for the question? Ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. It's carried.

**Deloitte &
Touche LLP**



**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION**

**Financial Statements for the Years Ended
December 31, 1995 and 1994 and Independent
Auditors' Report**

**Deloitte Touche
Tomasetti
International**



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INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

Board of Directors,
Disabled American Veterans
National Service Foundation:

We have audited the accompanying statements of financial position of the Disabled American Veterans National Service Foundation (the "Foundation") as of December 31, 1995 and 1994 and the related statements of activities, functional expenses and cash flows for the years then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Foundation's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, such financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Foundation at December 31, 1995 and 1994, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

February 9, 1996

**Deloitte Touche
Tobacco
International**

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION**

**STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 1995 AND 1994**

ASSETS	1995	1994
CASH	\$ 34,584	\$ 38,644
INTEREST AND DIVIDENDS RECEIVABLE	137,802	136,679
PREPAID EXPENSES	9,340	3,234
INVESTMENTS - Marketable securities (market value of \$12,018,387 in 1995 and \$9,658,349 in 1994) (Note 2)	<u>10,904,541</u>	<u>9,653,093</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$11,086,267</u>	<u>\$9,831,650</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
LIABILITIES:		
Due to DAV (Note 3)	\$ 44,231	\$ 39,205
Due to DAV legislative program (Note 2)	10,829	11,344
Other liabilities	<u>5,000</u>	<u>9,000</u>
Total liabilities	<u>60,060</u>	<u>59,549</u>
NET ASSETS:		
Unrestricted net assets:		
General	3,455,457	2,854,018
Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund (Note 2)	<u>7,385,956</u>	<u>6,736,289</u>
Total unrestricted net assets	10,841,413	9,590,307
Permanently restricted net assets - National Order of Trench Rats DAV Legislative Program (Note 2)	<u>184,794</u>	<u>181,794</u>
Total net assets	<u>11,026,207</u>	<u>9,772,101</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$11,086,267</u>	<u>\$9,831,650</u>

See notes to financial statements.

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1995 AND 1994

See notes to financial statements.

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION**

**STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1995 AND 1994**

	1995	1994
ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGES (Note 3)	\$ 84,743	\$ 78,923
TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES	10,747	9,836
INSURANCE	3,583	3,628
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	3,550	4,509
AWARDS	3,172	1,905
PRINTING, POSTAGE AND SUPPLIES	11,652	8,509
REGISTRATION FEES	40	43
INVESTMENT TRUSTEE FEES	19,039	16,052
MISCELLANEOUS	<u>445</u>	<u>416</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$ 136,971</u>	<u>\$ 123,821</u>

See notes to financial statements.

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION**

**STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
YEARS ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1995 AND 1994**

	1995	1994
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Increase in unrestricted net assets	\$ 1,251,106	\$ 943,360
Adjustments to reconcile increase in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Amortization expense	(1,758)	(10,663)
Investment (gains) losses	(221,628)	37,543
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Interest and dividends receivable	(1,123)	(5,268)
Prepaid expenses	(6,106)	3,628
Due to DAV	5,026	829
Due to DAV legislative program	(515)	(968)
Other	(4,000)	5,000
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>1,021,002</u>	<u>973,461</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Purchases of investments	(4,923,909)	(3,847,102)
Proceeds from sale of investments	<u>3,895,847</u>	<u>2,823,997</u>
Net cash used by investing activities	<u>(1,028,062)</u>	<u>(1,023,105)</u>
CASH FLOW FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:		
Contributions of permanently restricted assets	<u>3,000</u>	<u>1,000</u>
NET DECREASE IN CASH	(4,060)	(48,644)
CASH, Beginning of year	<u>38,644</u>	<u>87,288</u>
CASH, End of year	<u>\$ 34,584</u>	<u>\$ 38,644</u>

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1995 AND 1994

1. NATURE OF OPERATIONS

The Disabled American Veterans National Service Foundation (the "Foundation") is a financial auxiliary of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV). The purpose of the Foundation, as set forth in Article 3 of the Articles of Incorporation, is as follows:

"To receive and maintain a fund or funds of personal or real property, or both, to solicit and obtain contributions from the public, and, subject to the restrictions set forth in the Articles of Incorporation, to use and apply the whole or any part of the income and principal of said fund exclusively for the promotion of social welfare (including incidental nonpartisan legislative activity in furtherance of such purpose) within the meaning of Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or corresponding section of any future Federal tax code, primarily for the assistance, aid, maintenance, care, support, and rehabilitation of disabled veterans and their dependents, either directly or by contributions to the Disabled American Veterans, a Congressionally-chartered organization."

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Financial Statements - The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis.

Financial Statement Presentation - In 1995, the Foundation elected to adopt Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 117, Financial Statements of Not-for-Profit Organizations. Under SFAS No. 117, the Foundation is required to report information regarding its financial position and activities according to three classes of net assets: unrestricted net assets, temporarily restricted net assets, and permanently restricted net assets. In addition, the Foundation is required to present a statement of cash flows. As required by this new statement, the Foundation has discontinued its use of fund accounting and has, accordingly, reclassified its financial statements to present the class of net assets required. Other than presentation, this reclassification had no significant effect on the Foundation's financial statements. The 1994 financial statements have been reclassified to conform to the 1995 presentation.

Contributions - The Foundation also elected to adopt SFAS No. 116, Accounting for Contributions Received and Contributions Made, in 1995. In accordance with SFAS No. 116, contributions received are recorded as unrestricted, temporarily restricted or permanently restricted support depending on the existence and nature of any donor restrictions. The Foundation recognizes contributions with donor imposed restrictions that are met in the same period as unrestricted contributions. The adoption of SFAS No. 116 had no significant effect on the Foundation's financial statements for 1995 and 1994.

Net Assets - All contributions and bequests to the Foundation are designated by the Board of Directors (the "Board") for permanent investment in the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund as a reserve for future needs. Investment income derived from these invested amounts is used for current operations of the Foundation or appropriated for use by the National Organization of Disabled American Veterans. Donated assets are recorded at their fair market value at the time of the donation. Investment income of \$10,829 and \$11,344, in 1995 and 1994, respectively, from the National Order of Trench Rats DAV Legislative Program are temporarily restricted for use by the Disabled American Veterans' Legislative Program. Contributions to the National Order of Trench Rats DAV Legislative Program are permanently restricted.

Investments in Securities - Investments in securities consist of equity securities, corporate bonds and U.S. treasury notes which are stated at cost, adjusted for the amortization of premiums and discounts. Premiums and discounts on debt securities are amortized by a method which approximates the interest method. Gains and losses on the sale of investment securities are recognized based upon the specific identification method and are reflected as a separate component of revenue.

The cost and market value of investments in securities and the net unrealized gain or loss at December 31 are summarized below:

	Cost	Market	Unrealized Gain/(Loss)
1995			
Cash equivalents	\$ 184,403	\$ 184,403	
Corporate Bonds	600,000	607,077	\$ 7,077
Treasuries	5,650,000	6,036,447	386,447
Common Stocks	<u>4,470,138</u>	<u>5,190,460</u>	<u>720,322</u>
Total	<u>\$ 10,904,541</u>	<u>\$ 12,018,387</u>	<u>\$ 1,113,846</u>
1994			
Cash equivalents	\$ 1,463,997	\$ 1,463,997	
Corporate Bonds	700,000	710,735	\$ 10,735
Treasuries	5,150,000	5,134,472	(15,528)
Common Stocks	<u>2,339,096</u>	<u>2,349,145</u>	<u>10,049</u>
Total	<u>\$ 9,653,093</u>	<u>\$ 9,658,349</u>	<u>\$ 5,256</u>

Income Taxes - As a not-for-profit service organization, the Foundation has been approved as exempt from federal income taxes as a 501(c)(4) organization. Contributions made to the Foundation are tax deductible by the contributor.

Use of Estimates - The preparation of the financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual amounts could differ from those estimates.

3. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The DAV provides the Foundation with the use of DAV personnel, facilities and equipment. DAV charged the Foundation \$84,743 and \$78,923 in 1995 and 1994, respectively, for personnel services. At December 31, 1995 and 1994, the Foundation owed \$44,231 and \$39,205, respectively, for personnel services. Facilities and equipment are provided by the DAV at no charge.

In performing the duties of their positions, the DAV's National Commander, National Adjutant and National Finance Committee Chairman serve on the Board of the Foundation.

* * * * *

I'm going to call on the Legislative and Veterans Rights Committee for their report.

Mr. RICHARD E. GIESE. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. The National Convention Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights was called to order for its first business session on July 29th, 1996 by the committee advisor, Richard, Rick Schultz, assisted by Thomas L. Tomlinson. And Joe Violante provided much input on the session.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. Dick Giese from Florida was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed, and Dick Giese was elected chairman. The next order of business was the nomination and election of a secretary. Don Pouliot from California was nominated and was elected as secretary for the committee.

I also want to thank Mr. Tortolano from California who assisted us in much of the wipe-up paperwork.

I also want to recognize the diligent work and hard work that was put in by all the members, and rather than run their names, in the essence of time, I would ask that all of the delegates and the alternates please stand and please recognize a job well done. My personal thanks to all of you. [Applause.]

The committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted, and I will now report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption by this National Convention. For the purpose of saving time, I will read only the number and a short resume of or a goal of the particular resolution. If you are not happy with that and would like the RESOLVED portion read, I will call upon Don to bring that resolution forward.

As you know, all of these resolutions were adopted by your elected representatives to this committee, and they were very thoroughly discussed at length, and the adoption was not just a rapping of the gavel type situation.

Resolution Number 5 was adopted. The ten-year protection for service-connected evaluations.

Resolution Number 6. Concurrent receipt of VA disability compensation and military longevity retirement pay.

Resolution Number 8. Oppose the taxation of VA disability compensation benefits.

Resolution Number 9. Supporting a change in the payment of certain accrued benefits upon the death of a beneficiary.

Resolution Number 10. To oppose termination of compensation to certain mentally incompetent veterans.

Resolution Number 11. To raise the estate level applicable to certain incompetent and institutional veterans.

Resolution Number 12. Oppose any proposal that would offset payments of Social Security disability insurance benefits or any other federal benefit by VA compensation.

Resolution Number 28. Authorize automobile adaptive equipment eligibility to any veteran who has a service-connected disability that inhibits the ability to safely operate a motor vehicle.

Resolution Number 84. A disability compensation increase. Can't argue with that.

Resolution Number 105. The SMCK award for the loss of female mammary gland.

Resolution Number 106. To provide a temporary total rating for a period that an amputee has a new prosthetic device constructed.

Resolution 121. Oppose permanent rounding-down of the COLAs.

122. Oppose redefining service connection.

Resolution 124. Remove offset between military nondisability payments and service-connected disability compensation.

125. In support of the Court of Veterans Appeals review of decisions on the basis of clear and unmistakable error.

126. Require the Board of Veterans Appeals compliance with due process procedures.

127. Oppose broadening of the Board of Veterans Appeals authority to obtain evidence.

128. Support legislation to preclude inappropriate remands by the Court of Veterans Appeals.

129. Support legislation to provide for judicial review of certain decisions involving degree of disability.

153. Oppose subjecting compensations to mean testing.

154. Opposing a freeze in the rates of VA disability compensation benefits.

157. To provide a realistic increase in the VA's special adapted housing grant.

185. Revise presumptive period for establishing service connection for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

219. Supporting legislation to provide service connection to atomic veterans for all recognized radiogenic diseases.

220. Allow all veterans to recover amounts withheld as tax on disability severance pay.

221. Exempt benefits paid to wartime service-connected disabled veterans from the pay-go provisions of the Budget Enforcement Act.

222. To liberalize criteria for Agent Orange claims.

223. Support appropriate relief for spina bifida in children of Vietnam veterans.

224. Oppose reduction, taxation or elimination of VA benefits.

225. Oppose the indexing of VA disability compensation benefits.

225. Expand POW presumptions.

227. Compensate Persian Gulf veterans suffering from unknown illness or disease circumstantially linked to their service in the Persian Gulf.

228. Support change in requirements for temporary total rating under Paragraph 30.

229. Provide for commencement of payment period for temporary total ratings for compensation as of the date of entitling event.

230. To establish 5307, Title 38, U.S. Code, as the sole means to compel division of VA benefits.

240. Opposing the use of VA-generated savings for purposes other than restoring VA benefits and services.

232. These are under burial related now. To provide for at least one open national cemetery in every state.

233. Restore entitlement and increase burial and plot allowance for survivors of all wartime veterans.

234. Provide headstones or markers for all veterans.

Now under the category of insurance related. Resolution No. 13. To provide an open period to apply for service-disabled veterans' insurance.

Number 14. Mortgage protection life insurance for 100 percent service-connected veterans.

Number 30. Increase the face value of service-disabled veterans' insurance.

231. Provide for waiver of premiums for supplemental SDVI. That's service-disabled veterans' insurance.

Under military related. Resolution No. 91. Opposing the dissolution of the military commissary system.

241. Award commissary and PX privileges based on a DIC award.

242. In support of a COLA for military retirees.

243. Extend military commissary and exchange privileges and space-available air travel to certain service-connected disabled veterans. Specifically, we're talking about 30 percent and higher, just to clarify that.

244. Space-available air travel aboard military aircraft for 100 percent service-connected veterans.

245. Support of military medal to recognize and honor veterans exposed to ionization radiation during service.

Number 30. Now, this is under education. These are all education-related resolutions. Number 39. Provide Chapter 35 educational benefits for dependents of veterans rated 80 percent or more service-connected disabled.

Number 161. Eliminate the delimiting date for spouse in the VA's Chapter 35 Education Program.

Number 235. Eliminate the 12-year delimiting date for use of vocational rehabilitation benefits.

Now we come under the miscellaneous category. We're getting toward the end. Number 15. Supporting adequate funding for all VA programs.

Number 164. Allow for payment of fees, expenses and court costs under equal access to justice to unsupervised, nonattorney representation practicing before the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals.

Number 236. Expand the Vietnam Era.

Number 237. Oppose any reduction in veterans' programs.

Number 238. Oppose any authorization to use members of the armed forces for human experimentation.

Number 239. Oppose abolishment of the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

Number 246. Support legislation to allow veteran service officers to solicit contributions on Post Office property.

Number 247. Oppose legislation to reduce the number of judges at the Court of Veterans Appeals.

That, Mr. Chairman, concludes my report, and I respectfully move that we adopt the same and dismiss the committee with the thanks of the convention.

[The above-mentioned resolutions follow:]

RESOLUTION NO. 005—LEGISLATIVE

TO PROVIDE A 10-YEAR PROTECTION PERIOD FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY
EVALUATIONS

WHEREAS, section 110 of title 38, U.S.C., now provides for the protection of all disability compensation evaluations that have been continuously in effect for 20 or more years; and

WHEREAS, permanency should be conceded for disability compensation ratings which have been in effect for 10 years without change in evaluation with no further examination scheduled; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports amendment of section 100 of title 38 U.S.C. to provide that disability evaluations continuously in effect at the same evaluation rate be protected after a period of 10 years.

RESOLUTION NO. 006—LEGISLATIVE

CONCURRENT PAYMENTS OF VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND MILITARY RETIREMENT
PAY

WHEREAS, ex-service members who are retired from the military on length of service must waive a portion of their retired pay in order to receive disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, it would be more equitable if the laws and regulations were changed to provide that in such cases the veteran would be entitled to receive both benefits concurrently since eligibility was established and earned under two entirely different sets of enabling laws and regulations; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation and changed in applicable regulations which would provide that a veteran who is retired for length of service and is later adjudicated as having service-connected disabilities, may receive concurrent benefits from the military department and from the VA without deduction from either.

RESOLUTION NO. 008—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING THE TAXATION OF VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION BENEFITS

WHEREAS, the Tax Simplification Plan, released by the Department of the Treasury in November 1984, proposed the federal taxation of VA disability compensation benefits; and

WHEREAS, in the entire history of the disability compensation program these benefits have never been subject to taxation at either the federal, state or local levels; and

WHEREAS, taxation of these benefits would amount to nothing more than a permanent, enduring reduction in benefits and would demean the sacrifice and service of our nation's service-connected disabled veteran population; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, vigorously opposes any proposal that would subject VA disability compensation benefits to taxation.

RESOLUTION NO. 009—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING A CHANGE IN THE PAYMENT OF CERTAIN ACCRUED BENEFITS UPON DEATH
OF A BENEFICIARY

WHEREAS, section 5121 of title 39 U.S.C. sets forth the requirement for payment of accrued benefits upon death of a beneficiary and limits accrued benefits to periodic monetary benefits due and unpaid for a period not to exceed one year; and

WHEREAS, the current appeals process, including a favorable Board of Veteran's Appeals decision and payment of retroactive benefits can take considerably longer than one year; and

WHEREAS, the spouse and/or dependent children are part of the veteran's "family unit" and suffer the financial loss incurred during the appeals process; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28-August 1, 1996, supports legislation which would provide for payment in full of all due and unpaid accrued benefits to the spouse or dependent children.

RESOLUTION NO. 010—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING THE TERMINATION OF COMPENSATION TO CERTAIN MENTALLY INCOMPETENT VETERANS

WHEREAS, compensation is paid for physical and mental disabilities connected to service in our nation's defense; and

WHEREAS, there is nothing inherent in either physical or mental disability that diminishes the economic effects of either as compared to the other; and

WHEREAS, veterans with mental disability are as deserving of compensation as those with physical disability, and should also have the same opportunities for enjoyment of life, incurring financial obligations, saving for future security, and creation of estates; and

WHEREAS, proposals to terminate compensation to mentally incompetent veterans when their estates reach \$25,000 and until reduced to \$10,000 unfairly discriminates against veterans merely because the disease they suffered in defense of our nation is mental in nature; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28-August 1, 1996, opposes discriminatory legislation that would terminate the compensation of mentally incompetent veterans based on the size of their estate.

RESOLUTION NO. 011—LEGISLATIVE

TO RAISE THE ESTATE LIMIT APPLICABLE TO CERTAIN INCOMPETENT, INSTITUTIONALIZED VETERANS

WHEREAS, current law requires the suspension of VA disability compensation, pension and emergency officer's retirement pay in the case of mentally incompetent veterans who have neither a spouse or child and who are being furnished hospital treatment, institutional or domiciliary care at U.S. government expense once the estate of such veterans equals or exceeds the sum of \$1,500.00 (not to be continued until the estate is reduced to \$500); and

WHEREAS, this is discriminatory treatment towards this single group of veterans; and

WHEREAS, this \$1,500 estate level has not been adjusted in many years and conceivably can cause financial hardship to such veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28-August 1, 1996, supports legislation which would provide a realistic upward adjustment in the present maximum \$1,500 estate level that applies to such mentally incompetent, institutionalized veterans.

RESOLUTION NO. 012—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING ANY PROPOSAL THAT WOULD OFFSET PAYMENTS OF SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE BENEFITS OR ANY OTHER FEDERAL BENEFIT BY VA COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, there has been consideration given to proposing an offset of Social Security Disability Insurance Benefits by payments of any other federal benefit; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of such a measure would reduce the overall income provided to those service-connected veterans who have a compensable disability and who also suffer a permanent and total disability for purposes of Disability Insurance Benefits from the Social Security Administration; and

WHEREAS, such an offset would work a grave and undue hardship on all totally disabled service-connected veterans and their families by drastically reducing their total income; and

WHEREAS, benefits received from the Department of Veterans Affairs or under military retirement pay and other federal programs have differing eligibility criteria as compared to the earned payments of Social Security Disability Insurance Benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28-August 1, 1996, opposes any measure which proposes to offset the payment of any other federal benefit or earned benefit entitlement by VA compensation payments made to service-connected disabled veterans.

RESOLUTION NO. 013—LEGISLATIVE

TO PROVIDE AN OPEN PERIOD TO APPLY FOR SERVICE DISABLED VETERANS INSURANCE
(RH)

WHEREAS, service-connected disabled veterans are entitled to apply for Service Disabled Veterans Insurance (RH) within one year from the date the VA grants service connection for any disability; and

WHEREAS, many eligible veterans, due to financial difficulties and problems associated with readjustment to civilian life, did not apply for this insurance within the one year eligibility period; and

WHEREAS, many of these service-connected disabled veterans are now prepared and can afford to purchase this insurance but are not able to purchase comparable insurance coverage in the private sector; and

WHEREAS, precedent has been established to extend previously closed “eligibility periods” for certain other VA benefits and services, including insurance; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28-August 1, 1996, seeks the enactment of legislation that would authorize an “open period” for eligible service-connected disabled veterans to apply for coverage under the Service Disabled Veterans Insurance Program.

RESOLUTION NO. 014—LEGISLATIVE

TO EXTEND ELIGIBILITY FOR VETERANS’ MORTGAGE LIFE INSURANCE TO SERVICE-
CONNECTED VETERANS RATED PERMANENTLY AND TOTALLY DISABLED

WHEREAS, VA Mortgage Life Insurance is presently available to veterans entitled to the special adapted housing award under section 2101(a) of title 38 U.S.C.; and

WHEREAS, service-connected veterans rated as permanently and totally disabled cannot obtain Mortgage Life Insurance through commercial insurance companies; and

WHEREAS, their widows and dependents must bear an undue hardship upon the death of such veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28-August 1, 1996, seeks the enactment of legislation which would extend VA Mortgage Life Insurance to service-connected veterans who are rated as permanently and totally disabled.

RESOLUTION NO. 015

SUPPORTING ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR ALL VA PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, understaffing of VA programs in recent years has hampered the VA’s ability to effectively administer programs intended to benefit this nation’s veterans; and

WHEREAS, continued efforts by the Office of Management and Budget to reduce the VA budget will lead to further deterioration of all VA programs; and

WHEREAS, this nation’s first concern should be to fulfill its obligation to those who served in the military services in defense of the country; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28-August 1, 1996, seeks and strongly supports adequate funding for all VA programs.

RESOLUTION NO. 028—LEGISLATIVE

AMEND PROVISIONS REGARDING ELIGIBILITY FOR AUTOMOBILE ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT TO INCLUDE ANY VETERAN WHOSE SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY INHIBITS HIS/HER ABILITY TO SAFELY OPERATE A MOTOR VEHICLE

WHEREAS, title 38, U.S.C. § 3902 and 38 C.F.R. § 17.119(a) restrict the eligibility for adaptive equipment to those veterans who qualify for the automobile grant as specified in 38 U.S.C. § 3901; and

WHEREAS, not all veterans whose service-connected disabilities prohibit the safe operation of a motor vehicle meet the requirements of 38 U.S.C. § 3901; and

WHEREAS, these service-connected disabled veterans should be provided the adaptive equipment necessary to safely operate a motor vehicle; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports the enactment of legislation that would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide or assist in providing the adaptive equipment deemed necessary to any veteran whose service-connected disability interferes with the safe operation of a motor vehicle.

RESOLUTION NO. 030—LEGISLATIVE

TO INCREASE THE FACE VALUE OF SERVICE DISABLED VETERANS INSURANCE (RH)

WHEREAS, certain veterans are eligible for National Service Life Insurance (NSLI) under section 1922 of title 38 U.S.C.; and

WHEREAS, honorably discharged veterans released from active military duty on or after April 25, 1951, found by the Department of Veterans Affairs to be suffering from a disability or disabilities for which a compensable evaluation would be payable, shall, upon application, be granted insurance by the United States government under section 1922(a) of title 38 U.S.C.; and

WHEREAS, this insurance, commonly referred to as RH insurance, is non-participating with no dividends payable; and

WHEREAS, many of these veterans are uninsurable by private insurance companies as a result of their service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, inflation has rapidly increased and diminished the value of the insurance since the maximum was set at \$10,000; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports amendment of title 38 U.S.C. to increase the maximum amount of insurance coverage available under the Service Disabled Veterans Insurance (RH).

RESOLUTION NO. 039—LEGISLATIVE

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS FOR DEPENDENTS OF SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS RATED 80 PERCENT OR MORE DISABLED

WHEREAS, chapter 35 of title 38 U.S.C. extends educational assistance to the dependents of service-connected veterans who are evaluated as permanently and totally disabled; and

WHEREAS, there are many service-connected veterans rated 80 percent and 90 percent disabled, whose dependents cannot afford to attend an institution of higher learning or pursue a vocational endeavor because of the reduced earning ability of such veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, seeks the enactment of legislation which would extend educational assistance under chapter 35 of title 38 U.S.C. to the dependents of veterans who have a service-connected disability rating of 80 percent or more.

RESOLUTION NO. 084—LEGISLATIVE

DISABILITY COMPENSATION INCREASE

WHEREAS, it is the historical policy of the Disabled American Veterans that this nation's first duty to veterans is to provide for the rehabilitation of its wartime disabled; and

WHEREAS, the percentage ratings for service-connected disabilities represent, as far as can be practicably determined, the average impairment in earnings capacity resulting from such diseases and injuries in civil occupations; and

WHEREAS, compensation increases should be based on the loss of earnings capacity; and

WHEREAS, disabled veterans who are unable to work because of service-connected disabilities should be entitled to compensation payments commensurate with the after tax earnings of their able-bodied contemporaries; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports the enactment of legislation to provide a realistic increase in VA compensation rates to bring the standard of living of disabled veterans in line with that which they would have enjoyed had they not suffered their service-connected disabilities.

RESOLUTION NO. 091—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MILITARY COMMISSARY SYSTEM

WHEREAS, some members of Congress and other officials have proposed to phase-out the Military Commissary System; and

WHEREAS, the Commissary System is of vital importance to the personnel of our Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, active duty personnel, their dependents, retired military and disabled veterans who live on fixed incomes should have high quality food at fair and reasonable prices; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, vigorously opposes any proposal to phase-out the Armed Forces Commissary System.

RESOLUTION NO. 105—LEGISLATIVE

SPECIAL MONTHLY COMPENSATION FOR LOSS OF FEMALE MAMMARY GLAND

WHEREAS, 38 U.S.C. 1114(k) and 38 C.F.R. 3.350(a) grants special monthly compensation for loss of one hand, one foot, both buttocks, one or more creative organs; blindness—one eye having light perception only, deafness—both ears having the absence of air and bone conduction; and complete organic aphonia with constant inability to communicate by speech; and

WHEREAS, there is a significant hormonal interrelationship between the female mammary glands and the female reproductive system; and

WHEREAS, the female mammary glands can be a necessary postpartum accessory organ; and

WHEREAS, severe physical disfigurement and complete loss of use results from the removal of the female mammary gland; and

WHEREAS, major reconstructive surgery or utilization of a prosthesis is necessary to replace the amputated organ; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation to amend Section 1114(k) of title 38 U.S.C. to add the anatomical loss of a female mammary gland.

RESOLUTION NO. 106—LEGISLATIVE

TO PROVIDE A TEMPORARY TOTAL RATING FOR THE PERIOD THAT AN AMPUTEE HAS A NEW PROSTHETIC DEVICE CONSTRUCTED

WHEREAS, it takes four to six weeks to manufacture a prosthetic device; and

WHEREAS, many employers will not accept amputee back to his employment until he has his artificial limb; and

WHEREAS, the veteran who does not have an artificial limb is incapacitated and unable to perform gainful employment; and

WHEREAS, the 1945 Rating Schedule does not contain any provision to provide this temporary total rating; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996,

supports legislation to amend the 1945 Rating Schedule to provide a temporary total rating for the period involving the replacement of a prosthetic device.

RESOLUTION NO. 121—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING THE PERMANENT ROUNDING DOWN OF COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS IN
VETERANS' BENEFITS

WHEREAS, to maintain the worth of veterans' benefits, they must be adjusted to keep pace with the rise in the cost-of-living; and

WHEREAS, permanently rounding down the adjusted rates to the next lower dollar amount will erode the value of these benefits over time and thus not keep pace with the rise in the cost of living; and

WHEREAS, permanently rounding down veteran's cost-of-living adjustments unfairly singles out veterans for a disproportionate and unfair burden in deficit reduction; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, opposes permanent rounding down of cost-of-living adjustments for veterans' benefits.

RESOLUTION NO. 122—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING ANY CHANGE THAT WOULD REDEFINE SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY OR
RESTRICT THE CONDITIONS OR CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH IT MAY BE ESTABLISHED

WHEREAS, current law authorizes service connection for disabilities incurred or aggravated during service in the United States Armed Forces in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, there are various proposals to limit service connection to disabilities caused directly by the performance of duty; and

WHEREAS, disability incurred in the line of duty is sometimes not directly due to a job injury but may be due to less obvious factors attributable to the Armed Forces environment; and

WHEREAS, proof of a causal relationship may often be difficult or impossible notwithstanding an inability to disassociate the disability from service-related factors; and

WHEREAS, current law equitably alleviates the onerous burden of establishing performance of duty or other causal connection as a prerequisite for service connection; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, opposes changes in current law so as to redefine or restrict service connection.

RESOLUTION NO. 124—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO REMOVE OFFSET BETWEEN MILITARY NON-DISABILITY
PAYMENTS AND SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, servicemembers receive severance, separation, readjustment, and retired pay not based on disability; and

WHEREAS, current law requires these benefits to be offset against service-connected disability compensation; and

WHEREAS, each of these benefits are merited for totally separate reasons and do not duplicate in any way service-connected disability compensation; and

WHEREAS, the current provisions requiring offset are inequitable; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation to remove the offset between non-disability severance, separation, readjustment, and retired pay and service-connected disability compensation.

RESOLUTION NO. 125—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO PERMIT REVIEW OF BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS
DECISIONS ON THE BASIS OF CLEAR AND UNMISTAKABLE ERROR

WHEREAS, final decisions of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) may not be reopened or reviewed except upon submission of new and material evidence or in the case of clear and unmistakable error; and

WHEREAS, a decision by the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit construed the law as including no right to review of a clear and unmistakable error occurring in a final Board of Veterans' Appeals decision; and

WHEREAS, it is inequitable to bar correction of a decision which is undebatably wrong and which deprives a VA claimant of benefits to which he or she is unquestionably entitled, merely because the error occurred or was continued at the Board of Veterans' Appeals level; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation to provide for review, as a matter of right, of a prior Board of Veterans' Appeals decision in which a claimant asserts there is a clear and unmistakable error, and to further provide for right of review of the Board's decision on this question by the United States Court of Veterans Appeals without necessity for a jurisdictional notice of disagreement.

RESOLUTION NO. 126—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING MEASURES TO REQUIRE BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS COMPLIANCE WITH
DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES

WHEREAS, the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) employs medical treatises to help it in determining certain medical questions; and

WHEREAS, BVA also has limited authority to obtain independent medical and legal opinions; and

WHEREAS, the United States Court of Veterans Appeals (Court) has ruled that BVA must provide an appellant with a prior notice of its intent to use such additional evidence or opinion, along with a statement of BVA's intended reliance on this material; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the Court's ruling that this procedure is required for "any evidence" obtained by BVA, the BVA, according to its own contrary policy, does not provide a statement of its intended reliance for independent medical experts' opinions and certain other materials it obtains; and

WHEREAS, this leaves the veteran in the dark about BVA's interpretation of such evidence, thereby preventing any opportunity to persuade a different interpretation; and

WHEREAS, this contravenes BVA's duty to assist, is contrary to the non-adversarial nature of VA proceedings, and is a denial of due process as required by the Court's ruling; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports such regulatory or statutory changes as are deemed appropriate to require BVA compliance with these procedures.

RESOLUTION NO. 127—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING BROADENING OF BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS AUTHORITY TO OBTAIN
EVIDENCE

WHEREAS, within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the various field offices have original jurisdiction over questions of entitlement to veterans' benefits and services and the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) has appellate jurisdiction to review the adjudication of the field offices; and

WHEREAS, it is the primary responsibility of the field office to develop the evidentiary record with evidence sufficient to permit a well-informed decision on a claim, with the BVA charged with the function of reviewing the propriety of the record development and decision of the field office; and

WHEREAS, BVA must remand in the case of a deficient record to have the field office fulfill its responsibility to properly develop the record; and

WHEREAS, BVA has limited statutory authority to directly obtain evidence itself, under very special circumstances; and

WHEREAS, BVA seeks to broaden its authority to secure evidence although it barely has personnel and resources sufficient to accomplish its current responsibilities and although such action would only serve to encourage poor record development by field offices; and

WHEREAS, the effect will be one requiring more VA claimants to appeal to have their records developed properly, will further divert BVA resources away from decision making, and will result in even longer delays for VA claimants; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, opposes any legislative, regulatory, or administrative policy changes which would permit or authorize the BVA to directly obtain evidence, other than is currently expressly authorized by law.

RESOLUTION NO. 128—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO PRECLUDE INAPPROPRIATE REMANDS FROM THE COURT OF VETERANS APPEALS TO THE BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS

WHEREAS, appellants, but not the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), may appeal decisions from the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) to the United States Court of Veterans Appeals (COVA); and

WHEREAS, only appellants have the right to challenge the BVA decision, therefore; and

WHEREAS, COVA nonetheless remands cases for further action and a new decision by the BVA based on the VA's motions for remand which contain VA's arguments of error in its own decision; and

WHEREAS, this practice allows VA to appeal its own decision, to deprive appellants of their right to an independent review of BVA's decisions by COVA, allows VA to avoid scrutiny of BVA's decision and consideration of errors specified by appellants, and allows VA to attempt to gather new evidence on remand in an effort to provide after-the-fact justification for the prior denial; and

WHEREAS, appellants are not permitted remands merely to allow them to strengthen their cases; and

WHEREAS, permitting VA to take cases back from the Court to the BVA allows VA an unfair advantage and is therefore prejudicial to appellants seeking independent review; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation to constrain COVA from remanding cases to BVA for reasons argued by VA, over appellants' objections, and to prevent remands which permit VA to search for additional evidence in an attempt to justify the BVA denial.

RESOLUTION NO. 129—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW OF CERTAIN DECISIONS INVOLVING DEGREE OF DISABILITY

WHEREAS, the United States Court of Veterans Appeals (COVA) has jurisdiction to review Board of Veterans' Appeals Decisions which resulted from notices of disagreement filed on or after November 18, 1988; and

WHEREAS, COVA has held that it does not have jurisdiction to review a decision on the degree of disability where appeal was taken on that issue immediately following the establishment of service connection if there was a pre-November, 1988, notice of disagreement on the issue of service connection, even though there was a post-November 19, 1988, notice of disagreement on the issue of the degree of disability; and

WHEREAS, the issue of service connection and the issue of the degree of disability involve separate adjudications; and

WHEREAS, when service connection is granted on appeal that totally ends that appeal, requiring a new notice of disagreement and a new appeal if the disability evaluation thereafter assigned is unsatisfactory to the veteran; and

WHEREAS, COVA's reasoning is illogical in that it necessarily means the veteran's disagreement as to degree of disability, and notice thereof, preceded the adjudication on this issue; and

WHEREAS, this ruling by COVA unfairly deprives some veterans of the right to judicial review; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation to override this restrictive ruling by COVA and thereby reinstate the right to judicial review in these cases.

RESOLUTION NO. 153—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSITION TO SUBJECTING COMPENSATION TO MEANS-TESTING

WHEREAS, the citizens of our Nation have heretofore honorably recognized their indebtedness to those who sacrificed in the service of their country by providing compensation as restitution for the personal injuries suffered in such service; and

WHEREAS, a disabled veteran is rightfully entitled to restitution for the effects of service-connected disability during its continuation, without regard to good fortune or income of the veteran or spouse from sources wholly independent of the government's obligations to the veteran; and

WHEREAS, it is fundamentally unfair for the government to seek to disclaim its obligation to disabled veterans or their survivors merely because of the receipt of other, unrelated income; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the special status of disability and death compensation, there are efforts to reduce or eliminate it where the veteran or spouse, or survivor has other income; and

WHEREAS, this degrades compensation by providing it to the extent of the veteran's or survivor's economic needs rather than a measure of restitution equal to personal losses, thereby disassociating compensation from that which merits it and associating it with factors which govern purely gratuitous and welfare benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, opposes any scheme to means test disability and death compensation.

RESOLUTION NO. 154—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING A FREEZE IN THE RATES OF VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION BENEFITS

WHEREAS, no segment of our society is more deserving of federal benefits and services than those veterans who have incurred disabilities while serving their country honorably in time of need; and

WHEREAS, under the guise of “reducing federal expenditures,” proposals have been advanced to freeze the current rates of VA disability compensation benefits; and

WHEREAS, the disability compensation benefits of service-connected disabled veterans should be periodically adjusted to reflect inflationary pressures and the rise in the costs of goods and services; and

WHEREAS, service-connected disabled veterans, who have suffered so much for their country, should not be expected to endure further hardships such as would occur should a cost-of-living adjustment be denied to their benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, opposes any freeze in the VA disability compensation program if such program is singled out (from all other major federal entitlement programs) for such treatment.

RESOLUTION NO. 157—LEGISLATIVE

TO PROVIDE AN INCREASE IN THE SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING GRANT AUTHORIZED BY SECTION 2101(A) OF TITLE 38 U.S.C.

WHEREAS, section 2101(a) of title 38 U.S.C. authorizes a onetime specially adapted housing grant to veterans who have incurred the service-connected conditions of blindness, with loss or loss of use of one lower extremity, multiple loss or loss of use of extremities, and/or loss of functions which affect balance or propulsion; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this grant is to enable such severely disabled veterans to provide necessary structural adaptations and modifications in their homes for comfort and egress; and

WHEREAS, the current \$38,000.00 maximum amount authorized for this grant is insufficient to allow such veterans to make all necessary adaptations and modifications; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation in the Congress which would provide a realistic increase in the grant authorized by section 2101(a) of title 38 U.S.C.

RESOLUTION NO. 161—LEGISLATIVE

ELIMINATE THE DELIMITING DATE FOR ELIGIBLE SPOUSES AND SURVIVING SPOUSES FOR BENEFITS PROVIDED UNDER CHAPTER 35 OF TITLE 38 U.S.C.

WHEREAS, dependents and survivors eligible for VA education benefits under chapter 35 of title 38 U.S.C. have ten years in which to apply for and complete a program of education; and

WHEREAS, this ten year period begins either from the date a veteran is evaluated by the VA as permanently and totally disabled from service-connected disabilities or ten years from the date of such veteran's death due to service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, in many instances, because of family obligations or the need to provide care to the veteran, spouses or surviving spouses may not have had an opportunity to apply for these benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, seeks the enactment of legislation which would eliminate the delimiting date for spouses and surviving spouses for purposes of benefits provided under chapter 35 of title 38 U.S.C.

RESOLUTION NO. 164—LEGISLATIVE

IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION TO ALLOW FOR THE PAYMENT OF FEES, EXPENSES, AND COURT COSTS UNDER 28 U.S.C. SECTION 2412, EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACT, TO UNSUPERVISED NONATTORNEY REPRESENTATIVES PRACTICING BEFORE THE U.S. COURT OF VETERANS APPEALS

WHEREAS, attorneys practicing before the United States Court of Veterans Appeals (COVA) are allowed to collect reasonable attorney fees, expenses and court costs pursuant to the provisions of 28 U.S.C. 2412, Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA), in cases where the government was not substantially justified in withholding benefits or services; and

WHEREAS, COVA allows nonattorney representatives employed by veterans' service organizations to practice, unsupervised, before the Court; and

WHEREAS, DAV attorneys and nonattorney representatives practice before COVA; and

WHEREAS, COVA has recently determined that DAV's nonattorney representatives are not entitled to reasonable fees, expenses or court costs pursuant to EAJA; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation in Congress which would allow unsupervised nonattorney representatives to obtain EAJA fees under 28 U.S.C. Section 2412.

RESOLUTION NO. 185—LEGISLATIVE

REVISE THE PRESUMPTIVE PERIOD IN ESTABLISHING SERVICE CONNECTION FOR AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS

WHEREAS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) begins insidiously, involving degeneration of nerve cells, either in the brain, the brain stem, or the spinal cord, and is characterized by atrophy and, almost always, fibrillation of the muscular systems of the body; and

WHEREAS, in its primary stage it is almost impossible to diagnose; and

WHEREAS, the patient and doctor often believe that the condition causing the symptoms is arrested and nothing more is done to document the diagnostic entity; and

WHEREAS, when ALS has definitely been diagnosed, it has a dismal and grave prognosis which inexorably leads to death within four to five years; and

WHEREAS, the current presumptive period of one year from separation from active duty is grossly inadequate due to the insidious nature of this disease; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation to amend 38 U.S.C. § 1112(a) to increase the one-year presumptive period for ALS to seven years following release from active service.

RESOLUTION NO. 219—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTION TO ATOMIC VETERANS FOR ALL RECOGNIZED RADIOGENIC DISEASES

WHEREAS, members of the United States Armed Services have participated in test detonation of nuclear devices and served in Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan following the detonation of nuclear bombs; and

WHEREAS, the United States government knew or should have known of the potential harm to the health and well-being of these military members; and

WHEREAS, atomic veterans served their country with honor, courage, and devotion to duty; and

WHEREAS, remedial legislation passed by Congress in 1984 has not been effective in providing compensation to those atomic veterans suffering from radiogenic diseases; and

WHEREAS, by the VA's own admission, approximately no more than 50 claimants have obtained disability compensation/dependency indemnity compensation pursuant to Public Law 98–542; and

WHEREAS, the government has spent tens of millions of dollars to provide dose reconstruction estimates which do not accurately reflect actual radiation dose exposure; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation to provide presumptive service connection to atomic veterans for all recognized radiogenic diseases.

RESOLUTION NO. 220—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO ALLOW ALL VETERANS TO RECOVER AMOUNTS WITHHELD AS TAX ON DISABILITY SEVERANCE PAY

WHEREAS, money received as a result of personal injury or disability is not taxable; and

WHEREAS, disability severance pay is paid to a military member as a result of injury or disease suffered during military service; and

WHEREAS, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has, and continues to, tax military disability severance pay as regular income; and

WHEREAS, a United States District Court has held that military disability severance pay is nontaxable income; and

WHEREAS, the IRS has acquiesced in the District Court holding; and

WHEREAS, the three-year statute of limitations prevents veterans, who have been discharged for more than three years from recovering the nontaxable money withheld by the IRS; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, strongly supports legislation which would allow all veterans to recover nontaxable income withheld from their disability severance pay, notwithstanding the three-year statute of limitations which would otherwise prevent such recovery.

RESOLUTION NO. 221—LEGISLATIVE

TO SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT WOULD EXEMPT THE BENEFITS PAID TO WARTIME SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS FROM THE “PAY-GO” PROVISIONS OF THE BUDGET ENFORCEMENT ACT

WHEREAS, wartime disabled veterans have earned the benefits and services they, their dependents and survivors receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs as a result of the injuries sustained during their period of wartime service; and

WHEREAS, the benefits and services received by wartime disabled veterans as a result of their service-connected disabilities is an extension of the costs of war; and

WHEREAS, this country has a moral obligation to continue to care for these citizen soldiers who have risen in defense and support of the ideals of this great nation and who have returned to civilian life with service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the benefits and services provided to America's veterans, dependents and survivors have not caused this nation's deficit problems; and

WHEREAS, the so-called "pay-go" provisions of the Budget Enforcement Act require any new benefits or services to be paid out of existing benefits or programs, in effect, requiring one group of disabled veterans to give up a benefit or service so that another worthy group of wartime disabled veterans can receive benefits or services to which they are entitled; and

WHEREAS, Persian Gulf War veterans suffering from ailments associated with their service in the Persian Gulf War are compensated from funds generated by cutting the benefits of other service-connected veterans and their survivors; and

WHEREAS, the benefits and services provided to wartime disabled veterans are unique and are not a "welfare benefit"; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28-August 1, 1996, supports legislation to exempt VA benefits and services provided to service-connected disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors from the "pay-go" provisions of the Budget Enforcement Act.

RESOLUTION NO. 222—LEGISLATIVE

LIBERALIZE CRITERIA FOR AGENT ORANGE CLAIMS

WHEREAS, herbicides, the most potent known as Agent Orange, were used extensively and in great quantities in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, many veterans were exposed in varying degrees to these toxic defoliants and continue to suffer diseases of unknown origin; and

WHEREAS, more than 250,000 Vietnam veterans, concerned over this exposure to herbicides, have been entered on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Agent Orange Registry; and

WHEREAS, the National Academy of Sciences, in studies mandated by the U.S. Congress, continues to review and evaluate scientific data to determine whether a direct link exists between dioxin exposure and certain physical disorders; and

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans continues to support the premise that such exposure is the proximate cause of certain health disorders; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28-August 1, 1996, supports liberalizing the criteria for herbicide-related claims, including placing burden of proof for the award of disability compensation on the U.S. Government and not on the individual veteran, and making the U.S. Government responsible for providing needed medical attention, examination, care and treatment, as required by sound medical judgment, and where appropriate, awarding service-connected compensation on the basis of sound medical/scientific findings; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that those veterans now carried on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Agent Orange Registry be given the opportunity for a prompt examination by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs unit to ascertain dioxin levels, and to determine whether shared medical conditions exist among them.

RESOLUTION NO. 223—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING APPROPRIATE RELIEF FOR SPINA BIFIDA IN THE CHILDREN OF VIETNAM VETERANS

WHEREAS, there is evidence suggestive of a link between Vietnam veterans' exposure to the defoliant Agent Orange and spina bifida in their children; and

WHEREAS, spina bifida can be disabling to varying degrees and can require medical treatment; and

WHEREAS, these children's medical condition may be due to the exposure of their parents to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28-August 1, 1996, supports the provision of appropriate relief to Vietnam veterans' children where the veterans were exposed to Agent Orange and the children suffer from spina bifida.

RESOLUTION NO. 224—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSITION TO REDUCTION, TAXATION, OR ELIMINATION OF VETERANS' BENEFITS

WHEREAS, veterans' benefits are earned benefits paid to veterans and their families as a direct result of their service to the United States Government; and

WHEREAS, veterans' benefits are a part of a covenant between our Nation and its defenders; and

WHEREAS, certain government leaders have continued to attack veterans' benefits in an attempt to tax those benefits, reduce them, or eliminate them completely; and

WHEREAS, these attacks are occurring on a more frequent basis, with more and more attacks every year; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, vigorously supports the protection of veterans' benefits from taxation, cutbacks, and elimination.

RESOLUTION NO. 225—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING THE INDEXING OF VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION BENEFITS

WHEREAS, the Administration and the Office of Management and Budget have proposed that future adjustments in VA service-connected disability compensation benefits shall be automatically "indexed" to changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI); and

WHEREAS, adjustments of the benefit levels in this most important VA program have always been determined through legislative action by the U.S. Congress; and

WHEREAS, over the years such legislated increases have resulted in more realistic levels for disabled veterans, improvement in other compensation related entitlements and a continued and active Congressional oversight over the entire compensation program; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, goes on record as being strongly opposed to the automatic indexing of future adjustments in the VA service-connected disability compensation program.

RESOLUTION NO. 226—LEGISLATIVE

EXPAND POW PRESUMPTIONS

WHEREAS, former prisoners-of-war (POWs) suffered cruel and inhumane treatment, together with nutritional deprivation at the hands of their captors, which resulted in long-term adverse health effects; and

WHEREAS, POWs were subjected to numerous and varying forms of abuse dependent upon the place, time and circumstance of their captivity by the enemy; and

WHEREAS, for this reason former POWs suffer from a wide range of different physical and psychological maladies; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation which would add those medical conditions which are characteristically associated with or can be reasonably attributed to the POW experience as presumptive disorders for former POWs.

RESOLUTION NO. 227—LEGISLATIVE

TO COMPENSATE PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS SUFFERING FROM UNKNOWN ILLNESS OR DISEASE CIRCUMSTANTIALLY LINKED TO THEIR SERVICE IN THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

WHEREAS, the DAV has a significant concern regarding the multitude of ailments reported by a growing number of Persian Gulf War veterans who were exposed to both identified and unknown health hazards; and

WHEREAS, Persian Gulf War veterans were exposed to numerous and various environmental health hazards, including smoke from oil field fires and other petroleum agents, depleted uranium, chemicals and biological elements, desert parasites, vaccines, chemoprophylactic agents and vehicle paints; and

WHEREAS, primary investigations and multifarious studies have been unable to identify the source or sources of these ailments; and

WHEREAS, the scientific/medical community's inability to identify the disease has caused considerable anxiety for these veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, there appears to be a commonality of ailments plaguing Persian Gulf War veterans; and

WHEREAS, these ailments have been unofficially labeled "Persian Gulf Syndrome," "Multiple Chemical Sensitivity" and "Chronic Fatigue Syndrome"; and

WHEREAS, these brave veterans suffering from these unknown ailments are often prevented from providing for their own basic needs and for the needs of their families; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, vigorously supports the Department of Veterans Affairs expeditious handling of Persian Gulf War veterans' claims and the payment of fair and just compensation for these unknown ailments; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we strongly urge that these Persian Gulf War veterans receive priority medical treatment for those ailments that may be associated with their service in the Persian Gulf; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we vehemently urge VA, DoD and HHS to continue to cooperate in tests and studies to unlock the mysteries surrounding the ailments suffered by Persian Gulf War veterans, including the possibility of exposure to chemical agents by U.S. military personnel.

RESOLUTION NO. 228—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING A CHANGE IN REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR A TEMPORARY TOTAL RATING UNDER 38 C.F.R. 4.30

WHEREAS, with advances in modern medicine and increasing emphasis on more efficient use of health care resources, health care providers are being encouraged to utilize suitable alternatives to inpatient care; and

WHEREAS, as a consequence, veterans are often treated through home health services or convalesce at home rather than in the hospital; and

WHEREAS, convalescent ratings are currently only authorized where inpatient or outpatient treatment resulted in surgery or immobilization of a major joint by cast; and

WHEREAS, there are instances where the veteran's treatment did not involve surgery or casting of a major joint, but the veteran has undergone healing, convalescence, or a therapeutic course in the home, with a duration of more than 21 days; and

WHEREAS, exacerbation of a service-connected disability sometimes makes work activities contraindicated for periods of more than 21 days; and

WHEREAS, in such instances, the therapeutic course, convalescence, or restriction from work would occur in the home in lieu of hospitalization for more than 21 days; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports a change in 38 C.F.R. 4.30 to provide for a temporary total rating if treatment or exacerbation of a service-connected disability results in a condition of temporary total incapacity for employment or temporary unavailability for employment by reason of home health care or ambulatory care, bed rest or confinement to the home, or contraindication of work activities for more than 21 days.

RESOLUTION NO. 229—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING CHANGE IN LAW TO PROVIDE FOR COMMENCEMENT OF PAYMENT PERIOD FOR TEMPORARY TOTAL RATINGS FOR COMPENSATION AS OF DATE OF ENTITLING EVENT

WHEREAS, prior to the addition of section 5111 to title 387, United States Code, by Public Law 97–253, the payment period for temporary total ratings for compensation purposes under paragraphs 29 and 30 of the *Schedule for Rating Disabilities* commenced the date of award of the temporary total rating based on the date of entrance into the hospital for service-connected disability, the date of institution of hospital treatment for a service-connected disability, or the date of qualifying outpatient treatment for service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, section 5111, added by Public Law 97-253, now provides that the payment period for such temporary total rating does not commence until the first day of the calendar month following the month in which the award is effective, except where hospitalization or treatment commences and terminates in the same month; and

WHEREAS, veterans under a temporary total service-connected disability are, under section 5111, deprived of any increase in compensation to offset the total disability during the first month in which temporary total disability occurs; and

WHEREAS, this deprivation and consequent delay in the payment of increased compensation on account of total disability often jeopardizes the financial security of disabled veterans and often unfairly causes them hardship, NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation seeking an exemption of the temporary total ratings from this provision of section 5111 of title 38 U.S.C.

RESOLUTION NO. 230—LEGISLATIVE

TO ESTABLISH SECTION 5307 OF TITLE 38 U.S.C. AS THE SOLE MEANS TO COMPEL
DIVISION OF VA BENEFITS

WHEREAS, a primary purpose of section 5301 of title 38 U.S.C. exempting VA benefits from taxation and claims of creditors and preventing their exposure to legal claims of creditors and preventing their exposure to legal process, should be to maximize national uniformity in the protection afforded to VA benefits; and

WHEREAS, a necessarily implied purpose of section 1115 of title 38 U.S.C. is to provide support for dependents of VA beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS, a primary purpose of section 5307 of title 38 U.S.C. empowering the VA Administrator to apportion VA benefits where a veteran's spouse and/or children live separately, should be to provide the means for achieving both uniformity of protection and support for dependents in such living circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Supreme Court's 1987 decision in *Rose v. Rose*, authorizing courts to compel veterans to pay VA benefits to dependents living separately, creates substantial risks that VA benefits will be divided on a non-uniform basis; and

WHEREAS, extending the protection afforded VA benefits under section 5301 to claims of dependents living separately would enhance the likelihood of uniform treatment of VA benefits while preserving for such dependents both the availability of apportionment under section 5307 for VA benefits and the availability of judicial process for veterans' assets not attributable to VA benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation to amend section 5301(a) of title 38 U.S.C. to provide that, except as provided by federal statute, payments of benefits under any law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs shall not be liable to attachment, levy or seizure by or under any legal or equitable process whatever, including court orders of any sort whatsoever, before or after receipt by the beneficiary.

RESOLUTION NO. 231—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR WAIVER OF PREMIUMS FOR SUPPLEMENTAL
SERVICE DISABLED VETERANS INSURANCE

WHEREAS, section 1922A (a) of title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.) provides for supplemental service disabled veterans' insurance for totally disabled veterans, in an amount not to exceed \$20,000; and

WHEREAS, section 1922A (d) of title 38 U.S.C., provides that "no waiver of premiums shall be made in the case of any person for supplemental insurance granted under this section"; and

WHEREAS, such prohibition of premium waiver is based on the Servicemen's Indemnity Act of 1951, which states in part, "[t]he amount of insurance placed in force hereunder . . . at the time of the insured's application for waiver hereunder, may not exceed \$10,000" (38 U.S.C. 1912 (d)); and

WHEREAS, such denial of waiver on supplemental service disabled veterans' insurance for totally disabled veterans constitutes an inequity based on prior established standards; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996,

supports legislation to allow for the waiver of premiums, for any and all supplemental service-disabled veterans' insurance for totally disabled veterans that may be authorized by existing and future legislation; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the criteria for total disability waiver of premiums, as mandated in section 1912 of title 38 U.S.C., be maintained.

RESOLUTION NO. 232—LEGISLATIVE

TO PROVIDE FOR A NATIONAL CEMETERY IN EVERY STATE

WHEREAS, there are many states and regions of the United States without National Cemetery facilities; and

WHEREAS, federal and state land ideally suited for cemetery development is available in many states; and

WHEREAS, veterans should be entitled to burial in a National Cemetery reasonably close to their homes; and

WHEREAS, VA's current policy of regionalization does not always ensure that eligible deceased veterans can be interred close to their families; NOT

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation to provide for at least one open National Cemetery in each state to ensure that all veterans may be buried in a National Cemetery reasonably close to their homes.

RESOLUTION NO. 233—LEGISLATIVE

RESTORE ELIGIBILITY AND INCREASE BURIAL AND PLOT ALLOWANCE

WHEREAS, all veterans who have served their country honorably and faithfully are entitled to a decent burial and final resting place; and

WHEREAS, the amount payable by the VA as a burial allowance (\$300) and the amount payable as a plot allowance (\$150) have remained constant for many years in spite of the inflationary spiral; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 97–35, effective October 1, 1981, restricted the eligibility for the \$300 burial allowance, greatly reducing the number of veterans who previously qualified; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 101–508, enacted in November 1990, reduced the number of veterans who would have otherwise been eligible for the \$150 plot allowance; and

WHEREAS, these restrictive measures enacted over time were intended purely as cost-savings measures without regard to intrinsic value of this final honor which was bestowed by a grateful nation; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, support legislation to (1) increase both the VA burial and plot allowance to a level reflecting the inflationary impact of the intervening years, (2) restore entitlement to the VA burial allowance to those categories of veterans eliminated by Public Law 97–35, and (3) restore entitlement to the VA plot allowance to those categories of veterans eliminated by enactment of Public Law 101–508.

RESOLUTION NO. 234—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE A HEADSTONE OR MARKER FOR ALL VETERANS

WHEREAS, title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.), chapter 23, section 2306 authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish appropriate government headstones or markers at the expense of the United States only for the *unmarked* graves of veterans interred in public or private cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, veterans interred in a national cemetery, post, or veterans' cemetery owned by a state are furnished an appropriate headstone or marker at the expense of the United States; and

WHEREAS, it is inappropriate and unfair to deny veterans and their families their rightful recognition of service to the United States by limiting the availability of headstones or markers at government expense to gravesites of veterans who have no other marker; and

WHEREAS, it is inappropriate and unfair to deny veterans and their families their rightful recognition of service to the United States by limiting the availability

of headstones or markers at government expenses to gravesites of veterans who have no other marker; and

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans desires that the U.S. Congress take appropriate action to correct this injustice and inequity to America's veterans and their families; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation to amend 38 U.S.C., chapter 23, section 2306 (a) by deleting the word “unmarked”, thereby authorizing the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish appropriate government headstones or markers at the expense of the United States for all graves of veterans interred in public or private cemeteries notwithstanding the presence of other markers on the grave site.

RESOLUTION NO. 235—LEGISLATIVE

AMEND THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

WHEREAS, under current law, qualified and eligible disabled veterans are entitled to 48 months of education or training assistance under vocational rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, the disabled veteran must start and complete this program within 12 years following the determination of eligibility; and

WHEREAS, many disabled veterans are unable to complete their training and attain suitable employment within 48 months and others are unable or don't need training within 12 years following initial eligibility; and

WHEREAS, other vocational rehabilitation programs in the private sector and federal sector do not impose similar restrictions; and

WHEREAS, we believe disabled veterans deserve no less; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 27–August 1, 1996, seeks legislative change that would eliminate these two restrictions.

RESOLUTION NO. 236—LEGISLATIVE

EXPAND VIETNAM ERA

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense has recognized U.S. combat involvement in Vietnam by awarding the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and the Navy and Marine Corps expeditionary Medals for service in Vietnam for the period of July 1, 1958, to July 3, 1965; and

WHEREAS, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and Navy and Marine Corps Expeditionary Medals are awarded for honorable duty within specified geographical areas, and specified times during period of war, national emergency, and for participation in specified military operation; and

WHEREAS, during the periods of July 1, 1958, to July 3, 1965, many of our armed forces personnel were in Vietnam, in a hostile environment, training South Vietnamese military personnel; and

WHEREAS, a number of our armed forces personnel were wounded, captured or killed by North Vietnamese troops or guerrilla forces during this period of time; and

WHEREAS, Congress has amended title 38 U.S.C. section 101 (29), to include the term “Vietnam Era” as meaning the period beginning August 5, 1964, and ending May 7, 1975; and

WHEREAS, presently title 38 U.S.C. prevents veterans who served during the period of July 1, 1958, to August 4, 1964, from receiving “Vietnam Era” benefits; and

WHEREAS, most states adopt legislation affecting veterans' benefits to conform with the dates set forth in title 38 U.S.C.; and

WHEREAS, a number of veterans who served in Vietnam between July 1, 1958, and August 4, 1964, and their dependents and widows, are being denied federal and state veterans' benefits because of this unjust situation; *NOW*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation that will provide for recognition by the Department of Veterans Affairs, under the provisions of title 38 U.S.C. section 101 (29), by changing the dates of the “Vietnam Era” to beginning July 1, 1958, and ending May 7, 1975.

RESOLUTION NO. 237—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING ANY REDUCTION IN VETERANS' PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, there is a concerted effort to streamline and make more efficient the federal government; and

WHEREAS, the Vice President's National Performance Review ("Reinventing Government") makes numerous recommendations which impact on the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, several of those recommendations appear to be directed at cost-saving measures rather than efficiency and effectiveness, NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, urges Congress to reject any proposed intention to "streamline" government that would reduce or diminish VA's ability to properly serve and care for our nation's veterans.

RESOLUTION NO. 238—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING ANY AUTHORIZATION OF USE OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES FOR HUMAN EXPERIMENTATION WITHOUT THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMED CONSENT

WHEREAS, those who serve in our Nation's Armed Forces make personal sacrifices to maintain our national security; and

WHEREAS, members of the Armed Forces should be accorded special respect and the gratitude of us for whom they serve; and

WHEREAS, their willingness to sacrifice and relinquish their liberty does not surrender their natural right to determine what shall be done with their own bodies and their right to personal dignity; and

WHEREAS, it is unethical and a trespass against the person to use service members for human experimentation without their knowledge and consent; and

WHEREAS, our government has in the past used military members as human guinea pigs to test the effects of harmful and injurious substances on the body; and

WHEREAS, the Food and Drug Administration plans to make final a temporary rule allowing administration of experimental drugs to military members without their knowledge and informed consent. NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, opposes any rule or provision that would authorize use of service members for human experimentation without their knowledge and informed consent.

RESOLUTION NO. 239—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE ABOLISHMENT OF COMMITTEES ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, veterans, who have sacrificed to preserve our democratic form of government, deserve committees dedicated to their interests in the House of Representatives and Senate; and

WHEREAS, the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs have been standing committees for many years; and

WHEREAS, in the past there have been several proposals to abolish the Committees on Veterans' Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committees have functioned as bipartisan committees to ensure that VA and American veterans receive the benefits they have earned by serving this Nation; and

WHEREAS, the Government of the United States of America must never diminish the obligation that is owed to those who served in the Armed Forces; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, opposes the abolishment of the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committees.

RESOLUTION NO. 240

OPPOSING THE USE OF VA GENERATED SAVINGS FOR PURPOSES OTHER THAN RESTORING
VA BENEFITS AND SERVICES

WHEREAS, a former Office of Management and Budget Director proposed to use savings from reductions in veterans benefits and services to revamp the welfare system; and

WHEREAS, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Acts of 1990 and 1993 required the Department of Veterans Affairs to cut veterans programs by more than six billion dollars, which include the loss of compensation payments for certain incompetent veterans, elimination of Vocational Rehabilitation for some service-connected veterans, elimination of entitlement to Dependency & Indemnity Compensation for remarried surviving spouses and the elimination of cost of living increase for the Montgomery G.I. Bill educational benefits; and

WHEREAS, in addition, the fiscal year 1996 budget proposed by Congress for veterans' benefits and services called for a seven year freeze in spending levels for health care and general operating expense, ignoring the fact that the Department of Veterans Affairs' current spending levels do not permit the timely delivery of health care and benefit determinations; and

WHEREAS, the use of VA generated savings should be used for restoring VA benefits and services which have been taken away from America's veterans over the past several years; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, go on record as strongly opposing the use of VA generated savings for purposes other than restoring VA benefits and services.

RESOLUTION NO. 241—LEGISLATIVE

TO EXTEND COMMISSARY AND EXCHANGE PRIVILEGES ON THE BASIS OF AN AWARD OF
DIC BENEFITS

WHEREAS, current Department of Defense regulations authorize military commissary and exchange privileges to a broad category of active and retired military personnel, their dependents and survivors; and

WHEREAS, these regulations authorize such privileges to the spouses of living veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability and to the survivors of veterans who were permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability at time of death; and

WHEREAS, the survivors of veterans whose service-connected impairments were evaluated at less than totally disabling but whose deaths were determined to be service related are denied these privileges; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports the enactment of legislation that would authorize military commissary and exchange privileges for the survivors of veterans whose deaths were found to be related to a service-connected disability.

RESOLUTION NO. 242—LEGISLATIVE

IN SUPPORT OF COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS (COLAS) FOR MILITARY RETIREES

WHEREAS, COLAs for military retirees were reduced or eliminated as a result of legislation during 1986 and 1993; and

WHEREAS, other categories of federal annuitants and beneficiaries—Social Security and VA service-connected disability compensation and nonservice-connected pension recipients, for example—were not subject to these same COLA restrictions; and

WHEREAS, it is basically unfair—especially in the case of military disability retirees—to provide a COLA to one category of federal beneficiary while withholding such an adjustment from another category; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation in the Congress which would ensure the timely extension of COLAs to military retirees when similar adjustments are being authorized for beneficiaries in the Social Security and Va benefit programs.

RESOLUTION NO. 243—LEGISLATIVE

EXTEND MILITARY COMMISSARY AND EXCHANGE PRIVILEGES AND SPACE-AVAILABLE AIR TRAVEL TO CERTAIN SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, disabled enlisted personnel who were discharged from military service prior to October 1, 1949—the effective date of the Career Compensation Act—are not entitled to disability retirement from the armed forces; and

WHEREAS, many service-connected disabled veterans have been deprived of the various benefits to which all other disabled retired military personnel have enjoyed; and

WHEREAS, due to inflation, service-connected disabled veterans receiving VA compensation as a sole source of income are experiencing difficulties in keeping pace with the increased cost of living; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation which would extend military commissary and exchange privileges, as well as space-available air travel aboard military aircraft, to enlisted personnel who were discharged from active military service prior to October 1, 1949, for a service-incurred injury or disease rated by the Department of Veterans Affairs as 30 percent or more disabling and who retained at least a 30 percent evaluation for a period of five years from the date of separation from active duty.

RESOLUTION NO. 244—LEGISLATIVE

TO EXTEND SPACE-AVAILABLE AIR TRAVEL ABOARD MILITARY AIRCRAFT TO 100 PERCENT SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, totally disabled service-connected veterans have sacrificed greatly in terms of their impairments and loss of earnings capacity; and

WHEREAS, more than any other living group of Americans, such veterans should be eligible for all benefits and privileges that the Congress may provide; and

WHEREAS, such totally disabled veterans should be extended the same privileges as other personnel currently authorized to utilize space-available military air travel; and

WHEREAS, the extension of such travel to totally disabled service-connected veterans would not place any additional burden upon the administration of this program; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, seeks the enactment of legislation which would extend space-available air travel aboard military aircraft to all 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans to the same extent and under the same conditions as is currently provided to retired military personnel.

RESOLUTION NO. 245—LEGISLATIVE

IN SUPPORT OF A MILITARY MEDAL TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE COURAGE, SACRIFICE AND DEVOTION TO DUTY OF THOSE VETERANS EXPOSED TO IONIZING RADIATION DURING MILITARY SERVICE

WHEREAS, members of the United States military have participated (both willingly and unwillingly in test detonations of nuclear devices, served in Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan following the detonation of nuclear bombs, and served and continue to serve at duty stations on land, sea, and air where they are exposed to atomic and/or radioactive weapons, equipment, and nuclear reactors; and

WHEREAS, this service has been in the performance of their duties as members of the United States Armed Services; and

WHEREAS, the United States Government knew or should have known of the potential harm to the health and well-being of these military members; and

WHEREAS, the honorable service of the men and women who were exposed to ionizing radiation during their military service has gone unrecognized by the military and our nation; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports the recognition of these brave men and women who were exposed to ionizing radiation during military service with the issuance of a military medal for their

atomic/radiation service to acknowledge their courage, sacrifice and devotion to duty.

RESOLUTION NO. 246—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT FOR LEGISLATION TO ALLOW VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS TO SOLICIT
CONTRIBUTIONS ON POST OFFICE PROPERTY

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) was founded on the principle that this nation's first duty to veterans is the rehabilitation of its wartime-disabled; and

WHEREAS, it is the first duty of the DAV to assist the service-connected disabled, his widow and survivors; and

WHEREAS, DAV Chapters and Departments provide assistance to hospitalized and needy veterans such as donations to VA Medical Centers, financial assistance to needy veterans, meal programs, temporary housing, and transportation programs; and

WHEREAS, the efforts of the DAV on behalf of this nation's wartime-disabled veterans augments the government's legal and moral obligation to wartime disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, postal regulations, now being enforced, prohibit any solicitation on post office properties; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, supports legislation to allow veterans' organizations to solicit contributions on postal property.

RESOLUTION NO. 247—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING ANY LEGISLATION TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF JUDGES ON THE UNITED
STATES COURT OF VETERANS APPEALS

WHEREAS, there has been a recent increase in the number of appeals being filed with the United States Court of Veterans Appeals (COVA), due in large part to increased production levels by the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) and a large (10–15%) error rate in BVA decisions; and

WHEREAS, there has been a large increase in the number of appeals to COVA filed by DAV during the second quarter of 1996 and it is anticipated that the large number of appeals filed by DAV will continue into the foreseeable future; and

WHEREAS, any reduction in the number of COVA judges, below the authorized maximum number of seven, is premature and could cause long delays in the judicial appellate process; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 28–August 1, 1996, opposes any legislation that would reduce the number of judges on the United States Court of Veterans Appeal.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Is there support for the motion? Mike 3.

NEC 1st District Alternate DROGO. Frank Drogo, alternate national Committeeman from District 1, supports the report.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you. We have the motion and the support. Are we ready for the question? Ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. It's carried.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GIESE. Thank you, Commander. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. Now we'll go into the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for their final report. Mr. Daley.

Mr. DALEY. Thank you, Comrade Commander. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Copies of the proposed changes of the National Bylaws have been placed on your seats, and they are printed on both back and front.

Before we get started, please turn to Resolution Number 209 on your seats there. In rendering our National Bylaws gender neutral, we missed two places on this resolution which need to be called to your attention. Beginning four lines from the bottom, it should read:

If no payment is made during three full membership years, he or she is not thereafter a member. He or she may reinstate their membership at any time by initiating additional payments.

Yesterday's reading properly included these corrections. They simply were not corrected for this printing.

Comrades, you may recall that the convention passed last year two constitutional amendments which would have rendered our National Constitution gender neutral. After repeated efforts to get our chapters to vote one way or the other on them, they failed for the lack of a three-fourths majority, and the count was as follows: total qualified chapters, 2,278. We needed a three-fourths majority, which was 1,709. Chapters ratifying Resolution 336 were 1525. Chapters ratifying Resolution Number 337 were 1,550. Three-fourths majority we need is 1,709.

Now to the proposed amendments. I will read the RESOLVED one time only, as it is the same on each proposed amendment. Then I will read, as I did yesterday, the portion amended, which is usually a section or paragraph. In many cases, you have the surrounding language which has been printed, so that you can see where the amendment would be positioned in the Bylaws.

We believe that this presentation makes available to you in clearer fashion just what you are being asked to consider. After I read each resolution, I will move for its adoption.

Resolution Number 197. I'm going to read that RESOLVED once, ladies and gentlemen.

RESOLVED to amend the indicated sections of the National Bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans by adding/omitting text as follows. (Omissions are indicated by lining through, and additions are indicated by underlining.)

Section 3.10. Rules of the Convention.

(b) If such resolution proposes to amend the Constitution or Bylaws, it may not be considered unless the proponent had it read at the time the resolutions favorably reported by the Convention Constitution and Bylaws Committee were read to the convention in accordance with Section 3.10, Rule 21(d).

Recommend Resolution Number 197 for its adoption.

Commander McMASTERS. Mike 2.

Mr. GEORGE H. STEESE. George Steese, delegate, Chapter 1, California, seconds that.

Commander McMASTERS. You've heard the motion and the support. Are we ready for the question? Ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed.

In the interest of saving time, how about if we have him continue through these, unless there's an objection to something, and then approve them all with one or two motions? Any objections to that?

Okay. Continue.

Mr. DALEY. Resolution 200, Section 6.4, Suspension and Revocation of Charters.

Paragraph 4. When the charter of any chapter has been revoked, all members of the chapter shall be transferred by the national adjutant to the state at-large chapter. In the absence of a state at-large chapter, the members shall be transferred to the Nomad National At-Large Chapter.

Paragraph 5. Upon revocation of the charter of any chapter or county or district council where no state department exists, or upon revocation of any charter of a state department all property, money and effects of said state department, chapter or county or district council shall revert to the national organization, there to be held in trust for 18 months. In the event the state department, chapter or county or district council's charter is not reissued within the 18-month period, the said property, money and effects shall become the absolute property of the national organization. Disposition of assets of units of the DAV Women's Auxiliary are controlled by the appropriate provisions of their Constitution and Bylaws.

Paragraph 6. Upon revocation of the charter of a chapter or county or district council under the jurisdiction of a state department, all property, money and effects of the chapter or county or district council shall become the property of the state department. Disposition of assets of units of the DAV Women's Auxiliary are controlled by the appropriate provisions of their Constitution and Bylaws.

Resolution 200, I move for its adoption.

Commander McMASTERS. I think what we're going to do at this time, Tom, is we're just going to continue and then, if there's no objection to that portion, we'll go on to the next one. And if we come up with an objection, we'll move all of the resolutions prior to that and then consider the objections separately. Okay? That'll speed it up.

Mr. DALEY. Resolution 201. Section 7.10, Term of Office of Certain Appointees.

Paragraph 1. The term of office of persons appointed by the national commander under Section 7.2 of these Bylaws and of persons appointed by the national adjutant under Section 7.4 of these Bylaws shall not exceed that of the appointing power and may be terminated at any time by the appointing power, provided, however, that the removal of the national adjutant by the national commander is subject to approval by a two-thirds vote of the National Executive Committee. The National Executive Committee may, by a two-thirds vote of its members, remove the national adjutant from office for cause.

Paragraph 2. The term of office of all persons appointed by the national commander under Section 7.2 of these Bylaws and of all persons appointed by the national adjutant under Section 7.4 of these Bylaws terminates automatically at the adjournment of each convention, except that such appointees who are not employees of the national organization may continue to serve until their successors are installed. There is no right whatsoever to reappointment to any position held by appointment under Section 7.2 or under Section 7.4 of these Bylaws.

Resolution Number 202.

Paragraph 2. The financial statements as required by these Bylaws must be audited by an independent public accountant if the gross annual income, excluding membership per capita, exceeds \$300,000 for all sources.

Resolution Number 203.

Paragraph 2. Each state department shall include the following provision in its Bylaws unless prohibited by the charitable trust laws of its particular state:

"This department recognizes the national organization known as Disabled American Veterans, incorporated by Act of Congress, and affirms its allegiance and subordination to the national organization, its Constitution, Bylaws and all rules, mandates and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto. Upon dissolution of the department, the assets remaining after the payment of its debts shall be distributed as provided in Article 6, Section 6.4, Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the National Bylaws."

Resolution Number 204.

Paragraph 2. There shall be no form of unit rule or voting by proxy.

Resolution 205. Section 9.1: Chapter Constitution; Bylaws; Regulations. Article 9.

Paragraph 2. Each chapter shall include the following provision in its Bylaws unless prohibited by the charitable trust laws of its particular state:

“This chapter recognizes the national organization known as Disabled American Veterans, incorporated by Act of Congress, and affirms its allegiance and subordination to the national organization, its Constitution, Bylaws and all rules, mandates and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto. Upon dissolution of the chapter, the assets remaining after the payment of its debts shall be distributed as provided in Article 6, Section 6.4, Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the National Bylaws.”

Resolution 206. Section 9.3, Financial Records, Reports.

Paragraph 2. the financial statements as required by these Bylaws must be audited by an independent public accountant if the gross annual income, excluding membership per capita, exceeds \$300,000 from all sources.

Resolution Number 207.

Paragraph 3. The financial statements as required by these Bylaws must be audited by an independent public accountant if the gross annual income, excluding membership per capita, exceeds \$300,000 from all sources.

Resolution Number 208. Section 10.3, Limitation of Powers.

Paragraph 2. Each auxiliary and its subordinate units shall include the following provision in its Bylaws unless prohibited by the charitable trust laws of its particular state:

“This [type of unit] recognizes the national organization known as Disabled American Veterans, incorporated by Act of congress, and affirms its allegiance and subordination to the national organization, its constitution, Bylaws and all rules, mandates and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto. Upon dissolution of the [type of unit], the assets remaining after the payment of its debts shall be distributed as provided in Article 6, Section 6.4, Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the National Bylaws.”

Resolution Number 209. This is the one that we made reference from the outset of this resolution. Section 11.5, Membership Dues.

Paragraph 1. Membership dues shall be \$20, and shall be for the membership year or any part thereof. The membership year starts July 1 and ends the following June 30th. All membership dues will be applied toward becoming a member for life and will be deposited directly in the individual's membership account as established under Paragraph 2 below. Once the appropriate full membership amount has been paid into the member's account, he or she will no longer be required to pay dues.

Paragraph 2. Those eligible who have not attained the age of 41 before July 1 of the current year may become a member for life upon payment of \$150. Those who are between the ages of 41 and 60, upon payment of \$125; those who are between the ages of 61 and 70, upon payment of \$100; and those who have attained the age of 71 or over, upon payment of \$75. Section 11.7, Duration of Membership.

All memberships will extend for three full membership years from the date of the most recent payment, or (if and when paid in full) throughout the member's lifetime. If membership is paid in installments, payment notices will be sent to the member as a reminder. However, the member may pay the balance, or any part thereof, at any time. Distribution under Section 11.8 will only occur when there are sufficient funds in the member's account. If no payment is made during three full membership years, he or she is not thereafter a member. He or she may reinstate their membership at any time by initiating additional payments. Such payments will be applied to the previous balance and be counted toward a fully paid membership.

Resolution Number 210. Section 11.10, Multiple Memberships.

No member shall hold membership simultaneously in more than one chapter within the same state unless such other chapter is composed exclusively of blind veterans or amputee veterans.

Resolution Number 211. Section 12.1, Employment Policy. Article 12.

Paragraph 2. No paid employee of the national organization, hereafter referred to as "the employer", who is a member of the DAV or its Women's Auxiliary and who has been so employed continuously for a period of five years, shall be discharged except for cause. 12.2, Procedure

Paragraph 1. An employee described in Section 12.1, Paragraph 2 of these By-laws may, within 31 days of receiving from the national adjutant a written notice of discharge, make written demand upon the national adjutant for a hearing before a Hearing Board, as herein provided. Kindly turn the next page.

Paragraph 10. Upon conclusion of the hearing, the Hearing Board, by a majority vote, shall, after deliberation, render a decision either that the former employee's discharge be upheld or that he be reinstated with all pay and benefits retroactive to the date of his termination. The decision of the Hearing Board shall be final for all purposes and shall constitute a binding arbitration, which the parties shall acknowledge by executing an appropriate agreement in advance of the hearing.

Resolution Number 212.

Commander McMASTERS. Just a minute, Tom.

Ms. MARY L. CARTWRIGHT. Cartwright, delegate from Chapter 122, California. On these following resolutions, where you have missed the "he" or "she," are you going to put that in?

Commander McMASTERS. We're going to endeavor in all cases to make this document as gender neutral as we can. And if there's been an oversight at this point, it will be corrected before the final printing.

Ms. CARTWRIGHT. All right. Thank you.

Mr. DALEY. Resolution Number 212. Section 14.4, Depositories.

The National Finance Committee shall, by regulation, designate one or more depositories for all revenue of this organization.

Resolution Number 213. Section 14.5, National Revenue; Deposit and Investment.

Paragraph 1. All monies received in payment for membership shall be deposited in a separate account in one of these depositories, and all membership monies and securities shall be kept separate from the general funds of the organization, subject only to withdrawals to carry out the Life Membership Program. The National Finance Committee, with the concurrence of a two-thirds majority of the National Executive Committee, shall authorize the investment and reinvestment of such portions of the Life Membership Fund as it may determine to be in the best interests of the Membership Program.

Paragraph 3. The National Finance Committee shall provide in its regulations that access to any safety deposit box can be had only by the national adjutant and/or national comptroller in company with one additional bonded employee designated by the National Finance Committee. Disbursement of membership monies from the checking account of the Life Membership Fund shall be made upon life membership checks bearing the signatures of the national adjutant and national comptroller.

Resolution Number 214. Section 15.3, For Chapters, Women's Auxiliaries and NOTR.

Paragraph 1. The revenue of chapters, Women's Auxiliary units and subordinate units of the NOTR shall be derived from dues, contributions and such other sources as may be approved by the state department within the same is located. Where no commissions are to be paid, and solicitation of funds shall be only by personal contact of members, or friends of members, no prior approval shall be required for a fund-raising project where the gross receipts will be less than \$5,000, provided, however, that advance written notice of 30 days to the state department shall be required on all such fund-raising projects. (Such fund-raising must be in compliance with federal, state and local laws.) All monies received by local chapters on fund-raising activities, except as may lawfully be required to be paid to the state department having jurisdiction over such chapters, shall be retained by such chapter. If there is no state department, approval must be obtained from the National Executive Committee.

Resolution Number 215. Section 15.4, Women's Auxiliary National Organization.

Paragraph 2. No state department of the DAV Women's Auxiliary shall conduct any fund-raising project without the prior consent of the DAV state department and the DAV National Executive Committee.

Paragraph 4. If any dugout or other subordinate unit of the National Order of Trench Rats, or if any local unit or other subordinate unit of the DAV Women's Auxiliary desires to hold any fund-raising drive or fund-raising activity in the territory of more than one chapter, such subordinate unit, before asking for the required approval, shall give written notice of its intention to ask such approval, with reasonably detailed information about the proposed drive or activity, to all chapters within such territory not less than two weeks before seeking approval, and all such chapters shall have the right to protest promptly to the state department or to the National Executive Committee, whichever may have the power of approval as set out above. Section 15.5, National Order of Trench Rats.

The national organization of the National Order of Trench Rats shall not conduct any fund-raising project or fund-raising activity without the prior consent of the National Executive Committee.

Resolution Number 216. Section 15.7, Supervision and Enforcement.

Paragraph 2. Without limiting the remedies elsewhere provided in these Bylaws, the national commander may, in his sole discretion, direct an audit of the books and records of any such subordinate unit. The national organization, an independent account, or a certified public accountant shall conduct such audit. The expense of such audit shall be borne by the subordinate unit.

Paragraph 3. Each subordinate unit subject to the provisions hereof shall make available to the national commander or his designee all books and records for inspection at any reasonable time at its principal headquarters.

Paragraph 4. Each subordinate unit subject to the provisions hereof shall hold the national organization harmless from any claims arising from approval granted or withheld by any governing body hereunder, and the approval of such body is specifically limited to the project submitted as a means of fund-raising and may not be construed so as to make the approving body a party to any contract or obligation arising out of the project.

Paragraph 5. The national commander, acting pursuant to Paragraph 2 above, in his sole discretion may order any subordinate unit subject to the provisions hereof to cease and desist from any fund-raising project deemed by him not to be in the best interest of the Disabled American Veterans.

Paragraph 6. This section shall be applicable to, and shall be incorporated by reference into, all contracts entered into pursuant to this Article. It shall be applicable to all parties to such contracts. If projects are conducted without written contracts but nevertheless pursuant to authority granted under this Article, the rights, duties and obligations of the subordinate unit and all parties thereto shall also be subject to the provisions of this section.

Resolution Number 217. Article 17, Articles of Incorporation. Section 17.1, Approval Required.

Any subordinate unit, including but not limited to, foundations, memorial homes, thrift stores and any other entity which is now incorporated or desires to incorporate and use the name of the Disabled American Veterans or the letters "DAV" or any name similar thereto in its corporate name must submit the proposed articles of incorporation and any bylaws or amendments to the respective state departments and the National Executive Committee for approval prior to filing and complying with state law. They must contain the following provision, unless the charitable trust laws of the particular state direct otherwise:

"This corporation recognizes the national organization known as Disabled American Veterans, incorporated by Act of Congress, and affirms its allegiance and subordination to the national organization, its Constitution, Bylaws and all rules, mandates and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto. Upon dissolution of the corporation, the assets remaining after the payment of its debts shall be distributed as provided in Article 6, Section 6.44, Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the National Bylaws."

Resolution Number 218. Article 18, Accumulation of Funds. Section 18.1, Definition of Terms.

Paragraph 1. The “funds” referred to in this Article are the liquid assets of subordinate units.

Mr. HAROLD E. WILEY. Mike 1.

Commander McMASTERS. Mike 1, please delay your comment until he’s finished reading this part, and then I’ll get to you.

Mr. DALEY.

Paragraph 2. “Service purposes” are budgetary projects recognized as service under these Bylaws and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto.

Section 18.2, Restriction on Accumulation.—Subordinate units may not accumulate funds, whether for service purposes or otherwise, in excess of twice the expenses of their last fiscal year.

Section 18.3, Expenditure of Excess Funds.—Paragraph 1. Subordinate units whose accumulated funds exceed the amount referred to in Section 18.2 above must comply with this Article by expending such excess within a reasonable time.

Paragraph 2. The expenditure of funds by subordinate units to accomplish compliance with this Article must be for service purposes.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. Mike 1.

Mr. WILEY. Harold Wiley, Department of Washington, 46, delegate. I have a question on that in accumulation of funds. It appears to me that this would specifically prohibit a subordinate unit from accumulating funds for a building inasmuch as that may exceed the annual budget for two years. And I think this matter should be considered separately.

Mr. DALEY. That was incorporated under Rule 9, It’s incorporated—this is a new resolution under 218, and that Rule 9 incorporates this into Article 19, Accumulation of Funds. I think it stipulates that and it covers that.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. What I’m going to do at this time, I’m going to entertain a motion—are you ready for this—a motion to accept or adopt Resolutions 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216 and 217.

Mr. GEORGE H. STEESE. Mike 2.

Commander McMASTERS. Mike 2.

Mr. STEESE. George Steese, delegate, Chapter 1, California, moves that we adopt those resolutions as read.

Commander McMASTERS. We have the motion. Is there support? Mike 1, please.

Mr. HARRY I. KABLER. Harry Kabler, commander, Big D Chapter, Dallas 57, seconds that motion.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. We have a motion and support. Are you ready for the question?

MEMBER. No. Mike 2.

Commander McMASTERS. Mike 2.

MEMBER. Resolution Number 216, the new Paragraph 3 as it’s printed is stated as Paragraph 34. We need a little housekeeping.

Commander McMASTERS. That’s just a housekeeping thing. That will be corrected. But thank you for bringing that to our attention.

The gentleman that was just at Mike 2, would you please identify yourself for the record, now that you’ve gotten back to your seat.

Mr. RUSSELL BAIN. Russell Bain, Scott County Chapter 2, Iowa.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you.

Are we ready for the question? Mike 1.

Mr. WILLIAM S. GOODWIN. No. Bill Goodwin, Chapter 6, State of West Virginia. On Resolution 209, stating where a member can pay dues of \$20 and be a full member for three years, I'd like to understand that. I don't understand how that goes. It says, "If a payment is not made during three full membership years, he is not thereafter a member." We could have members be a member of the organization for three years for \$20, and after three years, he'd come back in, pay \$20 and be a member for three more years.

Commander McMASTERS. All right. That's not a change in the Bylaws, and that's not being considered. You can talk to Charlie Luttjohann, and he'll explain that to you and what the procedure is. But at this point, we are not amending that part of the Bylaws, and so your remarks are out of order. That is not a change at this point.

Mike 3.

Mr. JOHN F. McCULLOUGH. Comrade Commander, on Resolution 214—John McCullough, Genesee Chapter 3, Michigan.

Mr. GOODWIN. Sir, you say I'm out of order? How about 11.7? You did amend that.

Commander McMASTERS. Mike 1, you're out of order. Mike 3 has the floor. Continue, Mike 3.

Mr. McCULLOUGH. On Resolution 214, does that include our Forget-Me-Not drives?

Commander McMASTERS. The only change on that, John, is the addition of the words "subordinate units." The remainder of it has already been part of the Bylaws at this point. That's another one where you'd have to get a clarification, if you need a clarification from someone. And you can ask that question of probably just about anyone later on.

Mr. McCULLOUGH. Well, I keep seeing the word "chapters" in there, and this \$5,000 figure, and we exceed that on our Forget-Me-Not Drives.

Commander McMASTERS. That language has already been adopted by the organization, and it is not being considered for change at this time. The only change in that particular section is the addition of the words "subordinate units."

Mr. McCULLOUGH. Thank you.

Commander McMASTERS. All right, Mike 1.

Mr. DONALD M. LINDSAY. Don Lindsay, Chapter 103, Houston. I wonder why we refer to the Auxiliary as Women's Auxiliary in several of these resolutions, beginning with 207 and going through 215.

Commander McMASTERS. That one's pretty simple to answer. We didn't get enough chapters to respond to the changes we tried to make last year to the Constitution, and because of that, we still must refer to the Women's Auxiliary.

Okay. Are we ready for the question now? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. That's carried.

Okay. Let's consider 218. We had a question on 218.

Mr. JACK F. FEIGNER. Comrade Commander, Mike 1.

Commander McMASTERS. Mike 1.

Mr. FEIGHNER. Feighner, Cincinnati 1. Resolution 254 is strictly a housekeeping change of numbers. Let's pass that one first. I move that Resolution 254 be adopted.

Commander McMASTERS. Is there support for that motion? Mike 3. I'm sorry. Jack, what we're going to have to do is have that read. Are you asking for it to be read first and then we'll consider it?

Mr. FEIGHNER. Yes.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. Let's do that. Tom, do you want to read 254? We'll go through that, and then we'll come back to 218. Okay? Just be ready.

Mr. DALEY. Resolution Number 254. Article—

Mr. FEIGHNER. Comrade Commander, point of order. Mike 1. Feighner, Cincinnati 1. While I agree that a change has to be read completely, the only change in this is changing it from Article 18 to Article 19, and I think if you read that, that's all that needs to be read.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay, sir.

Mr. DALEY. Under that Section 19.1, that Corporate Organization, Dissolution, Nomenclature, Seal, Section 19.1 under Article 19; directing your attention to Section 19.2, Use of Members' Names and Addresses; Section 19.3, Rules of Order; Section 19.4, Certificate of Merit; Section 19.5, Amendments of Bylaws; Section 19.6, Captions; Section 19.7, Definitions and Interpretation. All of this is just a readjustment of numbering.

Commander McMASTERS. Mike 3.

Mr. GEORGE E. MOREY. George Morey, Chapter 59, California, delegate. Move to accept.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. Moves the adoption of Number 254. Mike 2.

Mr. GEORGE H. STEESE. George Steese, delegate, Chapter 1, California, seconds that.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. We have a motion and a support to adopt Resolution Number 254. Are you ready for the question? Ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. That's carried.

Now we will go back and consider 218. Mike 3.

I'm sorry. Was the objection at Mike 1?

Mr. WILEY. Yes, sir. Harold Wiley, Department of Washington Chapter 46 delegate. My objection was the Section 18.2 on restriction of accumulation. As I interpret this, this would specifically prohibit a chapter or subordinate unit from accumulating funds for a building for any length of time, and it is very reasonable to assume that, if you are accumulating funds for a building, it could exceed your previous budget for two years very easily.

So I don't think this is reasonable.

Commander McMASTERS. I'm going to have National Adjutant Wilson try to address your question.

Adjutant WILSON. I think what you're reading into that sir, as long as those building funds don't exceed twice your last year's expenses. That could be a sizable sum. So if you had a building fund you were accumulating funds, so long as that fund itself doesn't exceed twice the last year's annual expenses. That's the intent of—

Mr. WILEY. Yes, sir, I understand that, and that was my point specifically. For smaller chapters, they sometimes have to accumu-

late funds for two to three years in order to buy property and a building, and that is my point. And I will not belabor this any more. I just want everyone to consider that, because I believe you're putting a severe restriction there.

Commander McMASTERS. Mike 2.

Mr. STEESE. George Steese, delegate, California. I move that we adopt Resolution 218.

Commander McMASTERS. Mike 3.

Mr. MOREY. George Morey, delegate, Chapter 59, California, seconds that.

Mr. JOHN CUNNINGHAM. Motion on the question.

Commander McMASTERS. I'm sorry. Mike 3 has the floor, please. Mike 3.

Mr. MOREY. Mike 3 moves to second that.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. We have a motion and a second to adopt Resolution Number 218. Mike 1.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. John Cunningham, Chapter 49, New Jersey. On 18.2, "Subordinate units may not accumulate funds, whether for service purposes or otherwise, in excess of twice the expenses of their last fiscal year." That does not tell you if they've already had accumulated funds which are greater than that expense what happens to those funds?

Commander McMASTERS. In this case, refer to 18.3.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. But that only says that they shall not accumulate it in the past fiscal year. If it's been accumulated previous to that, then they should be able to keep it.

Commander McMASTERS. This is already in effect under Regulation Number 9 as adopted by the NEC, all right? And it's explaining later on, you're talking about all the accumulated funds.

Mike 2.

Mr. KENNETH G. MUSSELMANN. Ken Musselmann, past national commander. I also served on the interim committee this year, and just for a point of clarification, Commander, Section 18.3 addresses that. That's right below it. It says, "Subordinate units whose accumulated funds exceed the amount referred to in Section 18.2 must comply with the Article by expending such excess within a reasonable time."

I think that addresses this gentleman's question.

Commander McMASTERS. Within a reasonable time.

Mr. MUSSELMANN. That's what happens to the excess accumulated funds.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. Are we ready for the question? You're ready for the question? All in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The motion is carried.

Mike 3.

Mr. EDWARD M. SWAN. Commander, Ed Swan, Metro Detroit Chapter 1. I would like for you to give me a recommendation on what we should do about this problem.

Commander McMASTERS. Okay. I will talk to you about that at some other time.

Mr. SWAN. Okay. Thank you.

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you.

Mr. DALEY. Commander, that completes the resolutions that the committee recommended for adoption. I'd like to thank the advi-

sors, Fred Bristol, Ed Galian, Sally Wilson, and also the members of the Constitution and Bylaws for their support for these proposed changes.

Commander, I move that the committee recommendations be accepted and that the resolutions be adopted, and that the committee be dismissed with a vote of thanks.

Commander McMASTERS. Mike 2.

Mr. STEESE. George Steese, California Chapter 1, seconds that motion.

Commander McMASTERS. We have a motion and a second to basically discharge the committee with a vote of thanks. Ready for the question? Ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. It's carried.

Thank you, sir.

Ladies and gentlemen, please rise, and I'll ask the chaplain to lead us in prayer.

Chaplain WILKIE. Commander, it's a pleasure today to welcome a guest to the platform, Rabbi Saffra, the new department chaplain of the State of New York. If I may, I'd like to ask him to offer our prayer. Rabbi Saffra.

Rabbi RAFAEL SAFFRA. Thank you, National Chaplain Wilkie. Let us pray. Sovereign of the universe, we thank Thee, O God, for the deliberations this morning, for Your uplifting Spirit, and Your guidance, and we ask You as this day proceeds to grant us the wisdom and the good health as we enjoy the beauty of the day, the camaraderie and the friendship of each other in Your Holy work. And let us say amen.

Commander McMASTERS. The convention stands in recess until Thursday morning at 9 o'clock. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 11 o'clock a.m., July 30, 1996.]

FINAL BUSINESS SESSION

August 1, 1996

The Final Business Session of the 75th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans convened in the Grand Ballroom of the New Orleans Hilton Riverside, New Orleans, Louisiana, Thursday morning, August 1, 1996, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by Commander Thomas A. McMasters, III.

Commander THOMAS A. McMASTERS III. The convention will come to order.

Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our country.

[Pledge of Allegiance.]

Commander McMASTERS. Chaplain, will you please lead us in prayer?

Chaplain WILKIE. Once again, for a moment of silence, if we may. There are a number of our comrades who are ill, some who are in hospital here, have become ill since we arrived; others, of course, who are at home; many whose names are inscribed upon our hearts. Let's take just a moment of silence to remember all of those who stand in need.

[Moment of silence.]

Chaplain WILKIE. We pause again today, Father, with glad and grateful hearts, grateful that you have brought us through a day of seminars where our minds have been enriched, where we've been challenged, and where many have made deeper commitments to service to our disabled American veterans. We thank you for those who led the seminars and for those who attended.

We thank you for the rest and for the fellowship we've had this past day, for the rest of last evening, for the refreshment of this morning. And now as we enter into this very important day of business, once again I lift up our commander, our adjutant and all of those to make reports. I lift up those who are to be nominated for office.

Father, may all that is done in this day be to the glory, to the honor of Your Holy Name and to the benefit of our comrades wherever they are. Amen.

Commander McMASTERS. Please be seated.

Will you please welcome Reba Eslinger, Wisconsin, newly elected president of the Commanders and Adjutants Association for 1996–1997. [Applause.]

Ms. REBA ESLINGER. Good morning. I would like to announce the officers of the State Commanders and Adjutants Association, and would you please stand. Sloan Hoopes is vice-president; for the Executive Committee, Bill Brzezinski, Harry Yaukey, Jim Tanner, Ray Chatary and Dorothy Schilling.

I would also like to announce the appointments, because these are people that are going to be working with the organization, and they have a lot to offer. Secretary-treasurer, Dave Tannenbaum; judge advocate, Tom Daley; the chaplain, Al Melton; sergeant-at-arms, William Novak. On the Resolutions Committee, David Schiapo; June Springer, Stanley Miller; on the Audit and Finance Committee, Irvin Eddy, Bob Freitas and Tom Johns; on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, Ken Musselmann, Paul Pealer and David Goliver; and then the Special Projects, Tom Campbell, James Stewart and Wally Tyson.

That is our elected and appointed officers for the next year for the State Commanders and Adjutants Association.

At this time, would Art Wilson come forward for a presentation? Art, on behalf of the State Commanders and Adjutants Association, I'd like to present you a check for a thousand dollars for the National Service Foundation. [Applause.]

Thank you.

Commander McMASTERS. At this time, I'm going to call on the Imperial Rodent, Al Nowak, to present the newly elected Imperial Golden Rodent, Curt Guiglaar.

Mr. ALFRED W. NOWAK. Thank you, Commander. National Commander, National Adjutant, DAV members and guests: It is with pride that I stand before you as the Imperial Golden Rodent. With this pride, I can pledge that we, the National Order of the Trench Rats, will, as in the past, continue to support this great organization, the Disabled American Veterans.

We were chartered in 1924 to support this great organization by helping the widows and dependents of our wartime disabled. I will do my best to see that we continue the support in 1996–1997. To date, we have contributed \$181,793.36 to the Legislative Fund;

\$22,450.33 to the Memorial Fund. And, as in the past, we would like to contribute this check in the amount of \$4,000 to help continue the work in the many DAV service programs.

During the period of 1995–1996, our dugouts' total contribution to the many causes are as follows: DAV chapters or state departments, \$13,866; VAVS hospital, clinics and nursing care units, \$27,882.72; within the community, \$8,711.18; VAVS volunteer hours, 54,383 hours; VAVS events work, 316 events. This is with only 70 percent of our dugouts reporting.

I will see that we stand before you in 1997 with even greater figures. Thank you for allowing us this opportunity to speak before you.

In addition to this check for \$4,000, I would like to present a check for \$100 each for two of our deceased members in past years.

WHEREAS, God has seen in His infinite wisdom to call to the great beyond Kenneth G. Nowry, Imperial Golden Rodent Number 63, and Elmer E. Long, Jr., Imperial Executive Rat, District 9, 1995–1996; and

WHEREAS, they did, by their acts and diligence as imperial officers help lead the National Order of Trench Rats to the prominent position it holds today in the service of disabled American veterans;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the National Order of Trench Rats assemble at this 72nd National Rendezvous in New Orleans, that we recognize the outstanding service by contributing a sum of \$100 each as a memorial to them to be placed in the trust account of the Perpetual Rehabilitation Funds of the Disabled American Veterans Service Foundation, the income of which shall be used from time to time for the maintenance of the nationwide rehabilitation activities of the Disabled American Veterans and their dependents; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that their names be inscribed on the memorial honor rolls so all may see and appreciate their sacrifices and devotion to the cause of the Disabled American Veterans as exemplified by Kenneth G. Nowry, Imperial Golden Rodent 63, 1987 to 1988, and Elmer E. Long, Jr., Imperial Executive Rate, District 9, from 1995 to 1996.

And I would like to introduce our incoming Imperial Golden Rodent for a few words, Curt Guiglaar. [Applause.]

Mr. CURTIS L. GUIGLAAR. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm proud to stand before you this morning, and I pledge my support to the Disabled American Veterans and my organization, the National Order of Trench Rats. I feel, as all my brothers do, that if the DAV needs some help, please call upon us; we'll be there for you.

Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Mr. NORWAK. Thank you. good day, God bless and have a safe trip home.

Commander McMASTERS. They signed the important one; they didn't sign the two minor checks, though. [Laughter.]

I'm formally announcing that the registration of delegates is closed, and I'm going to call on the Credentials Committee for their final report.

Mr. BARNETT. Good morning. And this is the final report and reflects the total registration as of 12:00 noon, July 31st, 1996. At the present time, we have 590 chapters, 50 departments, 27 national officers, 10 past national commanders, for a total of 1,365 delegates, 52 alternates, for a total vote of 10,753.

This completes the final report of the Credentials Committee, Commander, and I move for its adoption.

Commander McMASTERS. There's a motion for the adoption of the credentials report. Is there a second? Mike 2.

Mr. SIDNEY BICK. Sidney Bick, past department commander, Illinois, delegate, Chapter 47, seconds the motion.

Commander McMASTERS. There's a motion and support. Are we ready for the question? Are we ready for the question. All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. It's carried.

I'm going to call on the chairman of the Nominations Committee for his report.

Mr. DENNIS A. JOYNER. Thank you, Commander. Comrade Commander and delegates: The National Convention Committee on Nomination of National Officers was called to order for its first business session on July 29th, 1996 by Committee Advisors Gene Murphy and William Leach.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. Dennis Joyner of Florida was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed, and Dennis Joyner was elected chairman. The next order of business was the nomination and election of a secretary. Michael Tempesta of California was nominated and elected as secretary of the committee.

The committee interviewed 13 candidates over the next three days. The following is the recommendation of the Nominating Committee for the offices.

For the office of national commander, Gregory C. Reed of Indiana; for the office of national senior vice-commander, Harry R. McDonald, Jr., Florida; for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander, William D. Wiggins of Virginia; for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander, Andrew A. Kistler of Pennsylvania; for the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander, Michael E. Dobmeier, North Dakota; for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander, Richard Christopher of Massachusetts; for the office of national judge advocate, Edward G. Galian of New York; and for the office of national chaplain, the Reverend Carl E. Bergstrom of Massachusetts.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Nomination of National Officers, and I move the acceptance of this report and that the committee be discharged with the thanks of the convention.

Commander McMASTERS. Mike 3.

NEC 1st District Alternate DROGO. Commander, I'd like to second that motion on the acceptance of the Nominating Committee. Frank Drogo, alternate National Executive Committeeman from District 1.

Commander McMASTERS. We have the motion and the second. Ready for the question? Ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. It's carried. [Applause.]

You have heard the report of the Committee on Nomination of National Officers. They have nominated Gregory C. Reed from Indiana for national commander. Here to second the nomination is Jim Powers.

Mr. JAMES S. POWERS. National Commander, National Adjutant, national officers, ladies and gentlemen: It is with great pleasure that the Department of Indiana places the name of Gregory C. Reed in nomination for the high office of national commander for the DAV.

Greg was born in Indianapolis, Indiana and after graduating from high school, enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1966. He subsequently served in Vietnam with the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines and the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines. It is while Greg was serving with the 2nd Platoon, Lima Company, 3rd of the 4th, that he was wounded during a fire fight in Vietnam's Quang Tri Province. Greg holds the Purple Heart, combat action ribbon, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, and the Presidential Unit Citation.

Following his discharge for active duty, he signed up in the DAV as a life member of Dr. Worthington Chapter 3, while pursuing and undergraduate degree at Indiana University. He has served in a variety of elected offices at the chapter level, including commander. After graduating from Indiana University in 1972, Greg became employed as a national service officer and remained in that capacity until 1974, when he began graduate studies at Butler University, where he began graduate studies at Butler University, where he finished a master's degree in 1977. Since that time, he has worked in the field of rehabilitation counseling, continually working with his fellow disabled veterans.

While pursuing his educational goals, this candidate continued to be active in the DAV at both chapter and department level, culminating in 1980 as department commander for the State of Indiana. Through continuing to function at the department level in a variety of offices, including assistant adjutant and Finance Committee chairman, he became increasingly active at the national level as well.

Since 1981, his national responsibilities have included appointments to the National Interim Employment Committee and the National Interim Hospital and Medical Services Committee. Mr. Reed has served two two-year terms on the DAV's National Executive Committee and has been elected to national vice-commander positions at four national conventions.

In addition to his DAV activities, Greg also holds membership in the American Legion, the Military Order of the Purple Heart. He is a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Indianapolis, and is a very proud father of two daughters, Suzette, who is a critical care RN, and Melissa, who's recently graduated from Indiana University and is employed as a therapeutic recreational specialist.

Mr. Gregory C. Reed was very instrumental and has been the main force behind Indiana's Homeless Veterans Stand-Down Meals. We have fed over 3,000 veterans and families the past four years. Mr. Reed has given of himself to include going out on Christmas Eve, December the 24th, 1995 to deliver blankets, clothes and food to the homeless and their families.

Mr. Reed was quoted in the DAV National Magazine issue of March-April of 1996, "Like most people, I was thinking about being at home exchanging gifts with my family, but as I walked along those abandoned railroad tracks toward where the homeless men were living, I truly understood the meaning of Christmas and what it is to give to others, not what we receive."

Mr. Reed's guidance and dedication to Indiana's homeless veterans and their families are a credit to the Disabled American Veterans.

In summary, our candidate is committed to continuing the legacy of this great organization with its continued involvement in service work to this country's wartime disabled. Additionally, Greg also desires more involvement among Vietnam veterans at chapter level and a greater participation among departments in community programs for veterans.

Thank you. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. The Chair will now call for any further nominations for the office of national commander. Are there any further nominations for the office of national commander? Are there any further nominations for the office of national commander? Hearing none, I close nominations and declare Gregory C. Reed elected as national commander, and instruct the national adjutant to cast one unanimous ballot for his election.

Adjutant WILSON. I, Arthur H. Wilson, national adjutant of the Disabled American Veterans, hereby cast one unanimous ballot for Gregory C. Reed for the office of national commander. [Rising applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. The Nominating Committee has nominated Harry R. McDonald from the State of Florida for the office of national senior vice-commander. I will now call for any further nominations for national senior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations for the office of national senior vice-commander? Any further nominations for national senior vice-commander? If there are no further nominations for national senior vice-commander, I close the nominations and declare Harry R. McDonald, Jr. of Florida elected as national senior vice-commander.

The Nominating Committee has nominated William Wiggins from Virginia for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander. I will now call for any further nominations for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations for national 1st junior vice-commander? Any further nominations for national 1st junior vice-commander? Hearing none, I will close the nominations and declare William D. Wiggins of Virginia elected as national 1st junior vice-commander. [Applause.]

The Nominating Committee has nominated Andrew A. Kistler of Pennsylvania for the office of 2nd junior vice-commander. I will now call for any further nominations for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander? Are there any further nominations for the office of 2nd junior vice-commander? If there are no further nominations, I will now close the nominations and declare Andrew A. Kistler of Pennsylvania elected national 2nd junior vice-commander. [Applause.]

The Nominating Committee has nominated Michael E. Dobmeier of North Dakota for the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander. I will now call for any further nominations for national 3rd junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations for national 3rd junior vice-commander? Are there any further nominations for the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander? If there are no further nominations, I will close nominations and declare Michael E. Dobmeier elected national 3rd junior vice-commander. [Applause.]

The Nominating Committee has nominated Richard Christopher of Massachusetts for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations for national 4th junior vice-commander? Are there any further nominations for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander? Hearing none, I will close the nominations and declare Richard Christopher of Massachusetts elected national 4th junior vice-commander. [Applause.]

The Nominating Committee has nominated Edward Galian of New York for the office of national judge advocate. I will now call for any further nominations for the national judge advocate. Are there any further nominations for the office of national judge advocate? Are there any further nominations for the office of national judge advocate? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed, and I declare Ed Galian as being elected our national judge advocate. [Applause.]

The Nominating Committee has nominated Carl E. Bergstrom for the office of national chaplain. Are there any further nominations for the office of national chaplain? Are there any further nominations for the office of national chaplain? Are there any further nominations for the office of national chaplain? If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Carl E. Bergstrom elected as national chaplain. [Applause.]

I will now instruct the national adjutant to cast one unanimous ballot for these officers.

Adjutant WILSON. I, Arthur H. Wilson, national adjutant of the Disabled American Veterans, cast one unanimous ballot for Harry McDonald for national senior vice-commander [applause]; William Wiggins for national 1st junior vice-commander [applause]; Andrew Kistler for national 2nd junior vice-commander [applause]; Michael Dobmeier for national 3rd junior vice-commander [applause]; Richard Christopher for national 4th junior vice-commander [applause]; Edward Galian for national judge advocate [applause]; and the Reverend Carl Bergstrom for national chaplain. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you, Mr. Adjutant.

May we have the newly elected officers and their families escorted to the stage, please?

We are now going to have Greg's daughters present him with the hat. [Applause.]

It is my pleasure to present National Commander-Elect Gregory C. Reed of Indiana for remarks. [Applause.]

Commander-Elect REED. Thank you, Tom. Thank you, Suzette and Melissa. I'm the proud father of those two young ladies back here. [Applause.]

I'd like for all the members of the 13th District to please stand., Indiana, Kentucky. Thank you. Without you, I wouldn't be here. Thank you very, very much. [Applause.]

National Commander McMasters, National Adjutant Art Wilson, honored guests, friends and delegates to the 75th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans: Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of Great Britain during the darkest hours of World War II, once said, "I never say, 'It gives me great pleasure to speak to any audience, because there are only a few activities from which I derive intense pleasure, and speaking is not one of them.'" It was a rule he violated only once.

At the Other Club, an informal group he organized to discuss ideas and politics, a standard custom was a spur-of-the-moment talk. From one hat the name of a member was drawn, and from another a topic. Once, Churchill's name was drawn along with the subject, sex. Churchill rose, and pointing to the card began, "It gives me great pleasure," and then sat down. [Laughter.]

Like Mr. Churchill, I, too, am more than a little uncomfortable with speaking in public. So, ladies and gentlemen, I promise you that I shall be as brief as possible, no matter how long it takes. [Laughter.]

I am truly honored by the opportunity to serve as your national commander. It is a privilege that fills my heart with gratitude and humility, an honor that inspires me to carry on with hope and courage the great legacy of this organization we call the DAV, a legacy that strives daily to help fulfill the dreams of all of those who bear the scars of war.

I want to talk for a moment about something that concerns all of us in the DAV. No, I don't mean sex. I want to talk about getting involved, actively involved in your local DAV chapter, and I particularly want to address my remarks to Vietnam and post-Vietnam-Era veterans. As everyone knows, people have been gathering together in groups for the benefit of the individual for as long as, well, for as long as there have been people, because as a group you can accomplish more, exchange ideas, support one another and change things for the better.

DAV members have been gathering, exchanging, supporting and changing things for the better for disabled veterans and their families for 76 years, and nobody does it better.

I learned so many of life's lessons while serving in the Marine Corps during the Vietnam War, lessons embodied in the phrases "doing your duty goes beyond the call"; "adversity is the key to success." In other words, the more obstacles that get tossed in your way, the harder you work to overcome them. Disabled veterans and their families know all about adversity and about overcoming obstacles, sacrifice and going beyond the call.

Today, our nation finds itself on the threshold of a new era. The long Cold War has come to an end, and America faces a new horizon. The DAV faces new challenges as well. We all stand at the dawn of a new century. Never before has unity been so very important. The time when World War II and Korean veterans stood as the active cornerstone in our chapters is fading. Many of these veterans who championed our cause are no longer able to remain as active as they would like, due to age and physical limitations.

It is truly a time of rapid and sometimes troubling change, and it is happening at a time when the current political climate in our nation's capital is becoming extremely hazardous to the health and welfare of disabled veterans and their families. Americans learned long ago that the blessings of freedom are never easy and never free. They must always be defended.

In the desert, they call something you can see in the distance but disappears once you get there a mirage. Next thing you know, they'll call it veterans' benefits. Constant threats of reductions, curtailments and outright elimination of service-connected veterans earned entitlements and beneficial Department of Veterans Affairs

programs are fast approaching reality in a changing and emotionally charged political atmosphere.

One reason for this change? The diminishing number of veterans in Congress is reducing the sensitivity of our elected leaders to veterans' issues. Currently, little more than half of all the U.S. Senators and a third of all Representatives are veterans. The growing number of nonveterans in Congress requires an ongoing commitment to educating its members.

Everyone understands that balancing the federal budget requires sacrifice. However, it must never be forgotten what veterans have already sacrificed when they answered their country's call to defend our precious freedom. Today, with fewer veterans in Congress, we must ensure that our elected leaders understand that veterans' benefits are a continuing cost of war and a debt never to be forgotten.

As President Lincoln pledged at Gettysburg to care for our nation's veterans, today's Congress has an ongoing obligation to honor that solemn promise. In its efforts to balance the budget, Congress should not turn its back on those who have given so much and only ask to be treated fairly.

Every generation of Americans inherits the complex work of maintaining the greatest democracy the world has ever seen. Our World War II and Korean War veterans and the families of those veterans should feel a sense of enormous accomplishment. They went beyond the call and maintained their watch with valor and dignity. Because of what was achieved during World War II, Historian Stephen Ambrose labeled the 20th the American century. That generation of Americans born between 1900 and 1930 made victory possible. Without their sacrifices, it could not have been done, he concluded.

Now that valiant generation of Americans is holding out the cherished torch of service to Vietnam veterans and post-Vietnam Era veterans as well. Their challenge must become our challenge. Their spirit must become ours as well. We who are the heirs of that legacy must also be the guardian of their dreams. Now is the time for each of you to accept that torch and carry its flame, brighter than ever before, into the future.

Please consider this: Lots of local chapters have real clout with their elected officials, and the bigger their membership, the more that they are listened to. It's at the chapter level that the true grass-roots service on behalf of disabled veterans and their families takes place.

If you're not an active chapter member, you probably don't appreciate how much of the load those big chapters and those veterans are doing for you. Now that you know, the question is, isn't getting involved in your local DAV chapter in your own and your family's best interests?

Ultimately, all that any of us can do for the DAV is to do our part during one time. We cannot rewrite the past, nor can we guarantee the future. But we can and must be vigilant in the time given to us. In order to succeed, we must stand united in purpose and mighty in spirit as never before. The first and great commandment is, don't be afraid. The DAV will endure, but only if we stand up for it. Together we are one.

Departments and chapters that are constantly rejuvenating themselves are a key ingredient into the future. A mix of older and younger members is healthiest, both for the chapters as well as this national organization. We all need to fight to protect health care Programs for our older veterans. Similarly, we need younger veterans to help energize the entire membership. New volunteers are needed to carry the legislative fights as never before. Each of us must continue to remind Congress that we are still around, that we vote, that we know the issues at hand. Together, we are one.

We must reemphasize that we are a vigorous, responsible, nationwide organization that intends to keep fighting at the polls and elsewhere for needed veterans' programs. Never again should we allow those in Washington to cast votes against the best interests of America's veterans.

While congressional leaders attempt to carry out their "Contract With America," we must ensure that they are mindful of another contract to which they have a moral commitment, a contract with America's veterans. Together we are one.

I'm reminded of an old African proverb which says, "The gazelle must run faster than the fastest lion or be eaten, and the lion must outrun the slowest gazelle or starve." It doesn't matter whether you're lion or a gazelle. When the sun comes up, you'd better be running.

As your national commander, that's exactly what I plan to do. When the sun comes up each day, I'll be running to ensure that our hard-earned benefits are protected; running to recruit new members to our organization; running to educate the growing number of nonveterans in Congress; running to strengthen our ability to generate grass-roots support for legislative issues that are vital to disabled veterans and their families; running to help our homeless veterans living on the fringe of society; running to eliminate the fear that too many widows of disabled veterans feel as they struggle to make ends meet; running to ensure adequate health care and compensation for those who have contributed so much to preserve our way of life; running to eradicate the barriers that separate many veterans from the rest of our society. Running together with our families and friends, we are one.

In closing, let me share with you a story that applies to all of us who serve veterans. In ancient times, there was a philosopher who had many disciples. One day, a cynical young man decided to humiliate the philosopher by asking him a question that he couldn't possibly answer correctly. The cynic put a recently hatched chick in the palm of his hand and asked the philosopher in front of a large audience whether what he had in his hand was alive or dead.

His intention, if the philosopher said, "Alive," was to crush the chick to death and show the master to be wrong. If the philosopher said, "Dead," then he planned to let the chick live to prove the great man wrong. In response to the question, the philosopher looked the cynic in the eye, smiled and calmly replied, "The answer, my son, lies in your hands."

Well, like that young man, the future of the DAV and all the good things we stand for lies in our hands. Our actions over the

next few years will determine whether the DAV as we know it today will be alive and will thrive, or only be a memory. Just remember, together we are one.

God bless you and thank you very much for the honor you've bestowed on me, [Rising applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. National Senior Vice-Commander Harry R. "Mac" McDonald, Jr., would you care to say something? [Applause.]

Senior Vice-Commander-Elect McDONALD. Commander McMasters, Commander-Elect Reed, national officers, distinguished guests, members: It is indeed a pleasure for me to stand up here this morning—I'm a little past the other age—to greet you and to wish Commander Reed a very productive year. We have had three great years, and I'm looking forward to the fourth one.

And would the Department of Florida stand up, please? Without your support, it would have been impossible. I appreciate it, and I appreciate all of your support. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. National 1st Junior Vice-Commander William D. Wiggins, would you care to say something? [Applause.]

1st Junior Vice-Commander-Elect WIGGINS. Commander McMasters, Commander-Elect Reed, fellow members of the DAV: I stand before you very humble today. Twenty-five years ago, I never realized I would be standing here in this position, but it feels great.

If Billy Hightower is in the room, would he please stand up? Thank you. Billy Hightower is my sponsor, my dear friend for many, many years, and I thank you for that, Billy.

For the Department of Virginia, our dynamic department commander, June Springer; our department adjutant, David Tannenbaum; Jim Clem; Rob Reynolds, many, many others, would you stand up, all of you? [Applause.] I thank you for your hard work in helping me with this. It's really appreciated.

And now for the 6th District, the greatest district in this organization, if you can, would you stand up? [Applause.] Thanks very much.

I pledge to Commander Reed my total support during the next year.

And I have done this personally, but I would still like to congratulate Commander McMasters for his outstanding year. Thank you. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. National 2nd Junior Vice-Commander Andrew A. Kistler. Would you care to say something, Andy? [Applause.]

2nd Junior Vice-Commander-Elect ANDREW A. KISTLER. Commander McMasters, Commander-Elect Reed and other line officers: This is indeed a great pleasure, and I take great honor in this, and thank you very much. And could the Pennsylvania delegation please stand up? Thank you. Thank you. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. National 3rd Junior Vice-Commander Michael E. Dobmeier. [Applause.]

3rd Junior Vice-Commander-Elect. I'd like to thank you, the members, for the confidence that you've placed in me. I'd like to thank the Nominating Committee for that same thing. I'd like to thank my Election Committee, the Department of North Dakota,

and the 14th District for their never-ending support. Would you stand, 14th District? [Applause.]

I'd like to thank my family and my wife, Sandi, who's always stood at my side. [Applause.]

You honored me by placing me in this line of distinguished officers, and again this morning you honored me by allowing me to continue. Rest assured that I don't take that for granted, and I'll work very hard to earn the trust that you've placed in me. Thank you. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. I'll call on National 4th Junior Vice-Commander Richard Christopher. [Applause.]

4th Junior Vice-Commander-Elect RICHARD CHRISTOPHER. Thank you, Commander McMasters. Newly elected Commander Greg Reed, National Adjutant Wilson, line officers, members of the Disabled American Veterans: It is indeed an honor for me to stand here before you. You have given me this great opportunity. Not only did I serve Massachusetts for 24 years, but now I'm ready to serve you as a whole for the rest of my life.

It is just a great feeling to be here. I look forward to working not only with the staff, but with newly elected Commander Greg Reed. My heart is with you. My heart is with the DAV. I will give it my all. Thank you so much for giving me this great opportunity to stand here before such a great body of disabled veterans. [Applause.]

Could I please have District 1, who supported me all year, from Massachusetts and the entire state please stand for a bow. [Applause.] Thank you, gentlemen, for all your help.

And Commander, I want to thank you personally for an outstanding job you've done and for what your friendship has meant to me in the past eight years. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. Newly elected National Judge Advocate Ed Galian, would you like to say something? [Applause.]

Judge Advocate GALIAN. National Commander Tom McMasters, III; Greg Reed, national commander-elect; National Adjutant Arthur Wilson; all national officers; members of the Disabled American Veterans; ladies and gentlemen: Thank you very much for this great honor. I have been up here so many times, I'm almost speechless, because I've said all the words time and time again. I guess you've heard this before, but I feel a little bit like Elizabeth Taylor's ninth husband on his wedding night: I know what to do, but I don't know how to make it interesting. [Laughter.]

My wife is here in the room. I saw her walk in. She's performed a little task. She's joined Maria Tedrow and Barbara Hicks in making a presentation in memory of Kit Seal Feighner this morning, and she just got in, and I want to congratulate her and the other girls who are with her for performing that task in behalf of SONCO, which is the Spouses of National Commanders Association that's very active at these national conventions.

Janet, why don't you stand up and say hello. Everybody knows you anyway, I think. She's over here. [Applause.]

I'd like to thank in particular all the members of the New York delegation, which also comprises the 2nd District. Why don't you all stand up and take a bow? These guys and gals, they do a great job for the organization. [Applause.]

I won't say much more, because I want to hear Carl Bergstrom but thanks again, and I'm with you all all the time. Thanks very much. [Applause.]

Commander MCMASTERS. I call on our newly elected national chaplain, the Reverend Carl Bergstrom. [Applause.]

Chaplain-Elect CARL BERGSTROM. Commander McMasters, newly elected Commander Reed, National Judge Advocate, and to all national officers and all delegates and friends today: I want to thank you very much for your confidence in me, and I shall endeavor to do the best I can to fulfill the office of chaplain for the ensuing year.

I walk in great footsteps. Chaplain Wilkie has done a tremendous job this last year, and I will endeavor to carry on those things that he has started and carry them further.

We are not a religious organization. However, each of us bears the mark of a religion. And so we respect one another, and we work with one another as a team. And I shall endeavor to go forth as one of the team.

There is a common denominator in our Judeo-Christian culture and religious belief. Among our Jewish brethren, the Shema Israel; for those of us, "Hear O Israel, the Lord Our God is One God, and you shall love the Lord." And we have again added from a different point in Scripture, "And you shall love your neighbor as yourself." I shall endeavor to the best of my ability to follow that law and keep it close to me. If I can do that, then I can do the rest of the job as the chaplain.

I would like to ask District 1 to stand again. They're going to be the strongest people here, because they've stood up and sat down. That was the rowdy bunch over there that you heard earlier. So could I ask District 1 to stand? And I want to thank you for all the support you have given to me. [Applause.]

Thank you all.

Commander MCMASTERS. We will continue with the unfinished business of the convention. At this time, I will entertain a motion to discharge the Credentials Committee. Mike 1.

Mr. SALVATORE LO SAURO. Sal Lo Sauro, the past department commander of New Jersey, representing Chapter 15, makes a motion to discharge the Credentials Committee.

Commander MCMASTERS. Thank you. Is there support? Is there a second? Mike 3.

NEC MCKEEHAN. Lowell McKeehan, Lavonia Chapter 114 from Michigan, seconds the motion.

Commander MCMASTERS. Okay. You've heard the motion and support to discharge the Credentials Committee. Are we ready for the question? Are we ready for the question? All in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. That's carried.

I'd like to introduce some people from the Department of Indiana for a presentation.

MEMBER. Mike 1. Point of order. I believe we have to dismiss also the Nominating Committee.

Commander MCMASTERS. The Nominating Committee has been already dismissed.

MEMBER. I'm sorry. I was out of the room. Thank you.

COMMANDER McMASTERS. Thank you for trying to keep us in line here.

Commander-Elect REED. Ken Kersey? There he is.

Mr. KENNETH C. KERSEY. I want to congratulate Greg. We've worked pretty close in Indiana with Greg being the first Vietnam veteran elected state commander in Indiana, and I just followed along and learned everything I could do from him.

At this time, I'd like to present Art Wilson, national adjutant, with a check from Indiana to boost our membership, get it started off the line. So here from Indiana is \$40,000, Art, to get our membership on the line. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. I think that puts Indiana in first place today.

At this time, I'd also like to request the members of Prescott, Arizona Chapter Number 16 for a presentation. [Applause.]

MEMBER. Commander McMasters, Commander-Elect Reed, National Adjutant Wilson: Among other things, I have the privilege of being the hospital services coordinator at the Prescott VA Medical center in the beautiful Grand Canyon State of Arizona.

Until recently, the DAV Winter Sports Clinic was little more than a piece of paper that crossed my desk periodically. Then the chief of recreation services called me one day and said, "Lee, I need help. I have a veteran that I want to send to the clinic, but I'm short on funding." Upon determining that this veteran was service-connected, our chapter provided the needed assistance.

Naturally, when the veteran returned, I got feedback. I have to tell you that I was utterly amazed at the level of rehabilitation that had taken place in such a short period of time. I did some checking, and I discovered that this event appears to have been overlooked as chapters look for ways to support service. In our current environment of financial austerity, I've come to believe that supporting the DAV Winter Sports Clinic gives you the best bang for the buck that there is around. The positive advantages of participation are essentially without parallel.

Therefore, DAV Prescott Chapter 16 has decided to adopt this activity as part of our service to disabled veterans, their widows, widowers, orphans and dependents. Mr. Commander, I am honored to present our chapter check in the amount of \$2,500 in support of this most worthwhile endeavor. And I encourage other chapters to consider a similar action.

Thank you and God bless. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you.

I call on the national adjutant to read the list of the newly elected members of the National Executive Committee.

Adjutant WILSON. NEC 2nd District, Sal Tornatore; alternate, William Novak. NEC 4th District, Grover Penn; alternate, Albert Church. NEC 6th District, Josue Saez; alternate, Tom Johns. NEC 8th District, Charles Mills; alternate, Hollis Bridges. NEC 10th District, Roger Jansen; alternate, George Zoscsak. NEC 12th District, James Harris; alternate, Desmond Fortner. NEC 14th District, Harry Vandemore; alternate, Larry Bouska. NEC 16th District, Robert Salisbury; alternate, George Steese. NEC 18th District, Michael Smaydy; and alternate, Donald Schmitt. NEC 20th District, William Bone; and alternate, Leonard Humes. [Applause.]

Commander McMASTERS. Thank you.

Adjutant WILSON. Those members have been elected to a two-year term, 1996 to 1998.

Commander McMASTERS. The Chair will now entertain a motion to adjourn the convention sine die.

Mr. ALFRED FATICONI. Faticoni from Connecticut makes a motion that we adjourn.

Commander McMASTERS. Is there support?

Mr. RUSS HENDERSON. Russ Henderson, PDC Virginia, seconds the motion.

Commander McMASTERS. All in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to call on Chaplain Wilkie for the prayer.

Chaplain WILKIE. Commander, may I have just a moment of special privilege? Thank you. I'd simply like to say a word of thank you to all of you for the last few years of being your chaplain. It's been a labor of love. I have never in my entire life been a part of an organization nor around a group of people that I love more and wanted to serve more than I've wanted to serve you.

I think you've got one whale of a list of officers. I think you've got a great person as your national chaplain. I just ask you to get behind him and let's do more than hearers of the word; let's be doers of it. Let's really get out and do the work of taking care of each other.

Again, thank you for the high honor.

Let us pray. Again, how good it is, Father, that we can assemble together in such fashion and know that you're with us. Whether we're on the streets homeless; whether we're standing before Congress, pleading with them to honor their contract with the veterans; whether we're at any place at any moment, yet the tie that binds us is always love of God, love of country, of family.

How we thank you for the past. How we thank you for the long line of splendor that has been ours that has deposited us upon this place in history. Oh, we ask now, Father God, that whatever that future holds, we may be ready to meet it with confidence and with assurance. help us always to please to do what is right.

Now go with us, be with these newly elected officers, be with each of us as we go into that future with joyous and radiant hearts ready to accept the challenge. Thank you, Father. Amen.

Commander McMASTERS. Will the Color Guard please retire the Colors?

[Retirement of Colors.]

Commander McMASTERS. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in thanking the Department of Massachusetts Honor Guard for retiring the Colors and for their work here at our convention. [Applause.]

Ladies and gentlemen, the 75th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 10:15 o'clock a.m., August 1, 1996.]

P R O C E E D I N G
of the
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
74th National Convention
NEW ORLEANS HILTON RIVERSIDE
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
JULY 27–AUGUST 1, 1996

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DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY

OPENING BUSINESS SESSION

July 29, 1996

The Opening Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary 74th National Convention convened in the Napoleon Room of the New Orleans Hilton Riverside, New Orleans, Louisiana, Monday morning, July 29, 1996, and was called to order at 9:25 o'clock a.m. by Adjutant Maria M. Tedrow.

Adjutant MARIA M. TEDROW. Will the national sergeant-at-arms please present National Commander Barbara Hicks to the platform?

And now will the national sergeant-at-arms have the national officers escorted to the platform: National Chaplain Carol Gray; National Judge Advocate Shelia Allred; 4th Junior Vice Phyllis Novak; 3rd Junior Vice Paula Raymond; 2nd Junior Vice Evelyn Dorsey; 1st Junior Vice Evelynne Dunn; and Senior Vice-Commander Margaret Hass.

And we have the Immediate Past National Commander Jane Troutman. Would you please bring Jane up to the platform?

Now, will the national sergeant-at-arms have the past national commanders escorted to the chairs in the front of the room, please? Past National Commander Lucille McCarthy, Florida; Past National Commander Pauline Wright of Colorado; Past National Commander Nelda Wilson of Illinois; Past National Commander Dorothy Van Hoy of Missouri; Past National Commander Marjorie Vincent, now of Arizona; Past National Commander Florence Valgardson of Utah; Past National Commander Maurine Pederson of Missouri; Past National Commander Betty Hall of Texas; Past National Commander Sally Wilton of Arizona; Past National Commander Loneita Shoemaker of Arkansas; Past National Commander Katherine Pearson of Minnesota; Past National Commander Rose Schilpp of Missouri; Past National Commander Claudia Roy from Vermont; Past National Commander Barbara Mallet of Ohio.

And would you now please escort the National Convention Chairman to the stage, Elaine Majors of Louisiana?

And now will the sergeant-at-arms present the National Colors?
[Presentation of Colors.]

Adjutant TEDROW. And will the national sergeant-at-arms now present the Colors of the various state departments? The first colors are the State of Ohio in honor of our National Auxiliary Commander Barbara Hicks.

[Presentation of Colors.]

Adjutant TEDROW. Will the national sergeant-at-arms at this time post the National Colors?

[Posting of Colors.]

Adjutant TEDROW. We will now have the prayer by our national Chaplain, Carol Gray.

Chaplain CAROL GRAY. Please join hands for a moment of silence as we remember those families who have suffered because of world tragedies, those who are defending the pursuit of peace, and all of our members who are sick and suffering.

[Moment of silence.]

Chaplain GRAY. We thank You, Lord, for the privilege we have to gather here with our Auxiliary family. Be with Commander Barbara as she leads us through this convention. May all that we say and do here make us a stronger organization. Let each and every thing we do show how much we care. Amen.

Adjutant TEDROW. The Pledge of Allegiance will be led by our National Americanism Chairman Paula Raymond.

[Pledge of Allegiance.]

Adjutant TEDROW. And now our national musician, Erna B. Smith, will play the National Anthem, and let's all join in.

[Singing of National Anthem.]

Adjutant TEDROW. And now will the national sergeant-at-arms dismiss the national and state color bearers.

[Color bearers dismissed.]

Adjutant TEDROW. How do you like our little junior members as pages? [Applause.]

The Constitution and Bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary state that the supreme powers of this organization shall be vested in the Annual National Convention composed of the national officers and representatives of the state departments and units. In accordance with these directives, I, Maria M. Tedrow, National Auxiliary Adjutant, declare the 74th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary be convened at New Orleans, Louisiana.

Consideration and disposition of business brought before this convention shall be conducted in accordance with the National Constitution and Bylaws and the Ritual of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary as most recently amended.

To all present, take due notice thereof and govern yourselves accordingly.

And now, one of the highlights of my few days here as national adjutant at this convention is to introduce to you the lady that you elected last year to lead this organization, and she has done that. She has been very conscientious and dedicated to the organization. It has been a privilege to serve with her.

I would like at this time to present to you my National Commander and your National Auxiliary Commander, Barbara Hicks. [Applause.]

Commander BARBARA L. HICKS. Thank you, ladies. It's been a great honor to represent you this year. It's indeed been an honor to represent you in my travels this year, and it's so nice to see so many here. The room is full. That is just so nice. And I do welcome each and every one of you here for this convention.

The ladies have done an excellent job in their presentation this morning. It is absolutely beautiful to stand up here as the flags from the states come forward, to see the past national commanders

come up, to see the pages. It's just a beautiful sight. That's why it was changed a few years ago so the commander can enjoy the presentation as it comes down the aisle.

At this time, I would like to introduce to you our convention chairman, who has been working very hard this year, for some remarks. Elaine Majors. [Applause.]

Mrs. ELAINE MAJORS. Good morning. How you-all are? [Laughter.] I can't talk French. I'm from North Louisiana.

Commander Barbara, line officers, Maria Tedrow, past national commanders, delegates and all these ladies assembled here at this convention in the great State of Louisiana in the City of New Orleans: We are glad to have you here, and we are proud that this was chosen as the state and the city, since this is the 50th anniversary of the Department of Louisiana Auxiliary. So we are proud of that. [Applause.]

Commander Barbara, on behalf of our department commander, Elizabeth Ketchum, and all of the delegates and the ladies from Louisiana, we want to wish you a successful convention.

And you ladies, we hope you have a good time, and we know that you are going to leave some money, because we need it bad.

If we can assist you in any way, if it's at all possible, we will be glad to help you. We have this little mask on. Some of our Louisiana ladies didn't get one, and I'm in the dog house. But you can see their badges, and we will assist if at all possible.

Now, I have a few presentations I'd like to make. Maria, you know the magnolia is the state flower of Louisiana, but in North Louisiana, at a little town north of Shreveport, we have a Dogwood Festival, and they grow wild in North Louisiana. So I would like for you to have this print of the dogwood flower. [Applause.]

And now, how many of you ladies when you call National Headquarters, you ask Pat, "Is Maria there?" or, "Can I speak to Maria?" And if she says, "I'm sorry. Maria's out. Would you like to talk to Judy?" And I think probably most of us—"Well okay. We'll talk to Judy." [Laughter.]

Judy is a lovely person and you couldn't ask anybody to do any more than she does. If she doesn't know where, what or when, "I'll get back to you." And let me tell you, she does, she calls you back.

So, Judy, I want to give you this. This is also made in North Louisiana, too. See, we're going to North Louisiana today. [Applause.]

Now, Commander Barbara, I have a little story behind this. At our state convention in May, two of the guys, Paul Benoit and Eddie Figueron—if you come to the Mardi Gras tonight, you'll meet them—they had this plaque that they were going to present to Commander Tom McMasters. And I said, "Hey, our Auxiliary commander needs one of those." So that was all, and Eddie said, "Well, I think I have one." But I never did hear from him.

So a few weeks back, I was talking to Paul, and I said, "Hey, Paul, I never did hear from Eddie about the plaque for our Auxiliary commander." He said, "Okay. Let me get with Eddie, and I'll call you back." Next morning, Paul calls me back. He says, "Eddie and I had a serious discussion last night." He says, "We decided that you can pay to have the plate put on there with the name. We'll donate the plaque, but you're going to be indebted to us." [Laughter.]

So, when you look at this plaque—there's no telling how many years it'll take me to get it paid for [laughter]—

Commander HICKS. As long as that's you that's indebted instead of me.

Mrs. MAJORS. So, Commander Barbara. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. I think that would be worth being indebted for. Thank you so much.

Mrs. MAJORS. It has, "Barbara L. Hicks, National Commander Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary, New Orleans, Louisiana, 27 July, 1996."

Commander HICKS. Thank you. [Applause.]

Mrs. MAJORS. Now I have one more. Jane Troutman, would you come up, please? You know, we're going to take care of all the business of this Auxiliary session and this convention, but we're going to have some free time, so Jane, when we get through with this convention, what are we supposed to do?

Mrs. JANE TROUTMAN. I'm from the South, too, so I can't say, "Let the good times roll" like Barbara Mallet did.

Mrs. MAJORS. Maybe I should get Barbara to say that. I can't say it either.

MEMBER. Laissez les bon temp roulez.

Mrs. MAJORS. Thank you, Gertie. See, Gertie had the assignment at our state convention in May. Jane was our representative. And I assigned Gertie to teach Jane how to say that by this convention. So I don't know what happened.

Anyway, just so you're going to learn this and so that you will not forget it, here. There is a shirt. [Applause.]

Thank you, ladies, and we hope you enjoy it, and then we'll get down to our serious business. Thank you. And it has been a pleasure to serve with these ladies as the convention chairman.

Oh, wait a minute. Let me tell you, my ladies from Louisiana, I can't say enough. They have been fantastic in getting ready for this convention. I've had some chairmen and I've had the ladies volunteering, and everybody has been working. And so all I can say is, all my Louisiana ladies stand up. They have been fantastic. [Applause.]

Thank you, and I love you all.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Elaine. We know that there's a lot of work that goes into these national conventions. And believe me, when we come, we appreciate every hour that you've all put into it.

I would like to at this time introduce a very, very special group of ladies. They, through the years, have built our organization, and it's indeed an honor to introduce the past national commanders: Lucille McCarthy; Pauline Wright; Nelda Wilson; Dorothy Van Hoy; Marjorie Vincent; Florence Valgardson; Maurine Pederson; Maria Tedrow; Betty Hall; Sally Wilton; Loneita Shoemaker; Katherine Pearson; Rose Marie Schilpp; Shelia Allred; Claudia Roy; Barbara Mallet went back to the office; and Immediate Past National Commander Jane Troutman. [Applause.]

Katherine, would you like to come to the podium, please?

Mrs. KATHERINE PEARSON. Thank you, National Commander Barbara. Thank you for giving the past national commanders a little time to tell you how much we care. We want to congratulate you

on a wonderful year. Your leadership—no matter where you went, you found Barbara, even up in the snowcapped mountains in Colorado. That was an experience that she highly recommends.

And we are very proud of her work, her accomplishments and each and every one of you that you cared enough to do the little things that she asked you to at the last convention. So we're very proud of that.

And I'm going to tell you, Barbara, that soon you will be one of us. But it has to be voted on, and you've got a great group of women here that's going to pass that vote. And so we'll let you know. [Laughter.]

I just wish that each and every one of you will care enough when you go into the committees to share a little thought, a little idea so that our programs can grow, service for the present time and lay the foundation for the future. Good luck to each and every one of you.

Thank you, Barbara. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Katherine.

Now may we have a preliminary report of the Credentials Committee, please.

MEMBER. Good morning. Madam Commander, this is the Credentials report for July 29th, 1996. The following units have not yet cleared for voting. A representative from that unit must report to the Auxiliary Headquarters Office in the Eglinton and Winton Room on the second floor. Arkansas 62; California 58; California 73; District of Columbia 1; Florida 12; Florida 28; Florida 72; Florida 109; Louisiana 15; Massachusetts 29; Massachusetts 97; Michigan 2; Mississippi 54; Nevada 12; New York 118; Pennsylvania 14; Rhode Island 13; Texas 63; Texas 106; Texas 220; Vermont 17; West Virginia, 8; Puerto Rico 6; Hawaii 1..

The total units registered, 331; total departments registered 35; the total, 366. Delegates registered, 631; alternates registered, 38; guests, 90; a total of 759. Total unit votes, 2,074; total department votes, 35; national officers, 8; past national commanders, 11. The grand total of votes, 2,128.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Dorothy. Do I have a motion to adopt this? Past National Commander Shelia Allred made a motion to adopt the report. Is there a second, please? And ladies, please go to the microphones. The recorder has to hear.

Mrs. JOAN F. FLETCHER. Joan Fletcher, Unit 20, Glendale, Arizona. I second it.

Commander HICKS. All in favor; opposed. So ordered.

The first order of business is the adoption of the National Convention Rules. Printed copies of the Convention Rules have been furnished to all registered delegates. The Chair will now entertain a motion for adoption of these Rules.

Mrs. VIRGINIA MITCHELL. Madam Commander, Virginia Mitchell, Unit 80, Alabama. I so move that we adopt the Convention Rules.

Commander HICKS. Is there a second, please?

Mrs. BARBARA E. MCVICKER. Barbara McVicker, Unit 2, Kansas City, Missouri, I second the motion.

Commander HICKS. All in favor; opposed. So ordered.

Margaret, would you please take over the chair for the purpose of my giving my report, please?

[Whereupon, Senior Vice-Commander Margaret E. Hass assumed the chair.]

Senior Vice-Commander MARGARET E. HASS. Thank you, Commander, Barbara. I welcome this opportunity to express for all Auxiliary members our sincere thanks for your sincere dedication to our veterans and to our Auxiliary. You have had a fine year, and we look forward to hearing your report.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Margaret.

National Officers, national chairmen, National Executive Committee, past national commanders, national staff, members and guests: Through the years, I have heard national commanders talk of their year. I thought I was ready for my year. How wrong I was! There is no way anyone can know the feeling of pride, honor and yes, responsibility until you walk in the commander's shoes. Every time I represented our organization, I did so to the best of my ability, with dignity and humility.

Last year I said how wonderful it would be if we could reach 200,000 members. Our national membership goal for the 1995-96 membership year was 187,002 members. As of June 30th, we had 192,832 members. That's a plus of 5,824 members. [Applause.]

Six states made their national membership goal, and two asked me to put their membership ribbon on the state banner. I was honored to perform this request at their state conventions.

Every state department is to be commended for their super efforts toward building our membership strength this year. No words can express the fantastic efforts on the part of our recruiters and congratulations to all of our Recruiting Incentive Program winners.

I also want to personally thank the National Auxiliary staff for their fantastic efforts on all of our mailings and their promptness in computerizing all new memberships.

To Evelynne Dunn, our National Membership chairperson, thank you, thank you, thank you for an outstanding job. We did it, ladies. [Applause.]

Now I would like to take you on a journey through my year as your national commander. And you really, really were with me every journey I made. You were with me when I journeyed to Hawaii with National Adjutant Maria. We represented the Auxiliary at the 50th anniversary remembrances of the Japanese surrender that formally ended World War II. You were with me as I placed a wreath at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

When National Commander McMasters and I placed the flowers from our leis in the water at the USS Arizona, I placed the string from my lei in my billfold. It has been in my billfold, and, ladies, it has traveled many thousands of miles. When I leave this convention, it will go to my history chairman to put in my history book. I always carry it as a reminder of my year as your commander and to remember a generation that sacrificed so much for our freedom.

As I attended state department conferences and visit nationwide from Minnesota to New Mexico, from Florida to California, and most points in between, pride in the Auxiliary was apparent everywhere. From the statewide weekend that the DAV and Auxiliary members visited every VA medical center in Massachusetts, to a whirlwind tour of Auxiliary services in Utah, service disabled vet-

erans and their families was the hallmark of our Auxiliary activities.

Amid the serious business conducted during these visits and conferences, there was a lot of fun and memories, too. Memories like being recognized as a special guest during a performance in Utah by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, to being guest of honor at an American Essay Contest recognition dinner in Missouri, love and dedication highlighted every state's events.

No commander's year would be complete with our Auxiliary Fall Conference. Members attending the conference in Dayton last year had the opportunity to learn from the experience of others and share their experience. I was so pleased to see experienced Auxiliary leaders training the next generation of Auxiliary leaders. It was a fun and rewarding experience.

I encourage all of you to attend this year's exciting three-day event in Louisville, Kentucky. The 1996 Fall Conference will be held at the beautiful Galt House East in Louisville, September 26th through 28th. Yes, be sure to bring your husbands, too. They had a good time and learned a lot about our Auxiliary last year.

In October, while visiting the Auxiliary in New Mexico, I had the moving experience of visiting the DAV Vietnam Veterans National Memorial at Angel Fire for the first time. Though it was already snowing there, one cannot help but be warmed by the beauty of this soaring monument to the men and women who died or were disabled while serving our nation in that far-off country.

At the National VAVS Service Meeting in Chicago, seminars and workshop were tremendously informative. The experience of attending this meeting with so many other service organizations dedicated to helping veterans and their families was exciting. You quickly learned that a lot of good people and a lot of organizations are working toward the same goal. Of course, no one does it better than our Auxiliary. [Applause.]

Veterans Day in Alabama demonstrated the patriotism that runs so deep in our culture. Everyone from school children to factory workers turned out to honor our nation's veterans.

As Auxiliary members, we stand beside the DAV in the battle to build better lives for disabled veterans and our families. Our Auxiliary is there in spirit and force, representing disabled veterans, their families, widows and orphans before all branches of our government.

At the 1996 Midwinter Conference in Washington, D.C., I joined Commander Tom and other members of the DAV national staff at the DAV's presentation before the Joint Session of the Committees on Veterans' Affairs. Not only is this an honor; it's an example of the partnership the Auxiliary shares with the DAV in all endeavors.

I was also pleased to be asked to address the Commanders and Adjutants Association by Association President Tom Campbell. It was an opportunity to build an even greater understanding of our joint mission, service to disabled veterans and their families. Every opportunity to work with the DAV builds our common bonds.

March was a fun month. I attended Commander Tom's testimonial dinner in Michigan and had a great time. Later that month,

he attended my testimonial dinner in Ohio. His gracious remarks demonstrated his love and appreciation of our Auxiliary.

I want to thank all of you for my testimonial dinner. It was a joyful and tearful occasion. Listening as my children, Jacki and Jeff, said so many wonderful things about me made me glow with pride. I'm so proud of them.

Our youth are so important. They are our future. As I watched our Auxiliary National Junior Miss lead the Pledge of Allegiance, I realized even more the importance of working with our future generation of Auxiliary leaders. The Juniors are an important part of many Auxiliary functions.

I am so proud to say my granddaughters, Nicole, Tiffany and Megan, are members of our Junior Auxiliary. As such, they are learning the functions and purpose of our Auxiliary. One day, they will lead our organization, and I am confident they will be prepared for the task, just as our lovely Juniors have demonstrated this morning.

I call on every unit to involve your junior members. They are the future, and we must prepare them for this.

On the snow-covered slopes of Crested Butte, Colorado, I witness miracles. At the 10th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, I watched men and women struggle down those slopes with joy on their faces. This is difficult, because this was very, very moving to me.

I realized that as a result of their sacrifices, DAV and Auxiliary volunteers help to make this miraculous event possible every year. Every event at the clinic, from wheelchair basketball to scuba diving, is an adventure. If you can possibly do it, I implore you to be a part of this adventure in the years to come.

There's so much I wanted to add to this, but I knew I couldn't read it.

Later in the year, I helped a hard-working Finance Committee spend countless hours setting up our next year Auxiliary budget. We often take our committees for granted, but I can tell you: Things go right in our organization because of committees' hard work.

A week after the Finance Committee finished, the Educational Loan Fund Committee met. I am happy to report that 38 loans were granted. Imagine! We were able to help 38 people further their education through this program. But without your help, this would not have been possible.

Memorial Day with Grafton, West Virginia, Unit 24, was simply unbelievable. In a town of just under 2,000 people, they hosted an event that saw more than twice the population in attendance. During the two-day event, ceremonies were conducted at West Virginia National Cemetery and Grafton National Cemetery. The two national cemeteries are located nearly 20 miles apart, but the local veterans organizations do a fantastic job making the memorial ceremonies so successful.

They also host a huge parade, and I mean huge, even by the large cities' standard. People come from everywhere to see the parade. It is not an event that Unit and Chapter 24 could do on their own, but cooperating with other service organizations, the West Virginia Department of Veterans Affairs and the City of Grafton,

they do a fantastic job. It's a classic example of joining forces and working together.

I was so impressed with their Memorial Day event that I assure you, I will go back again.

After attending department conventions in Oregon and Montana prior to the Memorial Day, I didn't think things could get much busier for me, but they did. In May and June, I was home for one weekend. The rest were spent at fantastic department conventions in Oklahoma, New Jersey, Wisconsin, New York and Puerto Rico. Warm welcomes, great fun and serious business went hand in hand at every convention. Thank you all for making me a part of your events, ladies.

It has been a wonderful and very busy year. For our next national commander's information, my busy year included traveling 61,702 miles, visiting 25 states, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C., enjoying every minute of it.

My last event before arriving for our National Convention was the DAV van drive-away at National Headquarters on July 11th. It was impressive, to say the least, 141 new Ford vans leaving for VA medical centers in 35 states and Puerto Rico, with one mission, to transport sick and disabled veterans to and from VA medical centers for needed medical care.

The drive-away was made possible through the combined efforts of the national organization, the departments, chapters and units working together to raise the necessary funds to purchase the much-needed vans.

Yes, it has been a wonderful and busy year, but I wouldn't trade it for anything. I want to thank each and every one of you for all you have done to make my year so fantastic. Love and prayers, and always remember, little things we do show we care. [Applause.]

Senior Vice-Commander HASS. Commander Barbara, that was indeed a fine report.

Do I hear a motion to accept Commander Barbara's report?

Mrs. DOROTHY VAN HOY. Past Commander Dorothy Van Hoy. Move that we accept the report.

Senior Vice-Commander HASS. Motion has been made. Is there a second?

Mrs. SANDRA SCHULMAN. Sandi Schulman, Department of New Jersey, seconds that motion.

Senior Vice-Commander HASS. Motion has been made and seconded. All those in favor, say Aye; same sign, opposed. The motion carried.

Thank you, Barbara. [Applause.]

[Whereupon, Commander Hicks resumed the chair.]

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Margaret.

I believe it's time for membership awards. I would like to tell everyone that monetary awards are given each year in the categories instead of plaques to the first-place winner, and that the checks will be mailed out from National Headquarters after the convention. The checks will be in the mail. [Laughter.]

At this time, we will now have the membership awards by our National Membership chairman, Evelynne Dunn. [Applause.]

1st Junior Vice-Commander EVELYNNE DUNN. Good morning, everyone. Madam Commander, national officers, past national com-

manders, members and guests of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary: I would like you to know what a privilege it was to serve as Membership chairman this year. It's been a wonderful year, especially reaching national quota. And I want to thank National Headquarters for all the dedicated work that they performed in getting all those letters out, 600,000 letters plus to potential members.

It was an exciting time for us, to realize that national quota had been reached, and I hope you share my enthusiasm for all the work that was done, not only by National Headquarters, but by all the ladies out there. Because I know you were out there pushing membership. I know that for a fact.

I'll give you the numbers in a few moments. What I want to do is present the awards. If you'll bear with me, I'll have it. From Group 1, 10 to 50, there was a tie: D. A. Nocera, 65 Arizona, 33 members increase. Is there a representative from that unit, D.A.—Arizona, D. A. Nocera, N-o-c-e-r-a Number 65, Arizona? Can I have someone from Arizona pick this award up for them?

We are going to straighten this out and move to the next one.

Adjutant TEDROW. We'll check this out. First mistake today. If you believe that, you'll believe everything.

1st Junior Vice-Commander DUNN. The next award is Group 2, 51 to a hundred, Hanover Township 177, New York, 15 member increase. [Applause.]

Mrs. JEANNE LE PORTE. I'm the commander for the State of New York. I'll accept this for the ladies in Hanover 177. They're a very hard-working group of ladies. Thank you. [Applause.]

1st Junior Vice-Commander DUNN. Group 3, 101 to 200, Lieutenant Alfred Lucia 118, New York, 55 member increase. [Applause.] Congratulations again.

Mrs. LE PORTE. Thank you. This is one of our newest units in Brooklyn, and the gentleman who is the award winner for the nation for membership is the one that helped start this unit for us, and we're very pleased that they have been so cooperative in helping us get this unit going. Thank you. [Applause.]

1st Junior Vice-Commander DUNN. Group 4, 201 and over, Walter Rohr Memorial Number 35, New York, 148 member increase. [Applause.] A hundred and forty-eight members, ladies, that's a great total.

MEMBER. Thank you so much. And I'd like to give a special thanks to our state commander, Jeanne Le Porte, who made it all possible. Thank you. [Applause.]

1st Junior Vice-Commander DUNN. Now we'll go to Group Number 5, the new unit with the most new members. Metro Number 7 with 35 members. Anyone here from Alaska? Well, that will be mailed to them.

Group Number 6, department with the largest percentage increase. Also, the State of Alaska. [Applause.] So those awards will be mailed to them.

Group Number 7, department with the largest numerical increase. The State Department of New York. [Applause.]

Here comes that lady again, New York. Congratulations.

Mrs. LE PORTE. Thank you again. And ladies, I want you to know, it's done by mailing, by getting membership from the Na-

tional Headquarters. So it's out there for all of you to do if you want to. [Applause.]

1st Junior Vice-Commander DUNN. We're going to go back to the first one. We had a kind of a little mix-up here. Group 1, 10 to 50, D. A. Nocera 65, Ohio. [Applause.] I know there's somebody here from Ohio. Would you accept this for these ladies? [Applause.] This was a 33 member increase.

MEMBER. I do want to say something about this unit. When I was state commander for Ohio, I went to visit this unit, and they were meeting in someone else's house, and when I first went, they had five members. And they promised me they would work on membership, and they did. And I will be glad to give this to them, because one of their husbands is here for the meeting, and I'll be glad to turn this over so they can take it home. Because this is a very special unit of hard-working ladies that are trying to start, and they're very dedicated, and this will make them very, very proud. Thank you. [Applause.]

1st Junior Vice-Commander DUNN. Now we have the special membership award. Number 1. These ladies signed up the most members. Fifty-eight new senior members, Marcia Mills, Ohio Number 43. [Applause.] Is she here?

Commander HICKS. Ladies, in the past few years, Marcia has been the one that has won this National Membership Award for signing up the most members. See, she really does exist. [Applause.]

Mrs. MARCIA MILLS. I just want to thank everyone for making this award possible, and if all of us in this room today stand hand in hand, this Auxiliary will flourish and grow, and the veterans will be better off with our help. Thank you. [Applause.]

1st Junior Vice-Commander DUNN. And this second special membership award, 27 new senior members, Janet Walters in Indiana Number 19. [Applause.]

Mrs. JANET WALTERS. I'm very proud to take this back to Unit Number 19, Elkhart, Indiana. Thank you.

1st Junior Vice-Commander DUNN. Ladies, when it comes to membership, the progress and growth of our organization are the results of each person taking responsibility for their share of the tasks necessary for the Auxiliary to go forward. Many thanks to Montana, New York, Ohio, Utah, Wyoming, Alaska and New Hampshire for reaching quota during this banner year.

So ladies, let me ask you a question. Don't you think that we need to celebrate reaching national quota? [Applause.] Louder, ladies, louder. So, let's celebrate!

[Video presentation.]

1st Junior Vice-Commander DUNN. Thank you very much, Madam Commander. Thank you, ladies. That was a great celebration. [Applause.] And that completes my report.

Commander HICKS. Isn't that great that we had this to celebrate? I'd like to thank each and every one of you who signed up one member, who's done something maybe to transfer a member over from annual to life. Whatever you have done to work on membership, I certainly do congratulate you. This is something that not one individual can do alone. It takes each and every one of us to work on membership, and we must keep these numbers up.

We have to have the number count in Washington to fight for our benefits, and it's up to each and every one of us to see that they are protected. Thank, you ladies. [Applause.]

Would Jan Bennett, chairman of the Finance Committee, please come forward for the Finance Committee report and the adoption of budget. I think you each received one.

Adjutant TEDROW. They are out there to be passed out. Anybody that does not have a copy of the budget, please put your hands up. Would the sergeant-at-arms see some more budgets are passed out, please?

Commander HICKS. Ladies, I want to tell you how hard this staff works on membership while they're passing these out. I was down at the office one day. I live about 125 miles from National Headquarters, so I pop in regardless of what my title might be. I pop in every once in a while. I walked in one day, and there's like three of their big desks, they've got long trays about this long, and they're stacked about this high on all the tables. Each tray holds approximately a thousand letters.

These girls, ladies, in this office, have to open those, go through, read your notes, take the checks out, if there are. If there's a problem, they have to see that that is taken care of. Plus separating, because we were having our renewal notices at the same time that this mass membership mailing went out.

And I want you to know if for ever one second you hesitate or doubt the capability of that office, don't. They work many hours. Some of this is done after the hours that they are open. They take time to go through and put these in the tray and see that they are taken care of. It is a fantastic office that we have. [Applause.] Very, very efficiently run, and each and every person that works there is qualified for not only the job they do, but they can do all of the jobs.

Are we still passing out or are we ready for Jan to read this?

NEC 18th District JANET W. BENNETT. Good morning, ladies. National Commander Barbara, national officers, past national officers, delegates and guests of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary: The National Finance Committee met on Saturday, April the 28th, 1996 at the Drawbridge Inn in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky. In attendance at this meeting was National Commander Barbara Hicks; Betty Nelson, NEC from District 2; Vicky Grier, NEC from District 9; E. Jimi Hayes, NEC from District 5; and myself, Janet Bennett, NEC from District 18.

Also present without a vote were Senior Vice-Commander Margaret Hass; National Adjutant Maria Tedrow, who served as a very capable recording secretary; Assistant National Adjutant Hezlep; and Head Bookkeeper Sandi Smith.

The purpose of this meeting was to set the National Auxiliary budget for the year 1996 and 1997, based on anticipated income from the memberships. After reviewing the 1995 and the 1996 income, expenses, assets, liabilities, the committee proceeded to prepare the proposed budget. A copy of this budget was either given at the door or recently given to your as your entered this morning.

At this time, I offer a motion to accept the budget for the year 1997.

NEC 9th District VICKY L. GRIER. Madam Commander, Vicky Grier, Georgia Unit 10. I second the motion.

Commander HICKES. The motion has been made and seconded to accept our budget. All in favor; opposed. Motion carried.

Pardon? Oh, I'm sorry. Was there any discussion, now that you've accepted it? [Laughter.] Thank you.

NEC 18th District BENNETT. Thank you. National Commander Barbara, I would like to thank you and the Finance Committee for electing me as your chairman. The past two years have been a great honor and a wonderful experience. Thank you, Barbara.

National Adjutant, Maria, thank you for all your expert guidance and gracious hospitality, which enabled us to carry out our duties without undue delay. Thank you, Maria.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and commend the ladies of the Finance Committee for doing a great job. I would like you to stand as I call your name, please: Betty Nelson, NEC, District 2 [Applause]; Vicky Grier, NEC, District 9 [Applause]; E. Jimi Hayes, NEC, District 5. [Applause.]

Ladies, I thank you for all your support, your cooperation and your wonderful friendship. It's been a great year. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Jan. And thanks to everyone who served on the committee.

Phyllis Greaney, director of the Educational Loan Fund, would you come up to give your report now, please? Good morning, Phyllis.

Mrs. PHYLLIS GREANEY. Good morning. Thank you, Barbara. This will be very brief, because I understand—okay. Maria has told me that the report has already been sent to all the states. So I'm just going to be very brief and tell you some of the highlights.

The Education Loan Fund Committee met on Sunday, May 5th, 1996. The committee members this past year were National Commander Barbara Hicks, Immediate Past National commander Jane Troutman, Senior Vice-Commander Margaret Hass and myself. National Adjutant Maria Tedrow, Assistant National Adjutant Judy Hezlep and Past National Commander Barbara Mallett attended our meeting and were very helpful.

We granted, as Barbara told you, 37 student loans for the academic year 1996–97. As you know, a student must be a full-time student attending schools of higher learning, college, universities or vocational schools. Their grades must be no lower than a 2.0 average, which is equivalent to a B minus.

We are aware that in these times, it is very difficult for parents and students to afford college education, and what we give to it helps them very much. They have to go to many other sources to complete the amount that is necessary for a college education.

We depend on mandates, contributions from state departments, chapters, units of the DAV and the DAVA, individual and memorial contributions in order to continue to help our students. And this is where I need all of you.

The National Educational Fund is a very important program of the Auxiliary. We are assisting families of disabled veterans through our membership in the DAVA and its programs.

I would like to emphasize the important dates to remember for those who may be interested or knows someone who is eligible and interested in receiving a loan. These dates are March 1st and April 25th. The application for a loan must be requested no later than March 1st for the next academic year, and a completed application must be received and postmarked no later than April 25th. All correspondence should be sent to me or to the Educational Loan director, whomever that may be, at the National Headquarters of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

I understand from talking to some of you, that the units don't always tell the chapters about our programs, and I do think it's very important that they know all about each of our programs. and I hope when you leave this convention, that you will share some of the knowledge that your receive here about all of our programs, so that they can be up to date and know exactly what we're going to do for their families.

Again, I say thank you for your kind consideration, and I'm going to turn the program back over to Barbara. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Phyllis, for your report and the many hours that you do put into this.

Donations for the programs, the Ed Loan, Service Support Fund, whatever, we will have at this time, please. Hoping that there are some.

MEMBER. From the Department of Michigan, I'm glad to donate this check to our chairman.

Commander HICKS. Ladies, I'm going to please ask for you to be quiet during this, because everyone takes time to have their state bring something, the units or whatever, and they do need the recognition. They need your cooperation so that they can be heard as they make their presentation, please.

Mrs. BETTY BOYD. I'd like to donate this in memory of my husband, Scoop Boyd.

Mrs. HANNELORE CICCARELLI. I'm Hannelore Ciccarelli, Department of Kentucky. Barbara, I would like to present to you this check in the amount of \$250 from the Department of Kentucky, and I hope that maybe next year we can do better. We want you to know that we support our youth.

Commander HICKS. Thank you.

Mrs. KAREN E. ESPINOSA. I am Karen Espinosa, commander of DAV Auxiliary Department of Arizona, and I am pleased to present a check for the Freedom's Foundation and also for the Education Loan Fund for the Department of Arizona.

Commander HICKS. Thank you.

Mrs. VIRGINIA MITCHELL. I'm Virginia Mitchell from Alabama. A few years ago, my husband and I started a small savings for just this kind of thing. He's gone now, but at this time I would like to present a check to the Educational Loan Fund as part of the money that we dispense every year.

Commander HICKS. Thank you very much.

Mrs. LE PORTE. I'm Jeanne Le Porte from the Department of New York. We have checks for \$510 for the National Loan Fund and \$510 for the National Service Foundation. Thank you.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, New York.

Mrs. NELDA P. BLAYLOCK. I'm Nelda Blaylock from Arkansas. I'm the department state commander, and I'd like to present a check to the Educational Loan and also to the Service Support Program.

Commander HICKES. Thank you, members of Arkansas.

Mrs. PATRICIA A. MCCOOL. I'm Patricia McCool from Unit 56 in Arkansas, and I have a check for Freedom's Foundation and the Education Loan Fund.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, members of Unit 56.

Mrs. OLIVER MANNING. Olive Manning, department commander, State of Vermont, a check for the Education Loan Fund.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Vermont.

Mrs. MARY J. BESSETTE. Mary Bessette from DAV Auxiliary Unit 17, South Burlington, Vermont, a hundred dollars for the Service Fund.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Unit 17, Vermont.

Mrs. ANDEE SILVER. I am Andee Silver, Department of Pennsylvania commander. We'd like to donate money to the National Education and the Service Fund.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Pennsylvania.

Mrs. VIRGINIA REINAGEL. I'm Virginia Reinagel. I represent Shelby County Number 70, Memphis, Tennessee. I have one check for \$200 for the Educational Loan Fund; one for \$300 for the Service Foundation; and \$100 for the Freedom Foundation.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Tennessee Unit 70.

Mrs. ISABEL KIRSCT. I'm Isabel Kirsct from Dallas, Big D 57, and we have a check for the National Service Fund and the National Scholarship Fund.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Big D 57.

Mrs. MARILYN HESS. Marilyn Hess, senior junior vice, Department of Iowa Auxiliary. I have some money here for the Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project, the Freedom Foundation, the Educational Loan Fund and the Service Project.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Iowa.

Mrs. VIRGINIA HOWARD. Virginia Howard, DAVA 32, Dallas, Texas. A check for the Freedom Foundation and for the National Education Fund.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Dallas Unit 32.

Mrs. CAROLYN S. REED. Carolyn Reed, Department of Ohio commander. Two checks, one for the Educational Loan Fund and the Freedom Foundation.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Department of Ohio.

Mrs. JUNE BECKER. June Becker, Unit 49, Department of New Jersey. A hundred dollars for the Loan Fund.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Unit 49, New Jersey.

Mrs. BETTY BERGQUIST. I'm Betty Bergquist, Auxiliary commander for the Department of Kansas, and I have a check here for the National Service Fund.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Kansas.

Mrs. MAE H. JOHNSON. Mae H. Johnson, senior vice-commander. I'm donating a check for the Auxiliary. Thank you.

Commander HICKS. Freedom Foundation. Thank you, Department of Kansas.

Mrs. CAROLYN JOHNSON. Carolyn Johnson, commander, Department of Tennessee. I have a check for \$400 for the Education Loan Fund and a hundred dollars for the service Fund.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Department of Tennessee.

Mrs. DOROTHY KASHNER. Dot Kashner from the State of Delaware, from the Department of Delaware, and we have for the Education Fund.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Department of Delaware.

Mrs. ESTELLA WATTS. Estella Watts from the Department of Georgia, and we have a hundred dollars from the department, and we have \$25 left over from our Central Area meeting, so we added that, too, to the Educational Loan. And we also have \$125 for the Service Fund.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Department of Georgia.

Mrs. EDITH C. HINDS. Edith Hinds from George H. Seal Memorial Unit 23 in the State of Maryland.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Maryland, Unit 23.

Mrs. ROBERTA BULLEN. Roberta Bullen, commander of the State Department of Maryland. I have three checks: Educational Loan Fund, Freedom Foundation and the Auxiliary Service Support Program.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Department of Maryland.

Ms. LILLIAN VAN GALEN. Lillian Van Galen from the Department of Massachusetts Auxiliary commander. I have two checks, one for \$300 from the Department of Massachusetts, and one from our senior vice. I also have three other checks for the National Service Fund: \$225 from the Department of Massachusetts and \$100 from our senior vice-commander; and we have another one for \$5.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, everyone in Massachusetts.

Mrs. WANDA FURBISH. Wanda Furbish, department state commander of New Hampshire. I'd like to present you this check for the National Education Fund.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, members of New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHARON A. KRAMER. Sharon Kramer, department of adjutant. I'd like to donate this on behalf of the Department of Minnesota.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Department of Minnesota.

Mrs. MIRIAM A. DALEY. I'm Miriam Daley from Somerville 27 in Massachusetts, and I bring a donation from Donna Tanner of Unit 115; Fran Costa for the National Service Fund and Loan Fund from 56; and from Margaret Karinsky in memory of her sister, Past National Commander Florence Daley.

Commander HICKS. Thank you again to the department members from Massachusetts.

Mrs. KIM JAMES. I'm Kim James, department of commander of the State of Indiana, and I have a check for the Education Loan Fund.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, members from Indiana.

Mrs. RUTH SPELL. I'm Ruth Spell from Chapter 5. I have three checks: one for National Service Program, Freedom Foundation and the Loan Fund.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, members of Unit 5, Mississippi.

Mrs. PAT VIGIL. We are from Murphy Borelli Number 7, Denver, Colorado. I am Pat Vigil and Rosemary Dye. We have a check for \$200 for the Education Fund.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Colorado Unit 7.

Mrs. NANCY E. CHAPLIN. I'm Nancy Chapin. I'm the senior vice-commander for the State of Idaho, and I'd like to present a check to the Foundation Fund and the Support Program.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, members from Idaho.

Mrs. CAROLYN FUDGE. I'm Carolyn Fudge. I'm from Quad City Unit Number 53 in Granite City, Illinois. We have a check for the Freedom Foundation.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, members of Unit 53, Illinois.

Mrs. CARRIE HICKMAN. Carrie Hickman from the State Department of Florida. I have a check here for the National Auxiliary Service Fund for a thousand dollars.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, members from Florida.

Mrs. RENEE JONES. Renee Jones, state commander of North Carolina, and on behalf of the delegates who are here, we wish to make this donation to the Ed. Loan Fund.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, delegates from North Carolina.

Mrs. DONNA HORTON. Donna Horton, national sergeant-at-arms, and this is from the delegates at the national convention. Thank you all. The Educational Loan Fund.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, each and every one. There will be many, many people helped in all of the donations that have been received here this morning, regardless of to whom they were given.

Mrs. GREANEY. I'd like to extend my thanks, too, to all of you. It is a very worthy cause. Thank you, (Applause)

Commander HICKS. Thank you again, Phyllis, for your many hours of work.

Maria has some things she would like to say. And these will be totaled, ladies, and later during the convention, you will know what the totals of the donations were.

Adjutant TEDROW. At this time, I would like to just speak a little bit about the Service Support Program. Now, we aren't going to pass anything out. But I want you to know it's important that I keep you informed because statistics are one thing, and correspondence is another and we made it very plain that when this fund started that you would never ever know the recipient's name, but you would always know who gave the donation, and we have continued to be true to that.

However, you're familiar with the address labels that were sent out to the various members all through the country, and in a lot of those letters we not only got donations, but stories of financial need and everything. And, of course, when they came in, they were put on my desk, and I sat down and wrote special letters to these people, because, you know, I didn't know how much their need was, or if they were just telling me politely, "Here it is, but don't send me any more." I felt that this was necessary, and we've gotten an awful lot of response back. Your money has been working.

What amazes me is that a large portion of these expenses are going for burials.

I brought just a little bit of correspondence to you, and they're addressing me in the letter, but I want you to know they're only

addressing me in the letter because I wrote the letter, but I wrote the letter on behalf of everybody who has given to this Service Program.

It's a great program. Of course, right now, you know, it's limited as to who can benefit from it. I'm hoping that it grows and grows so that we can make any woman eligible if she needs it, whether there's a veteran in the household or not. [Applause.]

But if you will just bear with me just a couple of minutes. This was one such letter that I sent because we had gotten the address labels and she'd written such a nice letter, and said:

DEAR MISS TEDROW: Thank you for your letter which brought tears to my eyes, for you showed what a wonderful person you are in caring about someone who you have never met, and also for enclosing the forms and telling me how I was to fill it out if there was a need. My husband's lengthy illness and the fact that he made me face reality has endured me these last ten years, five of which I spent crying and unable to cope.

However, I am now self-reliant and independent and face each day with new hope and confidence. In those ten years, I can recall only one time in which I ate peanut butter sandwiches and tea for one month every day so that I could pay my bills on time. I live and maintain a very strict budget, and unless an unforeseen emergency occurs, my months are routine. My home, which I maintain, hanging from an attic window with one hand and a paintbrush in the other, shows that with determination I, too, can do what every other widow has had to endure. I have had several part-time jobs. "Part-time?" "Part-time? you ask. Yes, mainly so that I can come home and shovel snow and mow the lawn and maintain the appearance so that I can be proud of it.

At this time of year, my mail consists of appeals which I cannot contribute to, but the DAV always receives something, no matter how small, because I do get a small widow's allotment, which I'm extremely grateful for.

However, at this time, I am not sending back the forms since I have not asked for any assistance of any kind, and I'm trying to prove that I can make it on my own, and I'm doing fine.

However, believe it or not, I can sleep better at night knowing that should I get in a financial position and need assistance, I only have to call on you and the members of this organization Thank you.

[Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Makes the dollars we donated all the more worthwhile.

Maria is going to now announce our committee assignments. Thanks for the wonderful job you do for our service support.

Adjutant TEDROW. We all do in the office, but it's great to get some letters, and I think once in a while you can appreciate the fund more if you know something. And, of course, I have various letters where they thank us. I have one here today that she didn't even care if her name was released, but I do. But you are helping, believe me, you know.

And it's a program, along with the Ed. Loan, that we can really see some benefits. And hopefully, through your ideas and everything, we can come up with other programs that can be just as valid and just as bit and just as important so that we say DAV Auxiliary, they'll know who we are.

Okay, Let's got to Americanism. Now, I think the chairmen, I hope, picked up the folders in the office. But these are the people that will be serving on the Americanism Committee, and I'm going to call them out right now. We've got from District 1, Donna Tanner of Massachusetts, Unit 115. District 2 would be Irene Boron, New York 1. District 3 is Wanda Furbish, New Hampshire 4; District 4, Idella Hosier, New Jersey 9; District 5, Evelyn Edmond,

Pennsylvania 14; District 6, Piekielniak—is that close enough? Okay, Mary. From Virginia 2.

District 7, Dolly Hartman, Florida 94; District 8, Elizabeth Ketchum, Louisiana 30; District 9, Barbara Buckley, North Carolina 27; District 10, Gwen McCracken, Michigan 51; District 11, Judy Uetterling, Ohio 36; District 12, Nancy Colby, Illinois 53; District 13, Donna Hatfield, Kentucky 19; District 14, Sharon Kramer, Minnesota 28; Marilyn Hess, Iowa 20; District 16, Elsa McCoy, California 19; District 17, Betty Conrad, Utah 8; District 18, Lellie Williams, Arizona 11.

And unless they're come up with someone, I do not have anyone for District 19, District 20, Joyce Humes, Texas 114; and District 21, Pat McCool of Arkansas 56.

The advisor—and I would hope that she would stand at this time—the advisor is Paula Raymond, and I would hope that the chairman stands. The chairman that has been selected is Gwen McCracken. And you will meet in the Wyndham Room.

Let's go to Community Service. District 1, Fran Costa, Massachusetts 56; District 2, Kathleen Tedesco, New York 120; District 3, Jacqueline Smith, Maine Number 1; District 4, Rose Henn, New Jersey 32; District 5, Mary Tunstall, Pennsylvania 14; District 6, Justine Dingus, Virginia 22; District 7, Sue Reed, Florida 126; District 8, Everlene Cody, Alabama 87; District 9, Ruth Koon, Georgia 10; District 10, Ethel White, Michigan 2; District 11, Marj Davies, Ohio 50; District 12, June Marheine Wisconsin 2; District 13, Norman Zeimet, Indiana 26; District 14, Miriam Kiser, Minnesota 1; District 15, Mae Johnson, Kansas 34; District 16, Florence Swisher, California 113; District 17, Janet Derby, Colorado 1; District 18, Karen Espinosa, Arizona 16; District 20, Nancy Laurence of Texas 56; and District 21, Sara Douglass of Arkansas 5.

The advisor to Community Service is Phyllis Novak. Please stand. The chairman for this committee will be Kathleen Tedesco. And it will be—according to this, it says Trafalgar Room.

I'm sorry. Americanism. Americanism goes to Windsor, not Wyndhan. Windsor on the third floor.

Community Service goes to Trafalgar on the third floor.

Okay. Now let's go to History Books. Good Luck! District 1, Annetta Boisvert, Massachusetts 13; District 2, Barbara Yenzer, New York 109; District 3, Jeanne Gideon, New Hampshire 7; District 4, Joan Kepfer, Delaware 1; District 5, Sonia Baldwin, Pennsylvania 98; District 6, Annis Craft, Virginia 2; District 7, Vera Sorrentino, Florida 129; District 8, Zelma Orr, Alabama 24; District 9, Barbara Williams, Georgia 10; District 10, Barbara McComb, Michigan 13; District 11, Jackie Sayre, Ohio 22; District 12, Zona Schalow, Wisconsin 5; District 13, Carolyn Vogel, Indiana 19; District 14, Elaine Fagerstrom, North Dakota 24; District 15, Beverly Bain, Iowa 2; District 16, Marie Bowan, California 5; District 17, Margaret Arneson, Utah 6; District 18, Sandra Thayer, Arizona 16; District 20, Mary Choate, Texas 42; District 21, Mary Pinney, Oklahoma 3.

And they will meet in the Jasperwood on the third floor. Most of these rooms are on the third floor, by the way. Advisor of History is Ann Jones. Ann, would you please stand? And the chairman of

the History will be Zona Schalow. Zona, are you in the room? There she is, way back there.

This is the Convention Committee on Hospital. District 1, Louise Barrett, Massachusetts 40; District 2, Lucita Christian, New York 35; District 3, Gerry Young, Vermont 7; District 4, Melva Matlack, New Jersey 41; District 5, Angie Ofiesh, Pennsylvania 53; District 6, Ellen Griggs, West Virginia 6; District 7, Gayle Flewwellin, Florida 109; District 8, Joe Henry, Tennessee 116; District 9, Elizabeth Overcash, North Carolina 75; District 10, Kathy Drako, Michigan 129; District 11, Virginia Gleason, Ohio 36; District 12, Betty Buck, Illinois 28; District 13, Ella Tyler, Indiana 19; District 14, Karen Haan, Minnesota 1; District 15, Olevia Dillon, Nebraska 12; District 16, Connie Salisbury, California 94; District 17, Arlene Snider, Colorado 32; District 18, Barbara Bradford, Arizona 1; District 19, Edith Minor, Washington 46; District 20, June Bradford, Texas 220; District 21, Nan Klee, Arkansas 61.

The advisor for Hospital is Grace Nagel. Is she here? There she is, right back there. And the chairman will be Gayle Flewwelin of Florida. Is she here? Would you stand, Gayle? And that will be in the Ascot Room.

Let's go to Junior Activities. Okay. Junior Activities. District 1, Janet Clark, Massachusetts 115; District 2, Patricia Weinert, New York 5; District 3, Olive Manning, Vermont 1; District 4, Doris Martelli, New Jersey 32; District 5, Rose Graffius, Pennsylvania 36; District 6, Neva Langston, Virginia 27; District 7, Bernadette Sorrentino, Florida 30; District 8, Fran Stringer, Louisiana 23; District 9, Barbara Souders, North Carolina 5; District 10, Minda Dewilder, Michigan 38; District 11, Marcy Mills, Ohio 43; District 12, Karen Eccles, Illinois 3; District 13, Kim James, Indiana 19; District 14, Rose Erpelding, Minnesota 35; District 15, Mary Pealer, Missouri 17; District 16, Dixie Robertson, Louisiana 113; District 17, Angie Duran, New Mexico—

[Inaudible comment from the floor.]

Adjutant TEDROW. District 16? Where is Dixie Robertson from? California, Dixie? Thank you very much. Okay, so District 16, Dixie Robertson, California. What unit, Dixie? One one three. Just got the wrong state.

District 17, Angie Duran, New Mexico 3; District 18, Kathleen Packer, Arizona 8; District 19, Nancy Chapin, Idaho 23; District 20, Sally Jones, Texas 84; District 21, Mary Roden, Arkansas 62.

The advisor is Linda Trulio. Linda, are you here? She's way back there. And the chairman for that is going to be Mary Roden of Arkansas. And you're going to meet in the Rosedown Room on the third floor.

Mae Holmes. District 1, Florence Curley, Massachusetts 97; District 2, Betty Nelson, New York 47; District 3, Ann Kelley, New Hampshire 7; District 4, Dorothea Campanelli, New Jersey 63; District 5, Sadie Turner, Pennsylvania 14; District 6, Gladys Seda, Puerto Rico 1; District 7, Grace McLaughlin, Florida 113; District 8, Eunice Eledge, Tennessee 94; District 9, Amy Adcock, South Carolina 30; District 10, Joann Slotman, Michigan 14; District 11, Libby Fancher, Ohio 63; District 12, Nellie Smithee, Illinois 3; District 13, Jan Walters, Indiana 19; District 14, Annette Bain-Wilson, Montana 4; District 15, Bonita Mitchell, Missouri 2; District 16,

Marie Zamacona, California 144; District 17, Susan Miller, Colorado 6; District 18, Barbara Davison, Arizona 1; District 19, Denise Vietz, Washington 18; District 20, Clara Lewis, Texas 47; and District 21, Peggy Nye, Oklahoma 49.

The advisor on Mae Holmes is Margaret Hass. Margaret, would you please stand? And the chairman for the Mae Holmes will be Libby Fancher of Ohio. And you will meet in the Oak Alley Room on the third floor. Okay?

The next one is Legislative. District 1, Ellen Drogo, Massachusetts 29; District 2, Terry Carlucci, New York 150; District 3, Maxine Clark, Vermont 7; District 4, Florence Kehne, Delaware 8; District 5, Mildred Furlong, Pennsylvania 77; District 6, Wanda Voyles, Virginia 2; District 7, Mary Jane Dickmyer, Florida 108; District 8, Carolyn Johnson, Tennessee 116; District 9, Estella Watts, Georgia 56; District 10, Deborah Emery, Michigan 129; District 11, Carolyn Reed, Ohio 35; District 12, Betty Bumpus, Illinois 28; District 13, Maxine Archer, Indiana 15; District 14, Frances Benkovics, Minnesota 10; District 15, Betty Bergquist, Kansas 4; District 16, Ruth De Sando, California 11; District 17, Shirley Wright, Utah 8; District 18, Judy Leiby, Arizona 1; District 19, Juanita Wiley, Washington 46; District 20, Patsy Mitchell, Texas 194; and District 21, Sharon Eddy, Oklahoma 32.

The advisor to this committee, which is Legislation, is Evelyn Dorsey. The chairman will be Judy Leiby of Arizona. Judy, are you in the room? And you're going to meet in the Belle Chasse, and that also is on the third floor.

I'd like to explain the reason I'm reading the unit numbers also is for our stenographer.

We're almost done. Let's go to the VAVS Committee. District 1, Miriam Daley, Massachusetts 27; District 2, Janet Willett, New York 1; District 3, Harriet Anderson, Rhode Island 13; District 4, Viola Penn, Delaware 3; District 5, Cathy Watkins, Pennsylvania 50; District 6, Ann Graybell, West Virginia 6; District 7, Myra Ferguson, Florida 13; District 8, Cornelia Cobb, Alabama 70; District 9, Aliene Warchak, Georgia 9; District 10, Bernice Sebring, Michigan 11; District 11, Sherry Price, Ohio 43; District 12, Barbara Curtis, Illinois 24; District 13, Irene Sablic, Indiana 15; District 14, Marilyn Vigen from Minnesota 9; District 15, Deloris Daniels, Missouri 51; District 16, Lillian Furlanich, California 144; District 17, Becky Lovato, New Mexico 3; District 18, Sunny Narcaroti, Arizona 16; District 20, Isabel Kirsct, Texas 57; and District 21 is Dee Huber of Oklahoma 5.

And your advisor is Lillian Nason. Lillian. She's right there in the back. And the chairman to that committee is going to be Cathy Watkins.

Jean, do you want to come up here to the mike? I can't hear you. MEMBER. District 2 is Jane Willett, not Janet.

Adjutant TEDROW. I have Janet typed.

All right. You know Lily Nason and Cathy Watkins is your chairman, and you are going to meet in Elmwood on the third floor.

And like I said, I do want to apologize for the way I'm pronouncing some of these names, because some of them I'm not real familiar with.

And like I said, I don't want to apologize for the way I'm pronouncing some of these names, because some of them I'm not real familiar with.

Let's go to Nominating Committee. District 1, Phyllis Greaney, Massachusetts 10; District 2, Jeanne Le Porte, New York 30; District 3, Grace Boland, Rhode Island 3; District 4, Frances Banghardt, New Jersey 2; District 5, Andee Silver, Pennsylvania 96; District 6, Mary Parrish, D.C. 5; District 7, Deloris Roussey, Florida 4; District 8, Virginia Mitchell, Alabama 80; District 9, Vicky Grier, Georgia 10; District 10, Gloria Boozer, Michigan 20; District 11, Edith Cottrill, Ohio 31; District 12, Nelda Wilson, Illinois 8; District 13, Hannelore Ciccarelli, Kentucky 1; District 14, Katherine Pearson, Minnesota 10; District 15, Dorothy Van Hoy, Missouri 2; District 16, Melba Morgan, California 22; District 17, Florence Valgardson, Utah 1; District 18, Donna Sellers, Nevada 1; District 19, Kathryn Wiley, Washington 46; District 20, Louise Rapisand, Texas 10; and District 21, Gertrude Tidwell of Oklahoma 60.

And the advisor to this committee will be the immediate past commander. Jane Troutman. This committee will elect its own chairman, and you will meet in the Norwich Room on the third floor.

The very last one, Constitution and Bylaws. District 1, Lillian Van Galen, Massachusetts 115; District 2, Dolores Robidoux, New York 185; District 3, Ann Young, New Hampshire 7; District 4, June Becker, New Jersey 49; District 5, Rhea Lynn, Pennsylvania 4; District 6, Ardalina Taylor, D.C. 3; District 7, Lucille McCarthy, Florida 4; District 8, Susan Henry, Tennessee 116; District 9, Renee Jones, North Carolina 18; District 10, Addie White, Michigan 86; District 11, Joyce Hutchinson, Ohio 63; District 12, Bernie Errett, Illinois 15; District 13, Joanne Laws, Kentucky 19; District 14, Judith Steinhouse, North Dakota 8; District 15, Rose Schilpp, Missouri 2; District 16, Joan Turbeville, California 58; District 17, Jean Jackson, Colorado 26; District 18, Shirley Kosisky, Arizona 8; District 19, Esther Westlake, Washington 45; District 20, Betty Hall, Texas 9; and District 21, Loneita Shoemaker of Arkansas 7.

The advisor to this committee will be Shelia Allred, and you will elect the chairman, and you will be located in the Newbury Room on the third floor.

And that completes those.

Commander HICKS. I neglected to do something that I would like to have all of us see. Would the people that are attending the national convention for the first time please stand? [Applause.] Look at this! Wonderful! We welcome each and every one of you.

And I hope that you were able to get on a committee, because that is a learning experience. And just because you're here the first time does not mean that you are not qualified to serve on a committee, because that's where we all learn. That is very important. And please don't be afraid to ask questions, ladies, because that's how we learn.

Adjutant TEDROW. Now for some brief announcements.

First of all, Forget-Me-Not. The forget-Me-Not tickets have been sold in the back of the room all morning. The cutoff date on those tickets will be 10:00 o'clock tomorrow morning. After that, you are

not going to get any. So you're going to have to decide if you want any. Ten o'clock tomorrow morning, we will not sell any more Forget-Me-Not tickets.

All right. "Please announce that we would like all the Illinois ladies to meet in the back of the room immediately following this meeting." Did all the Illinois ladies hear that? Immediately following this meeting, to please meet in the back of the room.

I believe that that's all the announcements for now.

I know one other thing. I usually try to do this at the beginning of the session, and I want to do it now. I want to at this time recognize Helen Parcelle who did such a fabulous job last year at our Las Vegas convention. Helen, there you are back there. [Applause.]

Okay. If anybody finds anything at all, turn it in to our Headquarters Office down on the second floor.

And at this time, Fay, if you want to come up and read this brief reading.

Mrs. FAY E. BRODHEAD. Hi, you-all. Most of you all know me. I'm Fay Brodhead. My husband is Russell Brodhead, and I'm with Unit 108 in sunny Cape Coral, Florida, but I was born in New Orleans, and I have been planning this for two years, since the last one in either Melbourne or Altamonte Springs, Florida. We are going to have a ball tonight, so you-all better come.

I have something here that my oldest daughter sent me about ten years ago to Florida, and it says:

Your know you're at home in New Orleans when you drink Dixie, not sing it. You begin to believe that purple, green and gold look good together and will even eat things those colors. You know exactly what you're going to eat next Monday and the next Monday after that and after that, because, as you know, New Orleans' red beans and rice, we Orleans residents eat every Monday.

Your're not afraid when someone wants to axe you—that's a-x-e—instead of ask you, a-s-k, or a-s-k-e-d.

You get on a bus marked "Cemeteries," without even a second thought.

The cemeteries are the end of Canal Street where there's a bus. We only have one existing streetcar in the United States, and that's in New Orleans, and you can go all the way to the Audubon Zoo, I hope they play that song tonight, "They All Ask For You." That is a song called, "The Audubon Zoo."

You know exactly that living anywhere else in the world would definitely be very sad.

I thank you. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Thank you.

Ladies, we are going to recess at this time and then we will have our committee meetings this afternoon and reconvene tomorrow.

Commander HICKS. Ladies, don't forget to remove the flags, please.

[Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 12:00 o'clock noon, July 29, 1996.]

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION

July 29, 1996

The Second Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary 74th National Convention convened in the Napoleon Room of the New Orleans Hilton Riverside, New Orleans, Louisiana, Tuesday morning, July 30, 1996, and was called to order at 9:15 o'clock a.m. by Commander Barbara L. Hicks.

Commander BARBARA L. HICKS. The Second Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary National Convention will now come to order, please.

Carol Gray, our chaplain, will lead us in our opening prayer.

Chaplain GRAY. Would you all please join hands? O God, Our Help in ages past and for the years to come, we thank You for the sunshine of this new day You have given to us. Today let us rejoice with those units who will receive recognition for the work they have done for our veterans, their families and for our communities.

Although storm clouds gather far across the sea,

Let us swear allegiance to our land so free.

May we be always grateful for this land so fair,

And please join our voices in this solemn prayer.

[Singing of "God Bless America".]

Chaplain GRAY. Amen.

Commander HICKS. Our Pledge of Allegiance will be led by the National Americanism Chairman Paula Raymond.

[Pledge of Allegiance.]

Commander HICKS. How about that Mardi Gras party last night? [Applause.] I'd like to thank the Department of Louisiana. It was absolutely fabulous. And I enjoyed it so very much, because I knew who you were, but I hope all of you didn't know who I was for a long time.

Our National Junior Activities Chairman Linda Trulio has a board outside the meeting room, and so many have sent in pictures from your junior activities this year, and I really would like you to take time to go out and look at it. And Linda, thank you for that. It's very, very nice. Our juniors, as I've stated so much, do so many things.

Dorothy, are you here with a Credentials report, please?

MEMBER. Madam Commander, this is the Credentials report for July 30th, 1996. The following units have not yet been cleared for voting. A unit representative must report to the Auxiliary Headquarters Office in the Eglinton and Winton Room, second floor. District of Columbia Number 1; Louisiana 15; Mississippi 54; Nevada 12; Vermont 17; West Virginia 8; Puerto Rico 6; Hawaii 1.

Total units registered, 336; total departments registered, 37; total of 373. Delegates registered, 647; alternates registered, 40; guests, 90; a total of 780. Total unit votes, 2,118; total department votes, 37; total national officers, 8; past national commanders, 12; grand total of votes, 2,175.

Madam Commander, I make a motion for this to be accepted as read.

Commander HICKS. Is there a second to this motion, please?

[Motion seconded from the floor.]

Commander HICKS. All in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. So ordered.

Would the chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee please come forward for the first reading? Ladies, since this is the first reading, there will be no discussion at this time.

Pages, would you please check to see whose hands go up? Everyone does not have copies of these, plus the head table does not.

Mrs. RENEE JONES. National Commander, national officers, past national commanders, delegates, alternates and guests of the Annual Convention of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary: The

Constitution and Bylaws Committee met on Monday, July 29th, 1996 at 2:00 p.m. in the Newbury Room at the Hilton Riverside in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The meeting was called to order by Advisor and National Judge Advocate Shelia Allred. The first order of business was the nomination and election of Renee Jones as chairman, followed by nomination and election of Addie White as secretary.

The committee voted to present the following amendments. Page S-1, Article I, State Organization, Section 1, Administration. Delete paragraph and substitute the following:

This state department is organized with the specific consent and recognition of the parent organization and shall be governed by these Standard State Bylaws, State Standing Rules, Supplement to State Bylaws and the National Constitution and Bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

Rationale: In addition to the Standard State Bylaws, each state department is governed by their State Standing Rules.

Page S-11, Article VI, State Committees, Section 4, State Standing Committees. Add new Section 4. New Section 4 will read:

In addition to having an elected state Finance Committee and a state Nominating Committee, a state department may have other elected state standing committees. Such committees shall be provided for in their State Standing Rules. These rules shall include the number of members serving on a committee, term/terms of office and duties of the committee. Any committee vacancies shall be filled with an appointment made by the state commander and approved by the state Executive Committee.

Rationale: A standing committee that requires continuity shall be elected committee, since the term of an appointed committee cannot exceed that of the appointing power. When new Section 4 is adopted, old Section 4 will become Section 5, and old Section 5 will become Section 6.

Page S-14, Article 8, Finances, Section 5, State Fund-Raising Project/Projects, Paragraph 2. Delete Paragraph 2 and substitute the following:

All fund-raising projects or activities for the state department must be approved by the Disabled American Veterans state department and the DAV National Executive Committee.

Rationale: Paragraph 2 is amended in order to agree with the DAV National Bylaws.

Page U-3, Article II, Unit Officers, Section 2, Elected Officers. Add new Paragraph 5. New Paragraph 5 will read:

In the event of the removal of a state Executive Committeewoman from office or her death, resignation or inability to discharge the duties of her office, same shall devolve upon the alternate state Executive Committeewoman. An election shall then be held for the position of alternate state Executive Committeewoman. Elected alternate shall be installed by a proper installing officer.

Rationale: No provision has been made in the Standard Local Unit Bylaws for filling state Executive Committeewoman and alternate state Executive Committeewoman vacancies. New Paragraph 5 would provide this procedure.

Page U-12, Article VII, Unit Finance and Dues, Section 3, Fund-Raising Project/Projects. Delete third paragraph of Section 3 and substitute the following:

Where no commissions are to be paid, no prior approval shall be required from the DAV department Executive Committee when the gross receipts will be

less than \$5,000; provided, however, that advance notice of 30 days to the DAV state department shall be required on all such finance-raising activity.

Rationale: Paragraph 3 is amended in order to agree with the DAV National Bylaws.

Thank you.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Renee.

Ladies, we are going to go into our awards, reports and awards. As your chairman is called and she calls the names of the winners, would you all please come up and then if you want pictures, you can stand over at the side and have them taken, so this will expedite the procedure, please.

Paula Raymond, Americanism. This is such a special time, because each and every unit works so hard during the year, so let's be enthusiastic and show whoever wins that we really do care. Little things we do show we care.

3rd Junior Vice-Commander PAULA RAYMOND. The chairman of the Americanism Committee was Gwen McCracken, and I'd like to ask her to come up here, please. This committee worked very, very hard. I'm very proud of them. They got right down to it. The Americanism reports this year were, all of them, very good. They had a tough time in there. They stewed and fretted, but they did an excellent job.

Mrs. GWEN MCCRACKEN. Good morning, ladies. Laissez les bon temps roulez. I learned it. Didn't we have a wonderful time last night? I would personally like to thank Louisiana ladies for your wonderful hospitality. [Applause.]

I would like the members of our committee to please rise, the Americanism Committee. As Paula has stated to you, these ladies worked very hard, and we deliberated and deliberated, and it was very wonderful to see so much work going into these reports.

I will read the names of our committee: Donna Turner, who was elected our secretary; Irene Boron; Wanda Furbish; Idella Hosier. Ladies, you can sit down if you'd like to. But you do deserve a round of applause when we're finished. Evelyn Edmond; Marianne Peikielniak; Dolly Hartman; Elizabeth Ketchum; Barbara Buckley; myself, Gwen McCracken; Judith Uetterling; Nancy Colby; Donna Hatfield; Sharon Kramer; Marilyn Hess; Elsa McCoy; Betty Conrad; Lellie Williams; Deborah Mazza; Joyce Humes; and Patricia McCool.

And ladies, I personally thank you as chairman. You did a wonderful job. You deserve a round of applause. [Applause.]

Our committee met at 2 o'clock, July the 29th, 1996. Our advisor was Paula Raymond. Our secretary elected was Donna Tanner. And our results are as follows. And ladies, I want to let you know. We had a very, very difficult time. Your reports were excellent. And to see the committee do the amount of work that they had to do to come up with the winners—you are all winners, and I thank you for the work that we do.

Group I would be 10 to 50 members. Mountain Top Unit 29, Oakland, Maryland. [Applause.] Congratulations.

Charles Gustafson Unit 94, Florida. [Applause.]

Bedford County Unit 48, Washington, North Carolina. [Applause.]

Sonoma County—wait a minute here. We have a mistake, girls. Just a moment. I'm sorry. I should have announced the categories.

The Charles Gustafson Unit 94, Florida was from 51 to a hundred; 101 to 200 was Bedford County 48, Washington, North Carolina. Group IV would be—I'm sorry. Beaufort? Sonoma County Unit 48, Santa Rosa, California for 201 and over. [Applause.]

We have our Special Americanism Award, and this was the most difficult award for our committee to judge. I'm sure all the ladies on the committee would agree with that. But we came up with a winner. As I said, we're all winners. But we chose this very special award to go to Boise, Idaho, Unit Number 2. So congratulations, Boise. [Applause.]

Congratulations to all, and I would like to thank the committee and our advisor. I think we all learned an awful lot in that meeting.

Now, we do have some recommendations. Our committee recommends that no money is mentioned on the report. We feel that the amounts are not required to be on that Americanism report. So they suggest there be no monies mentioned on that report.

Another suggestion is there should be a Special Americanism Program only. That's what it should state for the Americanism Programs, just dealing directly with Americanism, because we do have a tendency to confuse our committees here with community service and so on.

Eliminate the wording of "flagpole donations" on Question Number 2. And eliminate Question Number 8 on the naturalization, due to the fact that many of our units do not live near any of our borders, and they have a difficult time trying to do anything towards that program.

And that would be it. I thank you so very, very much, ladies. Let the good times roll. Thank you. [Applause.]

Oh, I'm, sorry. Another mistake. We have some honorable mentions for our Special Americanism Program, and that would be Quad City Unit 53, Granite City, Illinois; John Holden Unit 8, Murphy, Utah; and Nob Hill Unit 26, Colorado Springs, Colorado. So if you ladies, if you have anyone here in attendance, please come up. We have special awards for you. Thank you. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Paula.

We are going to deviate here. Ann, are you ready with History? Ann Jones for the history books.

Mrs. ANN M. JONES. Thank you, Commander Barbara. I was a little bit disappointed judging the history books. We only had four. Our chairman was Zona Schalow. Zona, are you here? Here she comes. Zona was our very able chairman, and she will tell you about the judging of the history books.

NEC 12th District ZONA M. SCHALOW. Good morning, everyone. National Commander Barbara, national officers, past national commanders, members and guests of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary: Well, it was quite a challenge, I must say. The districts that we had were—the only district we had missing was 19. And I would just like to have the ladies stand up that worked on these four books so diligently for History. Are they all in the room? These are the ladies that really worked. [Applause.]

Our secretary that was elected was from District 20, Unit 42, Texas. She was Mary Choate. And our advisor was Ann Jones. We met in the Jasper Room at 2 p.m. on July 29th, and we closed at 4 o'clock, so we really worked our little tails off.

There were four books for judging, and the winner was rated 97, and that was Michigan. [Applause.] Thank you. Their book was beautiful. I want to just tell you that all the books were beautiful, but Michigan was very outstanding.

And some of the problems that we had were one state used a marking pencil, and the marking pencil bled through the sheets of the pages. And some of the words were misspelled. Some of the articles were not in order. And some of the books were just not at all complete, and not enough information, and some had smudges. You have to be careful when you use the glue. It oozes out on the edges of the pictures, and a lot of pictures were missing.

So I just want to thank the committee and thank Ann Jones for helping me out, and it was a great pleasure to do this. Thank you. [Applause.]

Mrs. MINDA DEWILDER. Good morning, ladies. They told me to say something. All I have to say is thank you very much. I worked hard on it. [Applause.]

Mrs. MCCracken. Ladies, I must tell you, Minda Dewilder is an excellent, excellent hand-writer and organizer, and I know what I was doing when I asked her to be my History chairman. I'm so very proud of her. Thank you, Minda.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, ladies.

Grace Nagel, Hospital chairman, please.

Don't you think our musician is doing an absolutely outstanding job? [Applause.]

Mrs. GRACE NAGEL. Good morning. It was my pleasure to be the advisor to this committee. We had a great time, and we had a hard time. We worked very diligently and for a long while, and everybody went over everybody else's papers to meet an agreement.

I would like Gayle Flewwellin, please, to come up, who was our chairman. And I want to tell you gals from Florida, I also belong to your group. They didn't know that.

Mrs. GAYLE FLEWWELLIN. Ladies, National Commander, past national commanders, and all state commanders, NECs, alternates, units: It's a pleasure to be here before you and to have worked with the ladies on the VA Hospital—can you hear me? Non-VA hospital. Could someone bring my folder up to me? I was not aware I had to do this; believe me, I wasn't.

Commander HICKS. While we are waiting, ladies, the memorial service on Sunday, we always have the same gentleman that's in charge of the directing of it, Vinny Reed, and he happened to mention, make a good mistake of mentioning that he had a new granddaughter. Well, naturally, I had one of these, and he just sent me a little note up, and he said, "Barbara, thank you. The proud grandpa." So here's a membership for Massachusetts. [Applause.]

Mrs. FLEWWELLIN. Thank you for being so patient. The categories from 10 to 50 members, Flat River 106, Greenville, Mississippi. [Applause.] Come on up.

Categories from 51 to 100 members, Robert Loveday Memorial, Chattanooga, Tennessee. [Applause.]

Categories 101 to 200 members, Radcliff 136, Radcliff, Kentucky. [Applause.]

Category 201 members and over, Nob Hill Number 26, Colorado Springs, Colorado. [Applause.]

And while they are coming up to receive their awards, will all the members that participated in the selection of these awards please stand up. We thank you very much. [Applause.]

MEMBER. It's an honor for me to receive this award as the state commander of Colorado, but I'm not surprised, because we have some very good ladies and some very hard-working women there. Thank you.

Mrs. FLEWWELLIN. There's a correction on that first one. It was my error and no one else's error. Flat River 106, Greenville, Michigan. [Applause.]

And then there were some recommendations made to eliminate Number 5 on the report, that's miles traveled. The committee felt that 6 and 7 conflict with each other. They see no difference in it. And is there a difference? And could 6 and 7 be combined using the note attached to 7? That's the recommendations from the committee.

Commander HICKS. Ladies, is there someone here from Kentucky to pick the award up?

Mrs. FLEWWELLIN. Is there anyone from Kentucky here?

Commander HICKS. Thank you, ladies.

Sergeant-at-arms, do we have a guest waiting? Would you please escort Reverend Wilkie to the platform? [Applause.]

Reverend Wilkie, it's indeed an honor and pleasure to have you address the ladies at this convention.

Reverend OSCAR WILKIE. Thank you very much, Commander Hicks. Oh, what a joy it is to come and to share with you on such an occasion as this. It's been one of the highlights of my experience in the DAV to come and to bring greeting to you each convention, and then to meet so many of you at the department conventions where I've been privileged to go.

The highlights of these last eight, nine years are so very, very many. But surely among them are working with such people as your commander, Barbara, and with—I understand the Nominating Committee has nominated somebody for commander next year yet? They're going to, they're working on it. I hear all kinds of rumors. You know, down in our part of the world, rumor mill, you wouldn't believe, or maybe you would.

But nevertheless, working with this lovely lady, Margaret Hass, has been such a privilege. We started together as chaplains—we're not going to tell how many years ago. But it's been a pleasure working with her and her family, and with each of you.

Your adjutant, what can I say? She is one of the finest ladies, one of the most dedicated individuals and committed to veterans I've ever had the privilege to be around. [Applause.]

And this is kind of my swan song, in a way. I'm not going to be seeking election this year for chaplain. If you've heard that rumor, it is true. And I'm going to try to retire this year. I've been preaching some 48 years. And really, it's because of illness and fatigue. The people are sick and tired of me. [Laughter.] So I thought

maybe I'd just kind of take a little time to get refreshed and relaxed a little.

But I do have a very special thing I want to do today, but before I do it, I don't know if you've heard about this friend of mine—you know, have you been to the hospitals lately and recognized the medical expenses? Go to see a doctor or a veterinarian or that stuff? You just can't hardly afford to go.

A friend of mine had a dog that had died, had been his constant companion, constant companion for 20 years. The dog died, but the man decided, well, I've got to get something done for my dog. Took him to the vet, said, "Doc, you've got to do something for my dog. You've just got to help him." So the doc looked at the dog, and said, "Sir, the dog's dead."

The man said, "No, no, no, no. You don't understand. He's been with me for 20 years. We've been everywhere together. Do something. Give him a shot. Do something." Okay. So he took him in the examining room, laid him on the table. The dog's dead. He reached over, got a needle, gave him a shot. The dog didn't move. The dog's dead.

"What can I do to try to revive this dog?" Well, he'd been working on a cat that he had there, reached over in the cage and got the cat out, figuring that the dog would come alive surely if he smelled a cat. Took the cat and held him over the dog, and dog didn't move. Put the cat up, took the dog out, and said, "Sir, I'm sorry, but you dog is dead. There's nothing I can do."

The fellow said, "Well, I guess if he's dead, he's dead, but I just couldn't bury him. he's been so precious. Could you take care of him for me?" "Well, sure, but it'll cost you 350 bucks." "Three hundred and fifty bucks? What are you talking? How come so much?"

He said, "Well, 50 bucks for the office call and 300 for the cat scan." [Laughter and applause.]

What a joy it is to share with all of you who, as I say, have meant so much for so long. It's a tremendous honor and privilege for me to represent an organization in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania that calls itself the Chapel of Four Chaplains. It was organized in memory of four chaplains who gave their lives back in February of 1943.

A troop ship was sailing just off the coast of Greenland when a U-boat spotted it in the cross hairs of its periscope early that morning, fired five torpedoes which found their mark deep below the waterline of the USAT Dorchester. Of the 902 men that were aboard that vessel, only 230 of them survived. During the confusion and the fear that was reigning supreme during the time the ship went down, which took only 27 minutes, there were four chaplains, one Jewish, one of the Dutch Reformed Church, one a Catholic priest and one a Methodist minister, who took their own life jackets off and gave them to young men who had none, thereby linking arms as the ship went down, giving the supreme sacrifice so that others may live.

The Chapel of Four Chaplains was organized and dedicated in Valley Forge in memory to that kind of selfless service, and it is an honor and a privilege for me to come today, representing that organization, to pay tribute to your commander, Barbara Hicks, who has given of herself in the same sense of selfless service to so

many across the years of her service in the DAV Auxiliary and at other times.

There is a medallion that goes with this, and Barbara, if I may, I'd like to present it to you [Applause.] And I have a plaque with a picture of those four chaplains on it that reads like this:

The Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion presented to Barbara L. Hicks, National Commander, DAV Auxiliary, 1995-96, by the Chapel of Four Chaplains, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, in recognition of outstanding service to all people, regardless of race or faith. This award symbolizes for all Americans and for all time the unity of this nation founded upon the Fatherhood of One God.

Congratulations, Barbara. [Applause.]

Thank you very much. God bless you, God bless the Auxiliary, and God bless the U.S. of A. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Thank you so very, very much, Reverend Wilkie. I don't know what I've done to deserve that, but isn't that an honor? Wow! You will have to forgive me. I'm just a tad shook.

Would our Junior Activities chairman, Linda Trulio, please come forward for her presentations of awards?

Mrs. LINDA A. TRULIO. Madam Commander, national officers, past national commanders and members of the Auxiliary: It was indeed an honor and a pleasure to serve this year as Junior Activities chairman. I would hope that you are pleased and proud, just as I am, to see the little girls here, and that you would remember to include them in your departments and in all your Auxiliary work. They are our future. We must invest in their future, and investing in theirs, they will become ours.

Barbara, I would personally like to just thank you for giving this flower a chance to bloom.

And I would like to call up now our commander from Arkansas. Mary, would you like to come up now?

Commander HICKS. Did you all get your package of forget-me-nots that the juniors were passing out as you entered?

Mrs. MARY E. RODEN. Good morning, ladies. And as Linda says, it is an honor to see our juniors here and see them so active, and they are our future. The Junior Activities Committee met in the Rosedown Room at 2 p.m., July 29. Our advisor was Linda Trulio. Mary Roden was your chairman. Secretary was Minda Dewilder. Minda does write very well. I highly recommend her.

The members of our committee worked very diligently in judging the reports, and I would like to thank the committee. And when I call your name, would you please stand? Ladies I don't intend to call your last name, because I can't pronounce some of them. Janet Clark; Olive; Doris; Rose; Neva Langston. Please stand, ladies. Ladies, would you all please stand. We'll eliminate that. [Laughter and applause.]

Linda, I would like to thank you for a job well done. And thank our juniors for the work they have done and they continue to do, and they are our future. And I would like to thank you all for asking me to be the chairman. Thank you. And I love you all. [Applause.]

And our winners in Group I, from 1 to 25, Black Mountain, Nevada, Unit 12. [Applause.]

Group II, 26 to 50 members, Westover Unit Number 11, Massachusetts. [Applause.]

Group III, 51 to a hundred, Milwaukee Unit Number 1, Wisconsin. [Applause.]

Junior Activities Book. Please look at it, ladies; it's very interesting. Unit 10, Kingman, Arizona. [Applause.]

National Miss Teenage, 13 to 17, Tabitha Lyons, Westover Unit 11, West Springfield, Massachusetts. [Applause.]

National Junior Miss, ages 7 to 12, Rachel Ellen Witt, Mountain-top Unit 29, Maryland. [Applause.]

National Mini Miss under the age of seven, Tara Vandeneynde, Buddy Unit Number 43, Ohio. [Applause.]

Thank you all.

Commander HICKS. Since I'm from Ohio, I have already been invited to the picnic that they will be having the 10th of August, and it will indeed be an honor to take this and personally present it.

Our National Junior Miss last year was from Jackson, Ohio, and she led the Pledge of Allegiance at my testimonial dinner. So this is just fantastic.

And not only do I congratulate her; it's all of the winners, ladies. I didn't mean to be partial. Wouldn't do that for anything in the world. No, Maria, not for anything in the world. They're all special, each and every one of them.

Phyllis, we've been kind of going over your name because I know you've been out here. Would you like to do Community Service Awards at this time, please?

We're going to continue to skip this one right now, because now the chairman is out of the room.

So Evelyn Dorsey, are you ready for Legislation, please?

2nd Junior Vice-Commander DORSEY. Thank you, Commander, Barbara. Good morning, ladies. It's been a pleasure to serve as the Legislative chairman for this year. It has been a very interesting year in our lives as spouses and children of disabled veterans, and you ladies are to be commended for rising to the occasion. Your reports reflected your commitment and interest in what's going on as it relates to legislation pertaining to our veterans.

At this time, I'd like to call the chairperson of the committee Judy Leiby, to come forward and give the report.

Mrs. JUDY LIEBY. It was an honor, Commander Barbara, national officers, past national commanders and members, to serve as the chair of this committee. I have to admit, I went in a little bit nervous, because I said, "What am I supposed to do?" And they said, "Just do what you do at the state level." So that's what I tried to do.

I'd like to thank all the ladies that served on the committee. They did a fantastic job. It was a difficult job, and certainly all of you are to be commended for the work you did on the reports and on the legislative issues.

I'd like to call the names very quickly of the ladies who served, and if they would stand: Ellen Drogo; Maxine Clark; Florence Kehne; Mildred Furlong; Wanda Voyles; Mary Jane Dickmyer; Carolyn Johnson; Estella Watts; Deborah Emery; Carolyn Reed; Betty Bumpus; Maxine Archer; Frances Benkovics; Betty Bergquist; Ruth De Sando; Shirley Wright; Juanita Wiley, who became known in the meeting as "wiley" Juanita; Patsy Mitchell and

Sharon Eddy. They did a great job. Let's give them a hand. [Applause.]

The National Legislative Convention Committee met in the Belle Chasse Room at 2:15 on the 29th of July, 1996. Our advisor was Evelyn Dorsey. Mary Jane Dickmyer was selected as secretary. And what we did in our selection of secretary was run a lottery. The person that sat down in the right seat was elected, and that was Mary Jane. [Laughter.]

Everybody worked very, very hard.

Group I, 10 to 50 members. The winner was Maryland Number 29. [Applause.]

Group II, 51 to a hundred members, Killeen, Texas Number 147. [Applause.]

Group III, 101 to 200 members, Macon, Georgia Number 50. [Applause.]

And Group IV, 201 members and over—and I didn't tell anybody, did I?—Arizona Number 1, Phoenix Number 1. [Applause.]

The committee did come up with two brief recommendations. They would like to see copies of the winning reports sent to each state for distribution to the units. They think this will help the smaller units and new people in the units to see what a report really should look like.

And we do feel that more specific guidelines be given on how to weigh the points in each category. It was very difficult. We were getting 12 and three-quarters and 12 and a half because some of them were very, very close, ladies. It was very difficult to make that decision.

But I want to command everybody because what has happened legislatively this year shows that you've worked very hard. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Thank you very much. I just have been listening to some of the names, and I wonder how many people that served on committees this year were a member of a committee for the first time? Look at the hands! Isn't that great? Thank you for coming to convention and giving your time and being a part of the convention. [Applause.]

Now, Phyllis, you said your chairman is here? We can do Community Service? Thank you.

4th Junior Vice-Commander PHYLLIS NOVAK. Thank you. Good morning, everyone. May I ask Kathleen Tedesco and Ms. Espinosa to please come forward?

And while they're coming up, I just want to say that at the Fall Conference, we had the Community Service Program, and you all received a little heart, and we wore it on our sleeves. And that really was kind of making a statement. We do so much that we just don't give ourselves credit for. We're so used to giving that we take it as second nature. And we need to let others know what we do, so that they'll realize that we as members of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary are providing service, and when we need their support, they will give to us.

Throughout the year, I encouraged you to take those lights out from underneath the bushel baskets you'd hidden them under. And ladies, you did that. There was a significant increase in the number

of hours of community service that you gave on your reports when you handed them in in April of May.

And today you received a new heart, and if you noticed, it has another dimension because, ladies, your hearts are full. They are to the bursting point. You have given, given, given, all of you. And I applaud all of you for all the hours that you give to make us important in the eyes of others. [Applause.]

I'd like to present Kathleen Tedesco, who was our committee chairperson, and she'll read the winners.

Mrs. KATHLEEN TEDESCO. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity. It was a real pleasure working with the women on Community Service. First, before I announce the winners, I'd like Karen to introduce our committee and have you all stand, please.

Mrs. KAREN ESPINOSA. Good morning. Okay. If these ladies will please stand and hold your applause until they are all introduced: District 1, Fran Costa; District 2, Kathleen Tedesco; District 3, Jacqueline Smith; District 4, Rose Henn; District 5, Mary Tunstall; District 6, Justine Dingus; District 7, Sue Reed; District 8, Everlene Cody; District 9, Ruth Koon; District 10, Ethel White; District 11, Marj Davies; District 12, June Marheine; District 13, Norma Zeimet; District 14, Miriam Kiser; District 15, Mae Johnson; District 16, Florence Swisher; District 17, Janet Derby; District 18, Karen Espinosa; District 20, Nancy Laurence; and District 21, Sara Douglass

It was a pleasure working with you ladies. [Applause.]

Mrs. TEDESCO. Thank you, ladies. You all did a fantastic job. You worked together as a team, and it just showed how wonderful the Auxiliary can be.

Now I'll announce the winners. Group I, 10 to 50 members, Mountain Top Number 29, Maryland. [Applause.]

Fifty-one to a hundred members, Roll of Honor Number 120, New York. [Applause.]

Group III, 101 to 200, Cape Code Number 96, Massachusetts. [Applause.]

And Group IV, 201 members and over, Altman Ruoff Osier Number 6, Washington. [Applause.]

Congratulations to you all.

Now, we do have two recommendations. One, that the reports submitted to National should be free of extra markings and numbers that the state does on scoring, because it gets very confusing when you're adding up your scoring and you see a different number. And also, a reminder again to fill out the top part of the form completely to have the chairman or the commander sign the form.

Thank you very much for the privilege. [Applause.]

4th Junior Vice-Commander NOVAK. Kathy doesn't want to take all the honors here, but she is the commander of one of the units that won. So congratulations. [Applause.]

Thank you, ladies.

Commander HICKS. Thank you.

You ladies may have noticed that we have a group of ladies up here that have red and white checked aprons or dresses, or whatever, on. This is a very, very hard-working group of ladies from Arkansas that hosted the Southern Caucus breakfast this morning.

Ladies, would you stand and share your outfits so the ladies will know why you have these on? [Applause.]

And I think you might be interested to know they had a very, very interesting program on mothers of Presidents. You know, there is always a good woman behind a successful man. And instead of the wives, they went back and give history of the mothers and how they encouraged and lifted and pushed and educated their sons to become active and read and all of the things that they've done, and they all became Presidents. And I think it was so very interesting, and everyone at the breakfast this morning went home with a piece of history that we will always be able to share.

Thank you, ladies. It was so enjoyable. [Applause.]

And now we are ready to do VAVS. Lillian Nason and Oliver Tomlin, deputy representatives, please.

Mrs. LILLIAN NASON. Good morning, everyone. National Commander Barb, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests to this convention: This year has been a very rewarding and a highlighted experience of my life. Please do not forget that these chairmanships, appointments and whatever, you learn a lot. I have learned. And many of you will be seeing a lot of changes within the VAMCs, and probably already have, and this new vision. And if any way possible, please try to attend the seminar this afternoon. I understand there's going to be quite a bit of changes.

I'd like to introduce to you—most of you know her—our national deputy rep, Oliver Tomlin. She has stood behind me this year and helped me a great deal, and I appreciate her very much. [Applause.]

At this time, I would like to call Cathy Watkins to come up to the podium, please. And there again, I would like to also say that this committee really worked hard, and we had a number of new members serving on this committee. It was a new learning experience, and they did a fantastic job, and I want to also thank them.

Mrs. OLIVE TOMLIN. Good morning, ladies. National Commander, National Adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests of the 74th National Auxiliary Convention: The National VAVS Convention Committee met in the Elmwood Room at 2:00 p.m. on July 29th. Our advisor was Lillian Nason. Myra Ferguson was appointed secretary.

And I would like to take this time now to recognize the committee, which did a great job. As I call your name, if you would stand. Miriam Daley; Jane Willet; Harriet Anderson; Viola Penn; Ann Graybell; Myra Ferguson; Cornelia Cobb; Aliene Warchak; Bernice Sebring; Sherry Price; Barbara Curtis; Irene Sablic; Marilyn Vigen; Deloris Daniels; Trudy Furlanich; Becky Lovato; Sunny Narcaroti; Isabel Kirsct; Delphia Huber

Thank you, ladies. You did a great job. [Applause.]

The following units were judged to be the best in their category for the National VAVS Awards. Group 1, 10 to 50 members, Mountain Top Unit 29, Maryland. [Applause.]

Group 11, 51 to 100 members, Morgantown Unit 43, North Carolina. [Applause.]

Group III, 101 to 200 members, Allegheny-Kiski Unit 53, Pennsylvania. [Applause.]

Group IV, 201 members and over, Phoenix Unit 1, Arizona. [Applause.]

And the Thelma Feighner Award goes to Savannah Unit 8, Georgia. [Applause.]

The Committee had one recommendation regarding the point grading sheet, to delete the word "etcetera," and replace the word "hours for 30 points."

Commander Barbara, I would like to wish you much success in your future endeavors.

Thank you, ladies. [Applause.]

And I want to thank Maria for doing this to me.

Member. Madam Chairman gave me permission to speak, Maria, but I just all of you to know that our past national commanders do continue to work in the DAV Auxiliary. Thank you. [Applause.]

Mrs. NASON. This is Aliene Warchak from Georgia, and the Savannah unit won the special VAVS Award, the Thelma Feighner Award, and they did a fantastic job, donating to the VA hospitals. They were too far to travel to the VAMC, but they certainly did a wonderful job in supporting the hospitals as close to them as possible. Thank you. And you girls did a great job. [Applause.]

Mrs. ALIENE WARCHAK. Well, I know that Savannah does a good job and they work very hard. They are 234 miles from the nearest VA Center, so they cannot travel to and from the Charleston, South Carolina center. Thank you.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, ladies.

Margaret, are you ready with the Mae Holmes Awards, please?

Senior Vice-Commander HASS. Thank you, Commander Barbara. Is Libby here, our chairman? Here she comes. Okay.

The Mae Holmes Award is a prestigious award for the very best outstanding unit in the four membership categories. Our committee worked well together. It's always a hard job, because there are so many good reports. But they did their work. And we have Chairman Elizabeth Fancher, but by the time the committee was over, we were calling her "Libby." This is what is so wonderful to serve on these committees at national convention, because you renew old acquaintances and you make new friends.

And so I'd like to welcome Libby to the mike to give our awards.

Mrs. ELIZABETH FANCHER. Thank you, Margaret.

Oh, I'm so happy to be up here, I want to tell you. This is the first time I've been to a national convention. In fact, this is the furthest I've ever been away from home, and I love it. [Laughter and applause.] I like going to the boat, too. [Laughter.]

This Mae Holmes report is a very important category, and a lot of ladies have worked hard on this, and it was hard for them to judge all of these. I want to say what a pleasure that it was to have Margaret as our advisor. I've known Margaret for a long time from coming to our state convention. She didn't remember me too well, but now she's not going to forget me. [Laughter.]

We met in the Oak Alley Room at 2:00 o'clock, July the 29th, '96. Margaret Hass, our national senior vice-commander, was our advisor. We elected Dorothea Campanelli as our secretary. And I'd like to call the names of the ones that served on this committee, and hold your applause till we're finished.

District 1, Florence Curley; District 2, Betty Nelson; District 3, Ann Kelley; District 4, Dorothea Campenelli; District 5, Sadie Turner; District 6, Gladys Seda; District 7, Grace McLaughlin; District 8, Eunice Eledge; District 9, Amy Adcock; District 10, Joann Slotman; District 11, Libby Fancher. That's me.

District 12, Nellie Smithee; District 13, Jan Walters; District 14, Annette Bain-Wilson; District 15, Bonita Mitchell; District 16, Marie Zamacona; District 17, Susan Miller. I don't know what happened to District 18. Barbara Davison never did show up. She must have got lost along the way. District 19, Denise Vietz; District 20, Clara Lewis; and District 21, Peggy Nye. [Applause.]

I see everybody coming up here with a little envelope. Look here what I've got, and I want you to know I'm going to read it all to you. [Laughter.]

National Commander Barbara, National Adjutant Maria, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests of this 74th National Auxiliary Convention: Our Group Number I from 10 to 50 members, Flat River 106, Greenville, Michigan. [Applause.]

Group Number II, 51 to a hundred members, W.R. Hold 147, Killeen, Texas. [Applause.]

Group Number III, 101 to 200 members, Allegheny-Kiski 53, Arnold, Pennsylvania. [Applause.]

Group Number IV, 201 members and over, Nob Hill 26, Colorado Springs, Colorado. [Applause.]

And the committee submitted the following recommendations. Do not write on reports at state judging. They put their totals on there, and then that is confusing. Do not attach Community Service, Hospital and VAVS reports to this Mae Holmes report. Do make an itemized list if donations are over a thousand dollars.

That is our recommendations.

Again, I want to thank you all for letting me be on this committee, and whoever made me chairman of this committee, I thank you 4, 5, 50 times. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. You know, this is one of our Ohio girls, and I actually can't believe that this is our shy little Libby. [Laughter.] Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. BARBARA DAVISON. I would like to address the Chair. I am Barbara Davison, and I was there, and I think the secretary's got my name on there. I was at the meeting.

Commander HICKS. They'll check it. Thank you very much.

Mrs. DOROTHEA CAMPANELLI. Excuse me, Madam Commander. The slip was not signed at the end of the meeting, and I know I checked all the names off when everyone entered, and they were all checked off, but at the end when we had the paper signed, our signature was not on there. But yes, she was there.

Commander HICKS. Okay. We will take care of it, and thank you very much. I'm sure the ladies apologize for any inconvenience.

Ladies, I think we are ready for some announcements, please.

Adjutant TEDROW: Ladies, of course, you know at 10:00 o'clock we cut off the Forget-Met-Not Luncheon.

I also want to inform you, for those that do not know, we have her for sale the Revised Auxiliary Manual. If you want to go to the registration area, you can purchase it. So I want you to be aware

of that because, you know, after today, we may not have them out there for sale.

Okay. I want to talk to you about what we collected, what we collected yesterday because of your generous donations. On Freedom's Foundation, a total of \$985 was collected. On Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project, a total of \$100 was collected. On the Service Support Program, \$3,255 was collected. [Applause.] And on the Education Loan, \$4,165.11. [Applause.] So it's through the generosity of your donations here, and your states and your units. We thank you.

Tomorrow afternoon, of course, we are going to have a Forget-Me-Not Luncheon. Our convention chairman has done a terrific job. I'm sure that you're going to be pleased with what she does tomorrow. And I ask any of you that had not bought tickets, we—Louise is still back there. Okay?

Thank you.

One more important item: All the chairmen, all the chairmen, you were given folders with all those reports in. We want those folders back, so either bring the folders up to the stage if you have them in the room, or bring them to the office no later than today. We need those folders that you had in the meetings.

Thank you.

Commander HICKS. Judge Advocate Shelia Allred.

Judge Advocate SHELIA C. ALLRED. Madam Commander, have we addressed all the business for this session?

Commander HICKS. Yes, ma'am, we have.

Judge Advocate ALLRED. May I have your permission to address the assembly?

Commander HICKS. You may.

Judge Advocate ALLRED. We are ahead of schedule. Would you like to continue this progress? I'm saying continue our business but in accordance with the Convention Rules, and get out early for the remainder of the day? [Applause.]

The business having been accomplished, I move we recess for the districts to caucus with the representatives that were on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for ten minutes. Further, we will then reconvene into the next session for the second reading of the Constitution and Bylaws.

NEC 19th District ESTHER WESTLAKE. Madam Commander, Esther Westlake, Unit 45, Washington. I second that motion.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Esther. Is there any discussion on this, please? Ready for the question? All in favor; opposed. So carried.

We will have a ten-minute recess. You need to go into your districts and caucus so that the representative that you elected to be on your Constitution and Bylaws can fill you in, and then we will come back and have a second reading. Thank you, ladies.

[Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.]

Commander HICKS. Our next session will now come back to order, and I'd like Renee Jones, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman to come and give the second reading of the Bylaws, please.

Now, this time we will be voting on them, ladies.

Mrs. JONES. Proposed Constitution and Bylaw amendments second reading. Page S-1, Article I, State Organization, Section 1, Administration. Delete paragraph and substitute the following:

This state department is organized with the specific consent and recognition of the parent organization and shall be governed by these Standard State Bylaws, State Standing Rules, Supplement to State Bylaws and the National Constitution and Bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

Rationale: In addition to the Standard State Bylaws, each state department is governed by their State Standing Rules.

I move the adoption of this amendment.

Commander HICKS. Is there a second?

NEC 2nd District DOLORES U. ROBIDOUX. Madam Chairman, Dolores Robidoux, District 2. I second the adoption.

Commander HICKS. Discussion? All in favor; opposed. Carried.

Mrs. JONES. Page S-11, Article VI, State Committees, Section 4, State Standing Committees. Add new Section 4. New Section 4 will read:

In addition to having an elected state Finance Committee and a state Nominating Committee, a state department may have other elected state standing committees. Such committees shall be provided for in their State Standing Rules. These rules shall include the number of members serving on a committee, term/terms of office and duties of the committee. Any committee vacancies shall be filled with an appointment made by the state commander and approved by the state Executive Committee.

Rationale: A standing committee that requires continuity shall be an elected committee, since the term of an appointed committee cannot exceed that of the appointing power.

I move the adoption of this amendment.

Mrs. JUNE BECKER. June Becker, District 4, New Jersey, seconds the motion.

Commander HICKS. Is there any discussion? All in favor, Aye; opposed, Nay. Carried.

Mrs. JONES. Since new Section 4 was adopted, old Section 4 will become Section 5, and old Section 5 will become Section 6. I move the adoption of the renumbering of these sections.

Commander HICKS. Is there a second?

Mrs. JUDY M. STEINHOUSE. Madam Commander, Judy Steinhouse, North Dakota, District 14. I second that motion.

Commander HICKS. Discussion? All in favor; opposed. Carried.

Mrs. JONES. Page S-14, Article 8, Finances, Section 5, State Fund-Raising Project/Projects, Paragraph 2. Delete Paragraph 2 and substitute the following:

All fund-raising projects or activities for the state department must be approved by the Disabled American Veterans state department and the DAV National Executive Committee.

Rationale: Paragraph 2 is amended in order to agree with the DAV National Bylaws.

I move the adoption of this amendment.

Commander HICKS. Is there a second?

Mrs. ANDEE SILVER. Andee Silver, District 5, Pennsylvania. I second that motion.

Commander HICKS. Discussion? All in favor; opposed. Carried.

Mrs. JONES. Page U-3, Article II, Unit Officers, Section 2, Elect- ed Officers. Add new paragraph 5. New Paragraph 5 will read:

In the event of the removal of a state Executive Committeewoman from office or her death, resignation or inability to discharge the duties of her office, same shall devolve upon the alternate state Executive Committeewoman. An election shall then be held for the position of alternate state Executive Committeewoman. Elected alternate shall be installed by a proper installing officer.

Rationale: No provision has been made in the Standard Local Unit Bylaws for filing state Executive Committeewoman and alternate state Executive Committeewoman vacancies. New paragraph 5 would provide this procedure.

I move the adoption of this amendment.

Commander HICKS. Is there a second?

Mrs. SUSAN M. HENRY. Susan Henry, Tennessee, Unit 116. I second this motion.

Commander HICKS. Is there any discussion? All in favor; opposed. Carried.

Mrs. JONES. Page U-12, Article VII, Unit Finance and Dues, Section 3, Fund-Raising Project/Projects. Delete third paragraph of Section 3 and substitute the following:

Where no commissions are to be paid, no prior approval shall be required from the DAV department Executive Committee when the gross receipts will be less than \$5,000; provided, however, that advance notice of 30 days to the DAV state department shall be required on all such finance-raising activity.

Rationale: Paragraph 3 is amended in order to agree with the DAV National Bylaws.

I move the adoption of this amendment.

Commander HICKS. Is there a second?

Mrs. JOANNE LAWS. Joanne Laws, Kentucky 19. I second the motion.

Commander HICKS. Is there any discussion? All in favor; opposed. Motion carried.

Mrs. JONES. I would like to recognize those committee members who served. When I call your name, please stand and please hold your applause until the end. District 1, Lillian Van Galen; District 2, Dolores Robidoux; District 3, Ann Young; District 4, June Becker; District 5, Rhea Lynn; District 6, Ardalina Taylor; District 7, Lucille McCarthy; District 8, Susan Henry; District 10, Addie White; District 11, Joyce Hutchinson; District 12, Bernie Errett; District 13, Joanne Laws; District 14, Judy Steinhouse; District 15, Rose Schilpp; District 16, Joan Turbeville; District 17, Jean Jackson; District 18, Shirley Kosisky; District 19, Esther Westlake; District 20, Betty Hall; and District 21, Loneita Shoemaker; and our advisor was Sheila Allred.

Thank you. [Applause]

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Renee. And thanks to each of you who serve on that committee.

Now we're going to have Maria give announcements, please.

Adjutant TEDROW. Just a couple of brief announcements, but isn't it nice to know that after the raffle's over, you can leave for the rest of the day? Isn't that great? [Applause.]

I was asked to repeat the amounts of the donations, and I will repeat them one more time. Freedom's Foundation received \$985. Service Support received \$3,255. Ed. Loan received \$4,165.11. Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project received \$100.

I am to tell you that Junior Activities Chairman Linda Trulio would like all of you to remember that today from 4:00 to 6:00 all

the juniors will assemble in Room 2212 for a Junior Mardi Gras, and they'd like you to be there. That's Room 2212 from 4:00 to 6:00. So show them your support. And that's the Junior Mardi Gras.

And I believe, Madam Commander—is Jacki Fossiano in the room? Madam Commander, I believe Jacki Fossiano would like to make a presentation.

NEC 1st District JACQUELINE H. FOSSIANO. Yesterday we had a luncheon for the Nor'easter, and District 1 was very supportive, gave me lots of money to work with, and we had money left over, and District 1 decided that they wanted to give what was left to the Service Fund. So here you are, Maria. This is for you.

Then another very nice surprise. When I went to pay the bill for the luncheon, Beth Tussa, the woman who is in charge, said, "You had said you wanted so many seats, and that's all I charged you for." So I have all this money left, and it's going to the Service Fund. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Thank you to all of the Nor'easters. Thank you so much.

Don't forget the Forget-Me-Not Luncheon tomorrow ladies.

And I believe we can recess now for the drawings.

Adjutant TEDROW. This is a correction, ladies. I got one that said "Meet in 2212" for the Junior Mardi Gras, but that's on the juniors meet in 2212. So the juniors are to meet in 2212, and they will be marching through the lobby from 4:00 to 6:00. Is that correct? Okay. So they will be marching through the lobby from 4:00 to 6:00 celebrating Junior Mardi Gras. Okay?

Thank you.

Commander HICKS. See you either at the luncheon or on Thursday morning. Have a good afternoon.

[Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 11:30 o'clock a.m., July 30, 1996.]

FINAL BUSINESS SESSION

August 1, 1996

The Final Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary 74th National Convention convened in the Napoleon Room of the New Orleans Hilton Riverside, New Orleans, Louisiana, Thursday morning, August 1, 1996, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by Commander Barbara L. Hicks.

Commander BARBARA L. HICKS. Ladies, I'd like to call the Final Session of our convention to order, please.

Would Carol Gray please lead us in an opening prayer?

Chaplain GRAY. Would you all join hands? O God, Our Father, You have brought us safely through the night, and we thank You for giving us one more day to do the work that must be done. We ask that you watch over all the defenders of freedom in the world. Until people are free, there cannot be peace so * * *

[Singing of, "Let There Be Peace on Earth."]

Chaplain GRAY. Amen.

Commander HICKS. And now our National Americanism Chairman Paula Raymond will lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance, Please.

[Pledge of Allegiance.]

Commander HICKS. Dorothy, may we please have the final Credentials report?

MEMBER. Good morning. Madam Commander, this is the true Credentials reports as of July 31st, 1996. The following units have not yet been cleared for voting. A unit representative must report to the Auxiliary Headquarters Office in the Eglinton and Winton Room on the second floor. Mississippi 54; West Virginia 8; Puerto Rico 6; Hawaii 1.

The units registered, total units registered, 336; total departments registered, 37; being a total of 373. Delegates registered, 647; alternates registered, 40; guests, 93; a total of 780. Total unit votes, 2,118; total department votes, 37; national officers, 8; past national commanders, 12; grand total votes, 2,175.

I move for acceptance of this report as read.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Dorothy. Is there a second to this, please?

Mrs. MARIANNE PIEKIELNIAK. Marianne Piekieniak, Unit 2, Virginia. I second the motion.

Commander HICKS. Thank you. All in favor; opposed. Motion carried.

Ladies, I believe you probably have heard this brought up many times, but we are going to do this again this morning. Janet, would you please join me up here, Janet Galian, the treasurer of the organization I'm about to speak of.

There is a group that has been formed 20 some years. It's known as SONCO, and it is Spouses of Past National Commanders Organization. This group every time there is a death, makes a presentation if it is a death of a spouse, and I have the honor as a member of this organization, I have been asked to present a donation to our National Educational Loan Fund in memory of L. Kit Seal Feighner, and Jack is a member of our organization.

Mrs. JANET GALIAN. Also, on behalf of SONCO, these are contributions from individual members. A donation was made from Jack Feighner and from Phyllis Greaney and Joe Mallett, and this money is to be used also for the Educational Loan Fund in memory of Kit Seal from SONCO. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Janet.

Mrs. ELIZABETH FANCHER. Madam Commander, Libby Fancher from Ohio. May I approach the podium?

Commander HICKS. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. FANCHER. I don't want to get me in trouble. The delegates of Ohio would also like to make a donation to the Educational Loan Fund in memory of Kit Feighner that we loved so much. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Having heard the final Credentials report, I wish to thank the members of the Nominating Committee for their port effort and time. I would like at this time to discharge the Nominating Committee and all other convention committees. Would the chairman of the Nominating Committee please come forward, Louise Rapisand from Texas.

Ladies, this is a report of the committee, and there's no action to be taken at this time on it.

Mrs. LOUISE M. RAPISAND. Delegates, good morning to you all from the eyes of Texas. Before I start to read the report, I would like to tell you that this has to be the finest committee that I have ever served on, and, as some of you know, I've served several years on the Nominating Committee, and to get 21 women to be in a room and to be as congenial as these 21, it was the neatest blend of minds and wit and love that I have experienced in a long time. And I do want to thank all of them. We had an excellent advisor, Jane Troutman, our immediate PNC, and she just was wonderful, because she knew everything that we didn't know.

And I just thought that you all should know that this time, we finished in record time at 4:30 on Tuesday. There was no Wednesday morning last-minute deliberations. So I think that I would like to read the committee first and have them stand and let you acknowledge that they did a fantastic job.

From District 1, Phyllis Greaney; District 2—would you stand when I call your name? District 2, Jeanne Le Porte; District 3, Grace Boland; 4, Frances Banghardt; 5, Andee Silver; 6, Mary Parrish; 7, Delores Roussey; 8, Virginia Mitchell; 9, Vicky Grier; 10, Gloria Boozer; 11, Grace Nagel. I'm sorry. That was Edith Cottrill, because we had a change there.

District 12 was Nelda Wilson; 13, Hannelore Ciccarella; 14, Katherine Pearson; 15, Dorothy Van Hoy; 16, Melba Morgan; 17, Florence Valgardson; 18, Donna Sellers; 19, Kathryn Wiley; 20 was Louise Rapisand; and 21, Gertrude Tidwell; advisor, Jane Troutman. And I think they did wonders. [Applause.]

The Nominating Committee of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary held their first meeting on Monday, July 29th, 1996 in the Norwich Room at the New Orleans Riverside Hilton. We are pleased to submit the following slate for your consideration to serve as the 1996-97 officers:

Commander, Margaret Hass from North Dakota [applause]; senior vice-commander, Evelynne Dunn from Nevada [applause]; 1st junior vice-commander, Evelyn Dorsey from Washington, D.C. [applause]; 2nd junior vice-commander, Paula Raymond from Illinois [applause]; 3rd junior vice-commander, Phyllis Novak from New York [applause]; and 4th junior vice-commander, Esther Westlake from Washington. [Applause.]

Chaplain, Carol Gray, Michigan [applause]; and judge advocate, Shelia Allred, North Carolina. [Applause.]

The secretary who served on the committee was Kathryn Wiley, District 19, I think Kathryn—would you stand? There she is in the back. Thanks, Kathryn. You did a great job. [Applause.]

And this is submitted by Chairman Louise Rapisand and Advisor Jane Troutman.

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Louise and committee.

At this time, I would like all officers to please leave the podium and go back to your respective districts for the purpose of election of officers.

I'd like to appoint three tellers at this time to approach the platform: Jan Bennett, Nevada; Gwen McCracken, Michigan; and Delores Roussey, Florida, please.

Adjutant TEDROW. Jeanne Le Porte, would you act as a teller, please? Could you come up here and act as a teller, please?

Commander HICKS. Elaine Majors, would you please be a teller? Thank you. And later you'll see where the other two ladies couldn't.

Okay, ladies, you have heard the report to the Committee on Nominations. Margaret Hass has been nominated by the committee for the office of national commander. Are there any other nominations?

Mrs. JUDITH STEINHOUSE. Madam Commander, Judy Steinhouse, United Number 8, North Dakota. May I approach the podium?

Commander HICKS. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. STEINHOUSE. Madam Commander Barbara, National Adjutant Maria, past national commanders, delegates and guests: I am proud to second the nomination of Margaret Hass for the office of national commander of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary. Margaret is a life member of Minot Unit Number 4 in North Dakota and lives in Bowbells with her husband, Vic, a disabled American veteran who served in the Navy during World War II. They have three children and seven grandchildren.

Margaret is very active in her unit, even though she has to travel 68 miles for the meetings. Her two daughters and two of her granddaughters are life members in Minot Number 4. The two younger granddaughters are junior members. Vic's two sisters and three nieces bring the total number of family supporters in her unit to 12.

She has served as Department of North Dakota commander, National Executive Committeewoman for District 14, National History chairman, Community Service, Americanism, Legislation and Mae Holmes chairman. She served two years as national chaplain, national 4th, 3rd and 2nd junior vice-commanders and senior vice.

As a member of the Foundation Board of the North Dakota Lisbon's Veterans Home, she has another excellent opportunity to serve the veterans she loves so much.

I am pleased and proud to second the nomination of Margaret Hass for the office of national commander. Thank you. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national commander. All those in favor of Margaret Hass for the office of national commander, signify by saying Aye; opposed. Congratulations. [Applause.]

Congratulations, Margaret. You've just been elected national commander. [Applause.]

Evelynne Dunn has been nominated by the committee for the office of national senior vice-commander. Are there any other nominations?

NEC 18th District JANET W. BENNETT. Madam commander, Janet Bennett, Unit 7, Carson City, Nevada. May I approach the podium, please?

Commander HICKS. Yes, ma'am.

NEC BENNETT. National Commander Barbara, National Adjutant Maria, national officers, past national officers, members and guests of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary. I am proud to second the nomination of Evelynne Dunn from the State of Nevada, the silver state, for the office of national senior vice-commander for the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary for the year 1996 and '97.

Evelynne is eligible through her late husband, Fred, who was wounded during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II, and also through her late son, Monty, who was a Vietnam veteran. Evelynne is a charter and life member of Sunrise Mountain Unit 13 in Las Vegas, and has advanced through all the offices of the unit level and has been unit commander twice.

Currently she is serving as state Executive Committeewoman. On the state level, Evelynne has held all elective and many appointed offices, serving as state commander in 1986 and '87. She was instrumental in organizing the Women Helping Women Seminar in Las Vegas. Evelynne has conducted many Auxiliary workshops.

On the national level, Evelynne has served on the Mae Holmes and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. Evelynne has served as co-chairman of the 1989 and '95 National Convention in Las Vegas. Evelynne was the 18th District National Executive Committeewoman for the years 1990 and '92, serving on the National Finance Committee as chairman of this committee in 1991 and '92. In the years of 1992 and '93, she served as national chaplain with dignity, respect and honor that the office deserves. Evelynne served as 3rd junior vice-commander for the year 1993 and '94, and was Americanism chairman. She also served as national 1st junior vice-commander and was the Membership chairman for the years 1994-95, 1995 and '96.

Evelynne is a volunteer at the Las Vegas Medical Center, serving coffee and doughnuts to veterans several times a month. As a driver for the DAV Transportation Network, she transports veterans to the hospital appointments in California, a round trip of 470 miles. Evelynne is the first to volunteer when someone is needed, working with dignity, enthusiasm and compassion, which shows how much she enjoys helping others.

As a past state commander, on behalf of the delegation and the membership of the great silver state of Nevada and the 18th District, I am honored to second the nomination of Evelynne Dunn for the office of national senior vice-commander for the years 1996 and '97. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Thank you, Jan.

Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national senior vice-commander. All those in favor of Evelynne Dunn for the office of national senior vice-commander, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it, and Evelynne Dunn has been elected. [Applause.]

Evelyn Dorsey has been nominated by the committee for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander. Are there any other nominations?

Ms. REGINA COATES. Madam Commander, Regina Coates, Federal Unit 1, Washington, D.C. May I approach the podium?

Commander HICKS. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. COATES. Good morning. It gives me great honor to nominate my grandmother, Evelyn Dorsey, as national 1st junior vice-commander. First, I will tell you the business part, the stuff I'm supposed to tell you. Then I'll tell you a little mushy stuff. [Laughter.]

Okay. Evelyn Dorsey has been a life member of the DAV Auxiliary since 1976, and is eligible for membership through her late

husband, Garnett, my grandfather. A member of Federal Unit 1, Washington, D.C., she has held most unit officer positions, including commander, senior, junior vice-commander and adjutant, and served on various committees.

On the state department level, she has served as treasurer and state commander and is currently adjutant-treasurer.

At the national level, she has served as National Executive Committeewoman for the 6th District and is chairman of the National Finance Committee. Since being elected a national junior vice-commander, she has chaired the Community Service Program and is currently National Legislative chairman.

A native Washingtonian, Evelyn received her formal education in the nation's capital. For over 35 years, she was employed, retired by the U.S. Army Materiel Command and the D.C. Department of Human Services. She devotes much of her time and energy to church, Auxiliary and community activities. She is on the Board of Directors of the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA; the Board of Directors of the Starter Baptist Home; a member of the Mayor's Committee on Persons With Disabilities; and chairman of the Board of Trustees at our church.

She is the proud mother of four and has nine grandchildren, one plus me. One is eight plus me. [Laughter.]

I'm not a mushy person, so I don't tell my grandmother how proud I am of her, but there's a part of a song that really fits her. It says something like, "Did you ever know you were my hero? You're everything that I would like to be. I can fly higher than the eagle, because you're the wind beneath my wings."

Anything that I try to do or want to do, my grandmother's always there. She's a sweet lady not only here, but all the time, 24, 7, 365, and I love her very much. And it gives me great honor to second the nomination as a 1st national junior vice-commander. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander. All those in favor of Evelyn Dorsey for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it, and Evelyn Dorsey has been elected to the office of national 1st junior vice-commander. [Applause.]

Paula Raymond has been nominated by the committee for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander. Are there any other nominations?

Ms. KAREN S. ECCLES. Madam Commander, I am Karen Eccles, Alton Unit 3, Illinois. May I approach the podium, please?

Commander HICKS. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. ECCLES. Commander Barbara, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and alternates and guests here assembled: On behalf of the State of Illinois and the 12th District, I am both pleased and proud to second the nomination for Paula Raymond for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander.

Paula is a life member of Alton Unit 3 in Illinois. She has served all offices of her local unit and State Department of Illinois. She is presently serving as your national 3rd junior vice-commander, and with this, Americanism chairman.

Paula is employed as an administrative assistant in Family Service and Visiting Nurses Association. She has a son, Darren, serving in the U.S. Navy in his fourth year of a six-year enlistment. She has a daughter, Karen, that's me. [Laughter.] And I have been a member of the organization since I was hours old, and just this year became a senior member. [Applause.]

Paula's eligibility is through her father, a World War II veteran. She lives with here husband, Byron, and me, and we have heard, "I am home," and "I am leaving" quite often this year as she traveled with her work and for the DAV Auxiliary on local, state, district and national levels.

We of the 12th District in the State of Illinois are proud of Paula, and we feel that she has served us exceptionally well in the past and will continue to do so with honor and distinction. I stand here very proud and happy to second the nomination of Paula Raymond for national 2nd junior vice-commander. Thank you. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander. All those in favor of Paula Raymond for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it, and Paula Raymond has been elected to the office of 2nd junior vice. [Applause.]

Phyllis Novak has been nominated by the committee for the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander. Are there any other nominations?

Mrs. LEPORTE. Madam Commander, Jeanne LePorte, Department of New York, may I approach the podium?

Commander HICKS. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. LEPORTE. Madam Commander Barbara, National Adjutant Maria, national officers, PNCs, delegates, members and guests: It is with extreme pleasure that I stand before you to second the nomination of our past state commander, Phyllis Novak.

You have seen and participated in her dynamic History and Community Service Seminars at our National Fall Conferences. You have read her eye-catching inserts in our national mailings. Her infectious enthusiasm for the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary is obvious at our national conventions.

We in the Empire State have benefited from her many ideas, the most outstanding enabling us to make quota for the first time in many years. She continues to serve the New York State Department, having been elected to the Finance Committee in our June convention.

We in the Department of New York are proud of the way Phyllis has served as national 4th junior vice-commander. We are sure you will agree with us and the Nominating Committee that Phyllis Novak is the candidate for national 3rd junior vice-commander. Thank you. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander. All those in favor of Phyllis Novak for the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it, and Phyllis Novak has been elected to the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander. [Applause.]

Would your please stand, Phyllis? Thank you.

Ester Westlake has been nominated by the committee for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander. Are there any other nominations?

Mrs. FLORENCE VALGARDSON. Florence Valgardson, past national commander. May I approach the podium?

Commander HICKS. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. VALGARDSON. National Commander Barbara, Maria and delegates to this convention: It is with great pleasure that I second the nomination of Esther Westlake for the position of the national 4th junior vice-commander for 1996–97.

Esther is a life member, and she joined the DAVA in 1980 through her father, who is a World War II veteran, who died of his service-connected disabilities. Her husband, Dale, and her five brothers and a sister are also disabled American veterans.

As an active member, she has served as unit junior vice-commander, commander, five years as treasurer, two years as the adjutant, and as chairman of all the committees. She has also served as district senior vice-commander and commander, state senior vice-commander and state commander, three years as judge advocate, and two years as the adjutant, and is presently on the state Finance Committee.

Esther served as the deputy VAVS representative for two years before becoming a VAVS representative at the Spokane VA Medical Center, and she is presently the deputy.

As an employee of the Department of Washington, the DAV, Esther is the hospital service coordinator and department service officer at the Spokane VA Medical Center. She serves on the Female Veterans Advisory Board, Native American Veterans Advisory Board, and Congressman George Nethercutt's Veterans Advisory Board. As a member of the Executive Board of the Inland Empire Allied Veterans Association, she is active in the homeless veterans outreach.

Esther has just completed one year as the 19th District National Executive Committeewoman. She has attended three National Fall Conferences and eight National Conventions. She has served on the National Convention Committee for Americanism, Legislation and five times on the National Constitution and Bylaws Committee. In 1995, she was the National Constitution and Bylaws Convention Committee chairman.

Esther is married to a service-connected disabled Korean Era veteran, and they have eight children between the two of them. The youngest are ages 13 and 15, which are still at home. Her husband is active in the parent organization on the local and the state level, and in their free time—they should have a little bit, I would imagine—Dale and Esther are active in two bowling leagues.

It's with great pride and great honor that I second this nomination, as she has served the Auxiliary well, and she will continue to do so on the national level as your 4th junior vice-commander. Thank you. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander. All those in favor of Esther Westlake for the office of 4th junior vice-commander, signify by saying Aye; op-

posed. The Ayes have it, and Esther Westlake has been elected to the office of national 4th junior vice-commander. [Applause.]

Carol Gray has been nominated by the committee for the office of national chaplain. Are there any other nominations?

Mrs. BETTY BENZING. Madam Chairman, Betty Benzing, State of Michigan commander. May I approach the podium, please?

Commander HICKS. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. BENZING. National Commander Barbara, National Adjutant Maria, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests: It is my pleasure to second the nomination of Carol Gray for national chaplain. Eligibility is through her late grandfather, Andrew Biddell.

Carol is a life member of Wood Tazelaar Number 11, where she started as a junior member and now serves as junior vice-commander and Community Service chairman. Carol has held all unit offices and many chairmanships over the years. On the state level, she served as chaplain for nine years before going through the chairs and becoming commander 1986-87. She was then state adjutant for the next seven years.

During her 20 years as a state officer, she was also History chairman nine times. Several of those books received national awards. She is now my state Standing Rules Committee chairman and VAVS deputy at the Outpatient Clinic in Grand Rapids.

She has attended many Fall Conferences. This is her tenth National Convention, and she was National History chairman for two years and has served on History, Constitution and Bylaws and Nominating Committees. She was national chaplain last year, '95-96.

Carol and her husband, Ken, have three children. Her daughter is also a life member. She has five grandsons, but Number 1 granddaughter, Samantha, is a junior member.

She has a loving spirit and will, as usual, be an asset to our organization. Our Great Lakes State of Michigan gives our support to her, and I thank you very much. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national chaplain. All those in favor of Carol Gray for the office of national chaplain, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it, and Carol Gray has been elected to the office of national chaplain. [Applause.]

Shelia Allred has been nominated by the committee for the office of national judge advocate. Are there any other nominations?

Immediate Past National Commander JANE TROUTMAN. Madam Commander, Jane Troutman, past national commander. May I approach the podium?

Commander HICKS. Yes, ma'am.

Immediate Past National Commander TROUTMAN. National Commander, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests: On behalf of the State of North Carolina, I am very proud to read the seconding speech for Shelia C. Allred for the office of national judge advocate based on her qualifications and many years of experience as a member and leader of this organization.

Shelia first became a member of the Junior Auxiliary at age nine, and has remained an active and productive member. She has

attended 68 state conventions throughout the United States and 22 National Fall Conferences. Shelia is a life member of Concord Unit 27 and has held all local unit offices. On the state level, she has served as state junior and senior vice-commander, state commander for one year and five months, also state judge advocate nine years, state adjutant for the Department of North Carolina for five years.

Shelia was National Executive Committeewoman for the National 5th District for two years. She has served on various committees during her 21 National Conventions she has attended, including the National Finance Committee for three years. She served as national junior vice-commander, National Community Service chairman, national 3rd junior vice-commander, National Americanism chairman, national 2nd junior vice-commander, National Legislative chairman, national 1st junior vice-commander, National Membership chairman, National Constitution and Bylaws advisor, national senior vice-commander, advisor to the Mae Holmes Committee.

Shelia was also elected as National Auxiliary commander for the 1989 Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, and has just completed her fourth term as national judge advocate.

Shelia is president of Allco Research and Consultants of North Carolina. She holds membership in the American Legion Auxiliary and is a charter member of the American Businesswomen's Association. She's active in the community with "A History in the Making", the North Carolina Museum of History Association, a member of the National and North Carolina Genealogy Societies and a past member of the Board of Trustees of the Greater Piedmont Chapter of the National Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Shelia is a graduate of the Cabarrus County School System and Rowan County Community College. She attended the University of North Carolina and holds a certificate in early childhood development. She also holds a certificate in training on effective speaking and human relations. She also instructed as a graduate assistant at the Dale Carnegie Association.

For Shelia, the Disabled American Veterans is really a family organization. Her mother is a past state commander. Her husband, Jim, served two terms as department commander and is National Executive Committeeman for the 9th District. Their daughter, Tara Dahle is a life member of the Auxiliary, and presently serves as state Junior Activities chairman for North Carolina.

Shelia has one granddaughter, Brittany Michaela, who has been a Junior Auxiliary member since birth.

An article was recently written about Shelia for a nonprofit world newspaper by the DAV National Communications Director Tom Keller. This article was accepted for publication by the Society for Nonprofit Organizations. Tom was quoted as saying, "Shelia was the kind of leader that speech writers dream about, because she's not afraid to say what's in her heart."

Shelia's life and work enfolds a record of achievement. This was obtained because of her devotion and dedication to you, the members of this organization. If elected again, Shelia will again fulfill her obligations as national judge advocate with knowledge, dedication, honor and dignity.

It is an honor and a personal privilege for me to second the nomination of my best friend, Shelia C. Allred, for the office of national judge advocate. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national judge advocate. All those in favor of Shelia Allred for the office of national judge advocate, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it, and Shelia Allred has been elected to the office of national judge advocate. [Applause.]

The election having been completed, will all the officers return to their former stations on the podium, please?

Would you come to the podium for the purpose of introducing the pages and the National Executive Committee, please?

While the national sergeant-at-arms is doing this, I would like to personally thank you for all that you have added to our convention with your lovely, lovely music. [Applause.]

I'm sorry, I'd like to dismiss all the convention committees at this time, please. [Applause.]

MEMBER. Commander Barbara, I just wanted to say that I am so pleased to be here, and I want to thank all of those people who were responsible for bringing me up here and asking me, and I just love you all, and thank you. And I hope we see you again. [Applause.]

Mrs. DONNA HORTON. National Commander Barbara, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary 74th Convention: I'd like to thank you, Barb, for appointing me as national sergeant-at-arms. It has been an honor to serve in this position.

First, I'd like to introduce the personal pages. Margaret Hass's personal page is Miriam Kiser. Evelynne Dunn's personal page is Helen Parcell. Evelyn Dorsey's page is her granddaughter, Regina Coates. Paula Raymond's page is her daughter, Karen Eccles. Phyllis Novak's page is Betty Nelson. Shelia Allred's page is Renee Jones. Carol Gray's page is Betty Benzing. [Applause.]

At this time, I'd like all the color bearers and banner bearers to stand and be recognized. You did an excellent job when you brought our Colors in. [Applause.] Thank you, all of you.

The NECs that served as pages were: District 1, Jacqueline Fossiano; District 2, Betty Nelson; District 3, Grace Boland; District 4, Arline Phillips. She was here, but she had to leave early because she's going home to celebrate her 50th wedding anniversary. So Beatrice Albanese from District 4 has stepped in for her. Thank you.

District 5 is E. Jimi Hayes; District 6, Mildred Velazquez; District 7, Grace McLaughlin; District 8, Vernice Eunice; District 9, Vicky Grier; District 10, Zona McNeal; District 11, Jane Wood; District 12, Zona Schalow; District 13, Esther Houston; District 14, Annette Bain-Wilson; District 15, Delitha "Dee" Staples; District 16, Vera Davis Flatow; District 17, Dorothy Dudoich; District 18, Janet Bennett.

Until today, District 19 was Esther Westlake, but since she was running for—she is 4th junior vice, Kathryn Wiley has stepped in her place. Thank you. District 20 is Ann Hester. And District 21 is Gertrude Tidwell. [Applause.]

And now it's hard to say it to these kids. They have been great. We also had some juniors that acted as our pages. We had Angela Morales from New Jersey; Sarah Ann Coursey, she's from Arizona; Erin Murray from Nevada; Jenny LeMars from Mississippi; and my granddaughter, Nicole. Thank you, girls for taking part, and you are the future of our Auxiliary. Thank you, all of you. [Applause.]

Now last, but by no means least, are the pages for our national commander. They did a great job taking care of our national commander through the whole year. They're Diane Akers, please stand, Diane. Diane's leaving today. Virginia Merrifield, who has really been my right hand. Without her, I don't know how I would have done this either. And Jackie Hicks-Sayre, Barbara Hicks' daughter. [Applause.]

I just want to thank all of you for all your help. Thanks. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. I personally again would like to thank each and every one of them. They've done so much work. Just because they're running up and down and changing back and forth doesn't mean when they're in the back of the room, they're just sitting there. They're running errands, and they're doing a lot, and we really do appreciate all of them, including our beautiful little juniors. [Applause.]

Donna, you too, have done a very good job as sergeant-at-arms. Thank you so very much. [Applause.]

On Tuesday, we had our little quota kickoff, fun time, whatever. I'd like to thank the Department of New Jersey for that. I really appreciated them putting them together. Thank you. [Applause.] Would New Jersey stand, please? Thanks, ladies.

And now I want to thank everyone who has made my term so rewarding and fantastic. That is one of my new words: fantastic! Everything this year has gone that way. My junior officers, for dedicating so much of their time to attend conferences and other department conventions nationwide on my behalf; the past national commanders for their wise counsel, unbound energy, love and dedication to our Auxiliary; to the National Auxiliary staff for the work they perform on behalf of us day after day; to my good friend, our national adjutant, Maria Tedrow. Maria, thank you for your expertise, your guidance, your willingness to help in every possible way.

To all department and unit members who have sent cards, photographs, notes, gifts, telephone calls, your hospitality, smiles, friendship and love; to the great Department of Ohio and to my unit, Champaign County Unit 31 for your love and support; to my personal pages for their tremendous work.

Each and every one of us has someone that we're really close to and that we really count on. I have a lady that it didn't matter what time of day I called her, what it was, she'd say, "Settle down, Barb. Now, let's talk this through. We can do this." Or she would say, "I don't think that word sounds right in there. We need to make that plural. When you've got singular and plural, let's get this both in the same context."

Whether it's taking me to the airport, opening her home to me many hours—in Florida, I've stayed with her—Grace Nagel, you are absolutely one of the truest friends anyone could ever have, and I love you so much. [Applause.]

To my lovely daughter, Jacki, your support, encouragement, criticism have meant more than you will ever know. You are my daughter, you are my friend, and I love you, sweetheart. [Applause.] And the mother of my three beautiful granddaughters, Nicole, Tiffany and Megan.

To my handsome son, Jeffrey, my biggest supporter, all six foot three inches of him, who has encouraged me for so long, even though he couldn't be here today I love him very much, too.

Thank you so much for my wonderful, wonderful year. It's memories that I shall cherish for the rest of my life. [Applause.]

Thank you, each and every one, ladies. Thank you so much. What a beautiful family to have, our DAV Auxiliary family.

The national adjutant will now call the roll of the newly elected National Executive Committeewomen and their alternates. As your name is called, please come forward for the purpose of installation.

Adjutant TEDROW. As National Commander Barbara Hicks just explained, only the newly elected NECs and alternates will be called down front to be installed, because the other ones were installed last year, and you do serve a two-year term.

From District 2, we have Dolores Robidoux and Jeanne Le Porte. Would you please come down front? From District 4, Beatrice Albanese and Florence Kehne is the alternate. From District 6, Mildred Velazquez is the NEC, and Neva Langston is the alternate. From District 8, Elaine Majors is the NEC, and Dorothy Pearce is her alternate. From District 10, Gwen McCracken is the NEC, and Kathy Drako is her alternate.

From District 12, Beraldine Errett is the NEC, and Nellie Smithee, who just happens to be Paula Raymond's mother, is the alternate. From District 14, Sharon Kramer is the NEC, and Sheila Champeau is the alternate. From District 16, we have Alma Fowlkes as the NEC, and Dolores Wingett is the alternate. From District 18, Joan Fletcher is the NEC, and Ann Jones is the alternate. And we had a change in District 19, and at this time in District 19, Kathryn Wiley is the NEC and Bea Puleo is the alternate. From District 20, June Bradford is the NEC, and Joyce Humes is her alternate.

Please come down front for the purpose of installation, and then after that we will have the installation of the national officers.

Commander HICKS. You are requested to remain silent during the ceremony of installation.

As newly elected National Executive Committeewomen and alternates, are you willing to assume the oath of your office?

[Response of, "I am."]

Commander HICKS. Place your right hand over your heart, pronounce your name, and repeat after me the oath of your office. I, Barbara Hicks, having been selected as a National Executive Committeewoman or alternate of this Auxiliary, do most solemnly pledge myself to faithfully and impartially perform in letter and spirit all duties of the office I am about to enter. I promise to obey the lawful orders of my superior officers and exact the obedience of others thereto to the best of my ability and means.

When my successor has been duly selected and installed, I promise to surrender to her all the property of the organization in my possession, all of which I now affirm.

You may lower your hands.

Members, be seated. Delegates, members and guests, I now present to you the National Executive Committeewomen and alternates of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary. I trust you will aid them in their performance of their duties. With your help, their term of office will be highly successful.

About face. [Applause.]

Would the newly installed National Executive Committee and alternates please return to their seats.

The national adjutant will now make some announcements.

Adjutant TEDROW. [Lost and found announcement.]

Yesterday, because of all—I was a little remiss. We do this every year, and I'm going to make an announcement, and then everybody's going to get up and say, "Well, it's mine, too." But yesterday I was asked to announce that it was Jeanne Le Porte's birthday. Happy birthday, Jeanne. And I'm sure there are other people's birthdays in the room. Anybody celebrating a birthday today?

Okay. Those celebrating a birthday today or this week, please get up and we'll sign "Happy Birthday."

[Singing of "Happy Birthday."]

Adjutant TEDROW. All right. Now for some serious announcements. We are going to immediately go into the NEC meeting in this room following the adjournment of this convention, and at that time, of course, your national officers will be installed, and I'm sure you want to see that and hear their remarks.

To the national officers and the NECs—I hope you're all listening, national officers and NECs—you will line up for the Grand Ball in the Burgundy Room at 6:45. The presentation of the national officers and the NECs will be in the Grand Ballroom at 7:30.

Fall Conference. Boy, it's closer than we like to think about it. Fall Conference is September the 26th through the 28th at the Galt House in Louisville, Kentucky. And the room rate is \$74 plus tax, plus tax, plus tax. [Laughter.] And it's the same price for a single or a double. But, as you know, when we go to the Galt, you get a type of suite when you register, with a refrigerator and a table and a parlor, so it's well worth the rate.

The 1997 National Convention, of course, is going to be in Las Vegas, Nevada. If you didn't lose enough money here, wait a while. You can lose the rest. Las Vegas, Nevada. And it will be the week of August the 16th through the 21st. I said if they keep getting any later, we're just going to adjourn the convention and go right into our Fall Conference right in the same hotel. Okay. Las Vegas, Nevada, August the 16th through the 21st at the Hilton. And it will be \$85 plus tax.

Also, if there are those that are to be proposed as chairmen or have been approached by our incoming national commander to serve a chairmanship for the coming year, we would like you to remain through the NEC meeting, please. Certainly would make it easier if we had your names, addresses, and could give you some information.

That's it, Commander.

Commander HICKS. Yes, Past National Commander Pearson?

Mrs. KATHERINE PEARSON. Barbara, fantastic! And you have been fantastic. On behalf of the past national commanders, this fantastic lady has proven her ability throughout the year and years before that. I've known Barbara for a long, long time. She has been fantastic. She hasn't changed. She's still as fantastic.

And as members of your convention, the past national commanders would like to have you have this, and we're looking forward to you joining us. [Applause.]

Commander HICKS. Thank you very much. Thank you, Past National Commander Katherine and all past national commanders.

Adjutant TEDROW. Someone handed me an address if you want the name of the jazz band that played yesterday. I have their name and their address, and I was told to give it out. The name of the band, of course was the South Lafourche High School Jazz Band. That's spelled L-a-f-o-u-r-c-h-e. Okay? Post Office Box 160, Galliano, Louisiana, 70354. If anyone needs the address, I have it up here in front. Thank you.

Commander HICKS. Is there any other business to come before this convention? If not, at this time I will ask the national chaplain to give the closing prayer, at which time the convention will be adjourned. We will then go immediately into the National Executive Committee Meeting and the installation of new officers.

After the prayer, would the pages please escort the dignitaries down front?

Chaplain GRAY. Would you all please rise and join hands? You know, if each of you could see what we see from up here when you're all joined hands as one and singing together, you would know why I have tried to continue this. And I'm going to ask you to do it one more time at the end of this prayer.

God, please bless each and every member of this Auxiliary. Enhance our understanding of service and loyalty. Give wisdom to our leaders. Beside them, we'll unite. Protect them in their travels and guide them with Your light.

[Singing of "God Be With You Till We Meet Again."]

Chaplain GRAY. Amen.

Commander HICKS. The 74th National Convention of the Disabled American Auxiliary is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 11 o'clock a.m., August 1, 1996.]