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108th Congress, 2d Session - - - - - - - - - - - - House Document 108–232

PROCEEDINGS

of the

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
2004 NATIONAL CONVENTION

July 31–August 3, 2004

Reno, Nevada

PROCEEDINGS—2004 NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

108th Congress, 2d Session - - - - - - - - - - - - House Document 108-232

NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE NATIONAL ADJUTANT, THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

TRANSMITTING

2004 NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS, PURSUANT TO 36 U.S.C. 90i AND 44 U.S.C. 1332



NOVEMBER 16, 2004.—Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and ordered to be printed

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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 may be submitted.

[Approved October 2, 1968.]

LETTER OF SUBMITTAL

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS,
October 15, 2004.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: As business manager of 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31–August 3, 2004, 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, 2003, 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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- - -

NATIONAL OFFICERS 2004-2005

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

National Commander
James E. Sursely, P.O. Box 667, Apopka, FL 32704

Senior Vice Commander
Paul W. Jackson, 2935 Avondale Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80917

First Junior Vice Commander
Bradley S. Barton, 4765 S.W. Chunut Court, Tualatin, OR 97062

Second Junior Vice Commander
Robert T. Reynolds, 6034 Cliff Drive, Alexandria, VA 22315

Third Junior Vice Commander
Raymond E. Dempsey, 933 E. Forest Avenue, Des Plaines, IL 60018

Fourth Junior Vice Commander
Bobby Barrera, 1307 S. Main Street, Del Rio, TX 78840

National Judge Advocate
Michael E. Dobmeier, P.O. Box 6188, Grand Forks, ND 58206

National Chaplain
Rev. Gerald V. Stump, 817 Kensal Green Drive, Kernersville, NC 27284

Past National Commander
Alan W. Bowers, 21 Bolton Road, Royalston, MA 01368

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

First district: John F. Regan, 100 Airport Road, Quincy, MA 02171
Second district: John J. Skyler, 26 Shanley Street, Cheektowaga, NY 14206
Third district: Stephen C. Moffitt, Sr., 89 New London Turnpike, Wyoming, RI 02898
Fourth district: Richard E. Manners, 190-10 Gibson Blvd., Clark, NJ 06066
Fifth district: Kirby C. Lindsey, 1 Mill Street, Sheffield, PA 16347
Sixth district: Robert V. Richard, Sr., 6420 North Capitol Street, NW Washington, DC 20012
Seventh district: Richard Giese, 7481 Briarbay Loop, Lakeland, FL 33810
Eighth district: Harold J. Hicks, 14190 Fox Hollow, Harvest, AL 35749
Ninth District: Bobby G. Williams, 20191 Old Sandbar Road, Oakboro, NC 28129
Tenth district: Morris Penermon, 14164 Whitcomb, Detroit, MI 48227
Eleventh district: William L. Moseley, 215 E. Harmon, P.O. Box 416, Greenville, OH 45331
Twelfth district: Norman J. Resner, 818 Hastings Lane, Hanover Park, IL 60133
Thirteenth district: William T. Caywood, 4029 Summit Ridge Road, Greenwood, IN 46142
Fourteenth district: Richard C. Amos, 2413 East 18th Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57103
Fifteenth district: Lyle J. Dean, 205 Woodland Dr., P.O. Box 232, Dunkerton, IA 50626
Sixteenth district: Dennis W. Weber, 9907 Shadow Hills Drive, Sunland, CA 91040
Seventeenth district: Billy F. Jones, Sr., 1601 Tommy Armour Court, Belen, NM 87002
Eighteenth district: William D. Brzezinski, 3412 Pinon Peak Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89115
Nineteenth district: Jimmey W. Mayo, P.O. Box 201, Delta Junction, AK 99737
Twentieth district: L. Duke Hendershot, 1169 Loma Verde Drive, New Braunfels, TX 78130
Twenty-first district: Wayne L. Douglass, Sr., 104 Wellington, Hot Springs, AR 71901



James E. Sursely
National Commander
2004-2005
Disabled American Veterans



Alan W. Bowers
National Commander
2003-2004
Disabled American Veterans

NATIONAL OFFICERS 2003-2004

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

National Commander
Alan W. Bowers, 21 Bolton Road, Royalston, MA 01368-8929

Senior Junior Vice Commander
James E. Sursely, P.O. Box 667, Apopka, FL 32704

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Paul W. Jackson, 2935 Avondale Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80917

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Third Junior Vice Commander
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Raymond E. Dempsey, 933 E. Forest Avenue, Des Plaines, IL 60018

National Judge Advocate
Michael E. Dobmeier, P.O. Box 6188, Grand Forks, ND 58206

National Chaplain
Rev. Gerald V. Stump, 817 Kensal Green Drive, Kernersville, NC 27284

Past National Commander
Edward R. Heath, Sr., P.O. Box 115, Mechanic Falls, ME 04256-0115

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

First district: John F. Regan, 100 Airport Road, Quincy, MA 02171
Second district: Thomas F. Mazza, 94 Reinhardt Road, Middletown, NY 10940
Third district: Stephen C. Moffitt, Sr., 89 New London Turnpike, Wyoming, RI 02898
Fourth district: Elwood A.D. Lechausse, 128 Haystack Road, Manchester, CT 06040
Fifth district: Kirby Lindsey, 1 Mill Street, Sheffield, PA 16347
Sixth district: Jacob N. Stafford, P.O. Box 274, Oceana, WV 24870
Seventh district: Richard Giese, 7481 Briarbay Loop, Lakeland, FL 33810
Eighth district: Wilbur L. Trahan, 1813 32nd Avenue, Gulfport, MS 39501
Ninth District: Bobby G. Williams, 20191 Old Sandbar Road, Oakboro, NC 28129
Tenth district: Richard A. Straub, 15435 Snauble, Cedar Springs, MI 49319
Eleventh district: William L. Moseley, 215 E. Harmon Drive, Greeville, OH 45331
Twelfth district: Richard L. Fear, 2035 Kentucky Street, Racine, WI 53405
Thirteenth district: William T. Caywood, 4029 Summit Ridge Road, Greenwood, IN 46142
Fourteenth district: Jerome Krejci, 5 Wylie Court, East Grand Forks, MN 56712
Fifteenth district: Lyle J. Dean, P.O. Box 232, Dunkerton, IA 50626
Sixteenth district: Astro Tortolano, 2358 Benton Street, Santa Clara, CA 95050
Seventeenth district: James Owens, 4513 Andrew, NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109
Eighteenth district: Joseph J. McDowell, 12737 South 175th Avenue, Goodyear, AZ 85338
Nineteenth district: Jimmey W. Mayo, P.O. Box 201, Delta Junction, AK 99737
Twentieth district: Dennis R. Nixon, 401 Jo Drive, Robinson, TX 76706
Twenty-first district: Wayne Douglass, Sr., 104 Wellington, Hot Springs, AR 71901

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 (deceased 2002)
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)
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. Sheirbon, Seattle, Washington (deceased 1999)
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 (deceased 2002)
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. Musselmann, 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 Hts., Michigan
1996-97: Gregory C. Reed, Indianapolis, Indiana
1997-98: Harry R. McDonald, Jr., Crestview, Florida
1998-99: Andrew A. Kistler, Franklin, Pennsylvania
1999-00: Michael E. Dobmeier, Grand Forks, North Dakota
2000-01: Armando C. Albarran, San Antonio, Texas
2001-02: George H. Steese, Jr., Fresno, California
2002-03: Edward R. Heath, Sr., Mechanic Falls Maine
2003-04: Alan W. Bowers, Royalston, Massachusetts

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 83RD NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS HELD AT RENO, NEVADA

JUL 31-AUGUST 3, 2004

JOINT OPENING SESSION

July 31, 2004

The Joint Opening Session of the Disabled American Veterans convened in the Hilton Pavilion of the Reno Hilton, Reno, Nevada, Saturday morning, July 31, 2004, and was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Commander Alan W. Bowers.

COMMANDER ALAN W. BOWERS: Ladies and gentlemen, good morning. I hope you enjoyed that military service medley. (Applause)

I now call to order the 83rd National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans. National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson will read the call to convention.

ADJUTANT ARTHUR H. WILSON: The constitution and bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans states that the supreme legislative powers of this organization shall be vested in its annual 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 83rd National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans to be convened in Reno, Nevada, at 9:00 a.m., Saturday, July 31, 2004.

Consideration and disposition of business brought before this convention shall be conducted in accordance with the national constitution and bylaws now in force.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Please rise. Color Guard, present colors.

(Presentation of Colors)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Ladies and gentlemen, please join us in the National Anthem.

(National Anthem)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag.

(Pledge of Allegiance)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Please remain standing. Dr. Vincent Shelton of the New Jerusalem Baptist Church of Sparks, Nevada, will give the invocation.

DR. VINCENT SHELTON: Let us bow. Eternal God, our Father, we come thanking You for this day. Thank you, Lord, for opening our eyes and our minds to this new experience that we've never had before.

Thank you, Father, for looking beyond all that we are and continuing to supply us with that which we need. Lord, we come asking right now for Your leadership and Your guidance.

Allow the thoughts and the actions to be representative of You, that through all things You might be glorified. We thank you and we pray for the leaders, both locally and nationally, that their thoughts and their actions might be a symbolism of who You are in Your love for us. We ask it all in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in thanking the members of the Department of Massachusetts Color Guard for posting the colors. (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, what you see around you today and what you will experience over the course of this special event is the result of teamwork, pride, and dedication by you, the Disabled American Veterans and Auxiliary.

In its eighty-four years, the DAV has been blessed with spirited and dynamic leadership. The wisdom and vision has guided, driven and inspired, and this year's national convention is certainly no exception.

Rising to the challenge of this role for the 83rd DAV National Convention is David Wyble. David is a resident of nearby Carson City, and in these parts Carson City is just around the corner from Reno, even though that's thirty-two miles due south.

He is the commander of the Department of Nevada, a Vietnam veteran. David retired from the Marine Corps to pursue his career in corrections until his medical retirement in 1997. Long active in veterans' organizations, David is a member of Chapter 7 in Nevada.

He has previously served in the department as junior and senior Vice-Commander and has served in his chapter as commander, adjutant and treasurer.

He is currently the recipient of the Legion of Honor from the Chapel of the Four Chaplains. Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to present to you the Convention Chairman, David Wyble. (Applause)

MR. DAVID W. WYBLE, SR.: Thank you for that warm introduction. National Commander Bowers, National Adjutant Wilson, department and chapter leaders, honored guests, friends, and delegates to the 83rd Convention of the Disabled American Veterans, on behalf of the Department of Nevada and its more than 7,500 proud members, as well as the Department of Nevada's Auxiliary and its 505 members, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the city of Reno and the 83rd National Convention.

I know that we have a great deal of work to conduct during this convention, but you should take time out to enjoy the beauty that the west has to offer you. Besides great sunsets and desert beauty, Reno offers the richness of Lake Tahoe and the sublime Truckee River right here in town.

Reno has just completed a beautiful walkway so that you can walk along this historic river and enjoy both the calm strength and splashing rapids. Lake Tahoe is only forty-five minutes away, and Virginia City isn't far, but it will take you back to the Wild West. Time permitting, enjoy the Ponderosa Ranch, where many of the episodes of the TV show "Bonanza" were filmed and try to see our state capital, Carson City.

Immediately following our national convention, Reno kicks off its annual Hot August Nights Celebration. Tonight you can enjoy the closing night of our town by seeing a free concert featuring Big Kahuna and the Copa Cat Pack on stage in Wingfield Park.

Harris Plaza is offering the free Culinary Arts Festival today where you can sample the best of Reno's fine restaurants, and for a small price you can see Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus at the Blue Cub Theatre at the corner of First and Virginia Streets.

Right here in the hotel, you can purchase tickets to hear the Seattle-based rock band, Heart, featuring Anne and Nancy Wilson in the Hilton Theater. So there's plenty to do, and Reno and the great state of Nevada are pleased that you are all here again.

Enjoy your time here, conduct the outstanding business of our organization and enjoy the wonders of the west here in Reno, the Biggest Little City in the World.

I want to thank Commander Bowers for giving me the honor of serving as the 83rd National Convention Chairman; and on behalf of the Department of Nevada, I wish you a productive and informative convention.

In closing, Commander Bowers, one thing we know here in Nevada, we know who gambles and who doesn't, and we know that you don't gamble, so we're going to give you a little token from the Department of Nevada and Auxiliary, an 1878 silver dollar that had been minted in Carson City, Nevada. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Robert A. Cashell was elected Mayor of Reno in November, 2002. He served as Lieutenant Governor of Nevada from 1982 to 1986 and on the University of Nevada System's Board of Regents from 1979 to 1982.

He has over thirty-five years in entrepreneurial, executive and governmental experience throughout Nevada. He is chairman of the board of the Cashell Enterprises, a hotel, casino, and restaurant management company.

He has been married over thirty-five years with four children and eight grandchildren. Bob and Nancy Cashell came to Reno in 1964. Ladies and gentlemen, here to welcome us to the city of Reno is The Honorable Robert A. Cashell. (Applause)

MAYOR ROBERT A. CASHELL: Thank you very much. It's a great honor for me to be here to welcome to you to the great city, the Biggest Little City in the World. We appreciate your coming. We're very happy you came. We have a beautiful new Nevada Museum of Art, and I hope you get out and have a chance to see it.

Don't let them lock you up in here. You don't have to stay in your hotel the whole time. Get out and see what's around. We have beautiful ski resorts, Lake Tahoe. The chairman before me gave my whole speech, so I won't give you a lot of it. (Laughter) I'm not following him again. But, really, welcome to Reno.

You know, I saw some of you outside back where they have those machines and tables, and you're rubbing your head and you're looking around and you're feeling bad.

Look, folks, you left a little deposit there, but I want you to know that goes to educate our children. (Laughter) So that will make you feel better, and the kids are doing real well. (Laughter)

On behalf of the city of Reno, I want to say thank you to all of you for your service and your dedication to your country. Welcome to Reno. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

(Whereupon, a video was shown.)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Gary Sinise will forever be remembered as Lieutenant Dan in the 1994 film classic, "Forest Gump." He's a good friend of the DAV and a tireless supporter of our military. Sinise recently completed his sixth USO tour, taking his Lt. Dan Band around the United States, performing for the men and women in uniform. Look for Gary in the new crime series "CSI: New York" that's premiering on CBS.

MR. ROB LEWIS: And now let's meet your DAV National Officers. At the Past National Commander Position, from beautiful Mechanic Falls, Maine, a rousing welcome for Ed Heath. (Applause)

The pride of Grand Forks, North Dakota, our National Judge Advocate, Mike Dobmeier. (Applause)

Your National 4th Junior Vice-Commander from Des Plains, Illinois, let's hear it for Raymond Dempsey. (Applause)

Your National 3rd Junior Vice-Commander, a native of Arlington Virginia, Robert Reynolds. (Applause)

Your National 2nd Junior Vice-Commander, from Tualatin, Oregon, please give it up for Brad Barton. (Applause)

Your 1st Junior Vice-Commander, from Colorado Springs, Colorado, a rousing welcome for Paul Jackson. (Applause)

Last, but certainly not least, your National Senior Vice-

Commander, from Apopka, Florida, please welcome Jim Sursely. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Senior Vice-Commander James E. Sursely assumed the Chair.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER JAMES E. SURSELY: Each year it is the pleasure of the National Senior Vice-Commander to introduce the National Commander for the purpose of presenting his report to the convention delegates.

This honor falls on me this year, and I am very proud to introduce a man who has continued the finest tradition of this great organization, a man whose dedication to the DAV stands as an inspiring example of leadership to all of us.

I have found National Commander Bowers to be a man of purpose, a man of commitment and someone who is completely dedicated to the service we offer to America's disabled veterans. It is my pleasure and a genuine honor to present to you Alan W. Bowers, National Commander of the Disabled American Veterans. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, Jim. Thank you for that kind introduction. Again, good morning. I want to thank all of you for making the journey here to conduct the business of the Disabled American Veterans at this 83rd National Convention.

I can tell you from first-hand perspective we're just getting better. I hope you attended the Board of Directors meeting yesterday. We took a look back at ten years of our history, only ten years, but the last ten years, and it's no coincidence that this is Art Wilson's tenth year as our National Adjutant. (Applause)

I can tell you that Art is a great National Adjutant. After seeing the presentations by Executive Directors Rick Patterson and Dave Gorman, we have a lot to be very, very proud of, but we still have a lot of work to do in the future.

If you saw that presentation before the Board of Directors, you know that DAV etched into our history one of the finest decades, one of the finest we could have hoped for.

Our record of service to disabled veterans and their families is without equal. We have so much to be proud of, and we did it together, the national staff, you, the leaders of the DAV, and our million members back home. We did it together.

Our last decade of service has been outstanding. The Mobile Office Service Program, MSOs; the TSOs, the Transition Program, as well as our super corps of national service officers has kept our steadfast focus and advocacy on service to enhance the lives of disabled veterans.

It is a remarkable story of success, and it has all taken place in the last ten years. I'm proud to have been proud of that as your national officer; and as I look to my successors over the next decade, I know that an even greater record of service will be written by them. I know this because we are, without question, the finest veterans' service organization in the world. (Applause)

We've got a new generation of disabled veterans coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan, and I don't have to tell you that defending our nation's interest in these troubled nations has been costly.

We have more than 5,000 combat casualties and more than 11,000 non-combat injuries and illnesses. Those have resulted in disabilities. These men and women are coming home and they will need our help.

I'm proud to tell you that last month DAV hired its first veterans of the Iraq and Afghan wars as national service officers, and there will be more coming. (Applause)

Among those to report are Victor Thibeault in Philadelphia,

Steven Clark in Tampa and Karlo Sarmiento in Newark, and we do welcome them to the NSO Corps. (Applause)

By the time that this convention is over, I will no longer be your National Commander. Other than presiding over this convention, this is my last address to you, and I see this as an opportunity to share with you some of my experiences over this past year.

I can tell you without question that we are the most effective veterans' service organization in the world. (Applause) We have done this by staying focused on our central mission to build better lives for disabled veterans and their families.

As I look over this last year as your National Commander, I am truly awed by the programs we have to support our nation's disabled veterans.

So many times I have witnessed firsthand the kindnesses and compassions shown by our outstanding professional service officers. Our nation's veterans have no greater friend, no greater supporter than our NSOs.

Many times the NSOs are the first contacts that veteran sees or has anything to do with the DAV. Young men and women in our Corps of NSOs represent this organization honorably and professionally.

Initially, the Department of Defense was reluctant to allow us to have contact with the injured veterans at Walter Reed Medical Center. They had privacy and security issues and concerns.

The efforts by our professional leadership in Washington tore down those barriers, and now the NSOs have unfettered access to these soldiers and Marines who do need our help. (Applause)

An NSO was with me when we visited some of the wounded soldiers from Iraq at the Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington; and as I spoke to our newest generation of the wounded, I consistently saw the good work performed.

The needs of those injured men and women are being met by the NSOs, and I'm proud to tell you that your support has been needed by those soldiers and Marines, and your DAV has been brilliantly successful in helping them.

I remember one soldier at Walter Reed. He had been officially listed as "deceased". He didn't have enough money to buy a candy bar. The DAV stepped in, offered him some help and got the situation straightened out until the pay thing was restored.

I had an opportunity to visit with many of the young men and women. We went from ward to ward to offer that message of hope and compassion, and they got the message that the DAV is here to help them.

The message got around. It went from soldier to soldier, from Marine to Marine. The DAV cares, and the DAV will help. My most lasting memory as your National Commander was when I visited Walter Reed, because it brought back memories of my own hospitalization.

The medical equipment was more modern. The health care was excellent, just as it was when I was hospitalized. But you know what? I saw in the eyes of some of those men and women, those injured soldiers and Marines, pain, despair, and even fear. But every day the DAV is there offering confidence and optimism.

The DAV NSOs restore hope and lift their spirits so that they can endure the pain. Both our NSOs and the young soldiers and Marines are remarkable, the young soldiers and Marines for their courage, for their sacrifice, and our NSOs for their dedication and compassion.

I deeply enjoyed visiting with more than seventy-five of those wounded from Walter Reed, who came to our National Headquarters in Washington, D.C., for a reception.

They told me their stories, and they told me how grateful they were for the DAV. We were there when they needed us. I was able to offer them confidence and hope, hope in the future. These wonderful young men and women will have a future.

On a personal note, I was touched as I talked with the young men and women, the soldiers of Iraq and Afghanistan. In so many of those wounds, they're grievous, they're ugly.

You know, the new body armor, it does save lives, but it doesn't protect their head and their arms and their legs. Those remain exposed. Many of the soldiers and Marines are now amputees. But they are alive, and they are eager to make an impact on live. They are an inspiration.

The events that have occurred since you elected me National Commander have been momentous, but at times they've been disappointing. I met with the President of the United States, President Bush, and I urged him to support full funding for VA health care. (Applause)

We did not get the support of the Administration for full funding of VA health care, but our efforts will continue. (Applause)

Senator Tom Daschle offered an amendment to a defense appropriation bill for full funding of VP health care, and it actually passed. It actually won by 49 to 48. But because of the process in the Senate, it needed a super majority, and we did not get that.

We failed by eleven votes. Had we had the necessary sixty votes, we would have had a giant step forward for full funding for VA health care and the rest of the legislative process.

This proposal will come up again. The grassroots members of the DAV, you, will make it a reality. (Applause) It will be your phone calls, your e-mails, your letters, your telegrams. They have in the past made a difference, and this time they will make the difference. (Applause)

I was grateful and humbled by the tremendous support given me by the DAV membership when I addressed the Joint House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees in Washington, D.C., during the mid-winter conference in February.

Being on the point of our organization is a wonderful experience if you have the strong, vocal backing of hundreds of DAV members. You were there for me. Thank you for your support and thank you for your grassroots efforts and for your leadership, for your leadership in urging members of Congress about our legislative programs.

I want to thank National Adjutant Art Wilson for his friendship as well as his leadership; his leadership not only over the last year, but through all the years he has served the DAV, and especially for the last ten years that he has served as National Adjutant. And to Sandy and Sally, a truly marvelous thank you. (Applause)

Thanks also to Executive Directors Rick Patterson and Dave Gorman and to their staffs at Cincinnati and Washington. They do an outstanding job. They covered every base for me every single time. (Applause)

We're going to see some of their work at this convention, and we are going to find out how we can help advance issues through the participation in our legislative action, and your participation is still paramount.

I got first-hand experience in the outreach programs. I attended an air show where we told the story of the DAV to thousands of individuals about our mission of service and our

mission of hope.

I actually got to fly in that B-25, the Panchito, the restored World War II bomber. As that plane was on display, I watched the NSOs help those veterans in the crowd with information that they needed.

It was an incredible experience, and it is a remarkable program. What an innovative way to communicate the story of the DAV.

Perhaps one of the most historic experiences that I had was during the dedication of the World War II Memorial on Memorial Day. That was in Washington, D.C., and the city was filled with hundreds of thousands of World War II veterans and their families.

The memorial dedication was beautiful. As a matter of a fact, it was awe inspiring. It is a beautiful memorial to the greatest generation. (Applause)

The DAV topped off that day with a spectacular reception for more than a thousand members and their families. It was like stepping back in history.

Bob Dole spoke to us, and many of those World War II veterans danced to the big band sound. It was a fitting tribute to all veterans.

Before I leave this podium, I need to thank some special folks, because as I started this journey, I did so as a state officer in Massachusetts, and if I could ask all the Massachusetts delegates to please stand. (Applause) Thank you.

A special thanks to Commander Leo Mooney and to Adjutant Tom Daley, and so I won't get into a lot of trouble, let me also thank the most important person in my life, Teri. (Applause)

As I complete this year of service, I'm reminded of President Reagan's last address in which he summed up eight years in office. I can't compete with the speech he said euphemistically. If I remember correctly, he said, "All in all, not bad."

I can't compete with eight years of service by the President of the United States, but I can look back over the year as your National Commander and I can say the same, "All in all, not bad. (Standing Ovation)

Seven years in the seat of the national line, including NEC, at every convention, at every conference, and you will know that because I've been at your conventions and your conferences, I've ended by saying to each and every one of you thank you for all you do for the DAV. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER SURSELY: Commander Bowers, Alan, your leadership and devotion to the DAV will long be remembered, and we thank you for your service. At this time, I move to accept the National Commander's report.

MR. RAYMOND RICHARDS: Raymond Richards, Chapter 6, Milford, Massachusetts, proud home of our Commander, Alan Bowers, motions to accept the Commander's report.

MR. JOHN HOGAN: Comrade Commander, John Hogan, Chapter 13, Massachusetts, seconds the motion.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you. We have a motion and second. All those in favor, signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. (Applause)

We're going to take about a one-minute break. Just stay in place, if you would, waiting for our special guest to arrive. Thank you.

(Whereupon, Commander Bowers resumed the Chair.)

COMMANDER BOWERS: At this time, I would like to recognize the governing body of this organization, our National Executive Committee. Gentlemen, would you please rise to be recognized. (Applause)

Vice President Dick Cheney has had a distinguished career as a businessman and public servant, serving four presidents and as a member of Congress. In 1969 he joined the Nixon administration; and when Gerald Ford assumed the presidency in August of 1974, Mr. Cheney served on the transition team.

In November 1975 he was named White House Chief of Staff. Mr. Cheney was elected to Congress in 1978 and served with great distinction in the House of Representatives.

Under the first President Bush, Mr. Cheney served as Secretary of Defense and played a major role in the Gulf War. For his leadership in that conflict, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

He became Vice President in January 2001 and has since continued his service to our nation. Ladies and gentlemen, it is with distinct pleasure that I introduce the Vice President of the United States, the Honorable Dick Cheney. (Applause)

THE HONORABLE RICHARD B. CHENEY: Thank you all very much and thank you for that warm welcome. It's great to be here, and I want to thank Commander Bowers for that introduction.

I brought two guests with me today. My wife, Lynn, down here in the front row is traveling with us. (Applause) And next to her is somebody you may recognize is Al Simpson, a former senator from Wyoming, former chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee in the United States Senate when he had honest work. (Applause)

Lynn and I have been looking forward to joining you today for this convention, and I'm delighted to see Tony Principi here. (Applause) He does a superb job for all of us. Congressman Jim Gibbons is here, of course, too, from Reno. (Applause) I get the opportunity to work with Jim because he's a very important member of the House Intelligence Committee and does great work for all of us.

But I'm grateful, above all, to the leaders of the DAV for giving me the privilege of standing before so many American heroes and their families and those who advocate for them.

When dangerous enemies threatened our freedom, you stepped forward to serve. You put on our nation's uniform and stood ready to give your lives in defense of your fellow citizens.

Your courage helped liberate millions suffering tyranny and persecution, and your determination secured a future of freedom for the American people.

Our nation is grateful for your service and sacrifice. I'm honored to be in your presence, and I bring you greetings from our Commander in Chief, President George W. Bush. (Applause)

We owe so much to all of our nation's 25 million veterans, but we owe a special debt to those veterans who returned from war with injuries and disabilities.

You have a special place in the hearts of the American people. Because of your wounds, you bear the price of freedom each and every day; and on behalf of a grateful nation, I'm here today to thank you for all you have given for the peace of the world and the security of our nation. (Applause)

The DAV is one of America's great organizations, founded eighty-four years ago after the end of World War I; and given the honor of speaking at this convention, I cannot let the occasion pass without noting the recent loss of one of your earliest members.

He was Al Pugh from the state of Maine who fought with the 77th Infantry in France and was disabled for life by a mustard gas attack in the Argon Forest.

He was a man with a strong spirit, a good heart and a great sense of humor. Al was often asked how he managed to live so long, and he said, "Because the Lord ain't ready for me and the

Devil won't have me". (Laughter)

Al Pugh was the last known surviving combat-wounded veteran of the First World War. He lived until just before his 109th birthday, and his passing marks the end of an era. The United States of America honors his memory. (Applause)

Those of who served our nation so courageously in uniform continue to serve in civilian life. Each year volunteers from the Disabled American Veterans contribute nearly 2 million hours of their time, helping patients at VA medical facilities across America, transporting sick and disabled veterans to and from their medical appointments, counseling and consoling families and running the DAV's annual winter sports clinic, which assists in the physical rehabilitation of handicapped veterans.

Through these acts of compassion, you show that while America's enemies may have injured your bodies, they could not weaken your spirit or dim your love of country and your commitment to others. (Applause)

By serving others, you carry on a long tradition that began with the founding members of this organization. Since then, each generation of disabled veterans has offered a helping hand to the next generation of wounded heroes returning home from battle, and today, as American's return from the first war of the 21st century, you are reaching out to them and offering compassionate assistance.

Many of those returning from Afghanistan and Iraq have come home severely wounded. If they had fought with you in the wars of the 20th century, they might not have returned at all.

Advances in body armor, dramatic improvements in battlefield medicine are saving lives that would otherwise be lost in battle, and for thousands of military families this is a miracle.

But it also means that more wounded and disabled veterans will need the help of the DAV as they adjust to life back home. As Vice President, earlier as Secretary of Defense, I've had the privilege of visiting with wounded service members as they recover and their spirit is amazing.

Facing pain, difficult therapy and hard adjustments in their lives, they are upbeat, proud of their service and committed to America's mission.

Returning veterans are not only accepting your offers of assistance, but they in turn are helping others. Today your National Commander welcomed the DAV's first three national service officers from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, Victor Thibeault, Steve Clark and Karlo Sarmiento.

The American people are grateful for their service on and off the field of battle, and we thank them for joining us today. (Applause)

We can never repay our country's debt to Americans like these, who were wounded and disabled in our nation's defense. But this much we promise you. We are working everyday to improve the level of service we give disabled veterans and to ensure you that you are always given the care you deserve and the respect you have earned. (Applause)

America's veterans are a priority for President Bush. As a sign of his commitment to those who fought our nation's wars, President Bush selected a superb Secretary of Veterans Affairs, a combat-decorated Vietnam veteran named Anthony Principi. (Applause)

The President gave Tony a clear mission: Take care of the people who defended America in her hour of need. To fulfill that mission, our Administration has increased the Veterans Affairs medical care budget by more than 40 percent; and if the

President's 2005 budget request is approved by Congress, we will have increased spending for our nation's veterans by $22 billion in the last four years, more than double the growth in spending during the previous eight years. (Applause)

These historic increases have allowed the VA to enroll two and a half million more veterans in health care services and increase out-patient visits from 44 million to 54 million.

We've also been able to reduce the large backlog of disability claims that we found upon taking office by more than a third, and we're working to cut it even further.

We've assigned some 1,800 workers to tackle the overload; and because of their efforts, we've cut the average time it takes to process disability claims by seventy days, and we expect to cut it even more before the end of the year. (Applause)

As we've increased VA budgets, we've focused resources on the veterans who need it most, those with service-related disabilities, low incomes and special needs.

We've established a new scheduling system to make certain that veterans seeking care for a service-connected condition are first in line. Under this Administration, we're working to ensure that no veteran disabled in the service of our country will ever be turned away. (Applause)

We recognize that our nation has a special responsibility to disabled veterans; and in keeping with that responsibility, President Bush signed into law concurrent receipt legislation.

I'm also proud to report to you that since 2001 we've opened 194 new community-based clinics nationwide, and we've also taken unprecedented steps to help homeless veterans.

We've launched a $35 million program to provide permanent housing, health care and other support services to our neediest veterans, and we've expanded community grants for assistance to homeless and mentally ill veterans in all fifty states and Washington, D.C.

These veterans fought for America in sweltering heat and bitter cold in foreign lands, and they should not have to live without shelter, exposed to the elements, in the nation they served. (Applause)

President Bush also believes that veterans deserve 21st Century health care facilities. Many of our VA hospitals were built before World War II and some even before World War I.

They need modernizing, and we also need to build new ones, especially in the south and west, where increasing numbers of our veterans live.

Through the CARES Initiative, President Bush is seeking $1.5 billion dollars in 2004 and 2005 to begin to modernize VA facilities and to provide better care for veterans in areas where the need is growing, and even more money will be committed in the future.

We are working to improve care not only for our veterans, but for the families that depend on them. That is why last December President Bush signed the Veterans Benefits Act, authorizing a billion dollars in new and expanded benefits for disabled veterans, surviving spouses and their children. (Applause)

It was President Lincoln who stated our nation's pledge to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan. President Bush takes that pledge very seriously, and he is honoring it.

Our message to America's veterans is this: We are grateful for your service. We owe you our freedom. You stood by your country, and now America will stand by you. (Applause)

Through selfless service at home and abroad, veterans help

shape the character of our nation. Your courage, honor and life-long devotion to duty are an inspiration to our citizens and especially to a new generation of Americans, who are now defending the nation.

You understand better than most the kinds of risks these young Americans are taking as they fight and win the war on terror, and I know you are doubly proud of each and every one of them. (Applause)

We are living in a time of great challenge, facing an enemy today that is every bit as intent on destroying us as were the Axis powers in World War II or the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

We face an enemy that is perfectly prepared to slaughter anyone, man, woman, or child, to advance its cause. As we saw on the morning of 9/11, this is an enemy we cannot reason with, we cannot negotiate with or appease. This is, to put it bluntly, an enemy that must be vanquished. (Applause)

Under the leadership of President George W. Bush, that is exactly what we will do. (Applause) The President is leading a steady, relentless and determined war on terror, and America is safer as a result.

Consider for a moment where we were when President Bush and I took office January 20, 2001. As we were being sworn in that day, planning for the attack of 9/11 was already well underway.

Hijackers had been recruited, funds raised, training had taken place. Some of the hijackers were already in the United States. In Afghanistan, the Taliban were in power. Al-Qaida was operating training camps that in the late 1990's turned out an estimated 20,000 terrorists.

In Iraq Saddam Hussein was in power, overseeing one of the bloodiest regimes of the 20th century. He had started two wars, produced and used weapons of mass destruction and was in repeated violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions.

He was providing safe haven and sanctuary and support for terrorists and paying up to $25,000 to the families of suicide bombers.

When President Bush and I took office, there was a serious problem with proliferation, especially in the nuclear area. A man named A.Q. Khan, the individual who put Pakistan's nuclear program in place, had established a network that was providing nuclear weapons technology to rogue states, Iran, North Korea and Libya.

Moamar Khadafi, the A.Q. Khan network's biggest customer, was spending millions to acquire nuclear weapons, the basic design, the uranium feed stock and the centrifuges needed to enrich uranium.

The final problem was that the terrorists had learned two unfortunate lessons from the United States.

When President Bush and I were sworn in, there was a pattern extending back many years that had convinced our enemies that they could attack the United States with impunity.

They had attacked the World Trade Center for the first time in 1993. They attacked the Cobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996; East Africa, our embassies simultaneously in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998; and the U.S.S. Cole in 2000; and in none of these cases, did we respond very forcefully.

We treated each incident as a criminal matter, arrested a few individuals and sentenced them to long terms but didn't understand that we had a much broader problem.

Our enemies also became convinced during these years that if they attacked the United States hard enough, if they inflicted sufficient casualties, they could even get us to change policy and withdraw, as we did in Beirut in 1983 and from

Somalia, after they killed nineteen of our soldiers in Mogadishu in 1993.

From their perspective, it looked as though going after America was not only relatively painless, it was productive.

Then came September 11th, and it became clear to all of us that we were at war. Under the President's leadership, we moved to strengthen our defenses, to attack the financial networks that supported terrorists and to improve our intelligence capabilities.

No longer would attacks on America go unanswered, and no longer would America wait for the next attack. (Applause) In what will surely rank as one of the most important strategic shifts in our nation's history, the President declared that we would take the war to the enemy, and he established the Bush Doctrine, which holds that any person or regime that harbors or supports terrorists is equally guilty of terrorist crimes and will be held to account. (Applause)

In Afghanistan, where al-Qaida terrorists trained and lived, the Taliban were the first to find out exactly what that new strategy means.

Working with the Northern Alliance, we launched a military campaign of stunning effectiveness, and in a matter of weeks drove the Taliban from power, captured or killed hundreds of al-Qaida, put Osama Bin Laden on the run and closed the camps that had trained terrorists to kill Americans. (Applause)

Now a new government has been established under President Hamid Karzai in Afghanistan. The nation is being rebuilt and children are back in school. A new constitution has been written, and free elections will be held in Afghanistan this fall. (Applause)

In Iraq Saddam Hussein is in jail. (Applause) His regime is gone. His sons are dead. Sovereignty has passed to a new interim government, and elections will be held there by next January; and while a continuing U.S. and coalition presence will be required in Iraq, the Iraqis themselves are taking on more and more responsibility for their own country. (Applause)

In Libya, Moamar Khadafi, having witnessed our determination in Afghanistan and Iraq, has given up his nuclear ambitions. Five days after Saddam Hussein was captured, Colonel Khadafi announced he would turn over all of his weapons of mass destruction materials.

The designs, the uranium, the centrifuges now reside down in a U.S. facility in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. (Applause)

A.Q. Khan, the proliferator, is under house arrest in Pakistan. His network is being dismantled. The world's worst source of nuclear proliferation and of weapons technology has been shut down. (Applause)

Three years ago I think it would have been impossible to imagine these accomplishments, and our nation should be very proud of what we've done, not only because we've removed threats, but because we are helping these nations along the road to freedom.

A central fact that history teaches is that institutions of self-government turn human beings away from violence to the peaceful work of building better lives.

Democracies do not breed the anger and the radicalism that drags whole societies to export violence. Terrorists do not find fertile recruiting grounds or welcome bases of operation in societies where young people have the right to guide their own destinies and choose their own leaders.

We are safer now, but the danger to our country has not passed. Our enemies are still ruthless and determined, and they intend to strike America again, so we will continue to pursue

our enemies at home and abroad, while doing everything in our power to defend the homeland.

The war on terror has well begun, but it has only begun. Victory will take years of sustained effort and an unwavering commitment by the leaders of this nation.

In these dangerous times, we are blessed to have so many brave soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marine and Coast Guardsmen who have stepped forward to wear the uniform.

And before I close, I want to tell you the story of just one of these courageous Americans. Four years ago today on July 31, 2000, a young man named Jason Dunham joined the United States Marine Corps. He joined Company K, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, as a machine gunner and went to serve in Iraq.

His enlistment was supposed to end last June, but he voluntarily extended because he loved his country, believed in his mission and wanted to stay with his fellow Marines and see the job through.

On April 14 of this year, Corporal Dunham was manning a roadside checkpoint when a suspicious car approached. Suddenly a man burst from the vehicle and began sprinting away. Corporal Dunham went after him. In full combat gear, he caught the man and tackled him to the ground.

A moment later, as other Marines arrived to assist, the man took a grenade out of his pocket and pulled the pin. Without hesitating, Corporal Dunham dove on top of the grenade just before it went off, absorbing most of the blast with his own body and saving the lives of his fellow Marines. He died ten days later of his wounds.

At a memorial service a few days later, more than 500 of his fellow service members gathered to pay their last respects. They lined up one by one to kiss his helmet and say farewell to a hero from their ranks.

His death brought sorrow to his fellow Marines, but pride as well. As one of Corporal Dunham's comrades put it, this generation of Marines is as good as any generation we've ever had in the Corps. (Applause)

Our nation is free today because every generation since the War of Independence has produced heroes like Corporal Dunham, those willing to give up their own lives so that others can live in freedom. Each of you here today knows such heroes, friends or family who served in battle, but never returned.

We remember their service and we honor their names, just as we remember the thousands like them last seen doing their duty whose fate is still undetermined.

The best way we can honor Americans like Corporal Dunham and all those who have served and sacrificed in the war we face today is to complete the mission to protect our people, defend our freedom, and secure a future of peace for the United States of America, and that is exactly what we intend to do. Thank you very much. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Mr. Vice President, thank you for your remarks. (Applause) We're going to need to stand fast for just a few moments while some rearrangements are made on the podium, so hang loose for just a few minutes.

(Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats. When President Bush was deciding who should head the VA during his Administration, he knew he would need someone with a firm hand to take the reins of the VA and someone with considerable experience and an intimate knowledge of veterans affairs.

There could only be a handful of people who could fill that bill, so it's not surprising that he named Anthony Principi as

Secretary of Veterans Affairs. (Applause)

A life member of DAV Chapter 2 in San Diego, Secretary Principi most certainly has a great deal of experience and knowledge in veterans' affairs.

In 1984 to 1988, Mr. Principi was chief counsel and staff director of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. He then served as Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs from 1989 until 1992 and was named acting secretary, holding that post until January of 1993.

Secretary Principi is a combat-decorated Navy veteran of the Vietnam War. He graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1967 and then served aboard the destroyer U.S.S. Joseph P. Kennedy and commanded a riverboat patrol unit in the Mekong River Delta in Vietnam.

So, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honor and a privilege to introduce a friend and steadfast advocate of all veterans, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Anthony Principi. (Standing Ovation)

THE HONORABLE ANTHONY J. PRINCIPI: Thank you very, very much. Thank you, Commander Bowers. Congressman Gibbons, National Adjutant Wilson, national officers of the DAV and DAV Auxiliary, my friend, Dave Gorman, Rich Patterson, my fellow DAV members, ladies, and gentlemen, over the past year, I've come to know National Commander Alan Bowers, and I have found a man courageous in Vietnam, whose values was shaped by his experiences, who has brought to this great organization such wonderful leadership, and very importantly, he's a very kind and decent man, and I'm proud to call him my friend and to thank him for all he has done as VA's partner over the past year. Thank you, Commander. (Applause)

I want to express my thanks to Congressman Gibbons, a fighter pilot during the Vietnam War, who continued to serve his country in the Guard, and flew over Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm, a member of the Armed Services Committee caring for our men and women in uniform, Intelligence Committee, a member of the Homeland Security Committee and truly a staunch advocate for our nation's veterans. Thank you, Congressman Gibbons. (Applause)

And, of course, to the wonderful leadership under Art Wilson, Dave Gorman, Rich Patterson and your Washington staff, whom I have the privilege to work with.

Indeed, any progress we've made is because of the great, great leadership and the great support that they have given to me and to my people, and I thank them for all they've done.

I have a wonderfully prepared speech, but earlier this morning I decided that I just wouldn't deliver this speech, and I would speak from the heart to my friends and my comrades in the DAV.

I want you to know how very, very proud I am to be your Secretary, how very humbled I am to be your Secretary, because I think the men and women in this room, the men and women of the DAV individually and collectively, truly represent what it means to be an American. (Applause)

You have given so much. You have been willing to lay down your lives so that others could be free. You suffered disabilities in wartime and in peace, and very importantly, you came home and you continued to serve.

You continued to serve your communities, your fellow veterans and your nation, and I think you are a reflection of the greatness of America. You are the bedrock of America.

Your volunteerism across this great nation, as the Vice President indicated, the millions of hours that you have given to my department, incalculable if we were to try to fund those

hours, the number of veterans you have made possible to gain access to the VA health care system, so, indeed, I am very, very humbled to be your Secretary.

I want to thank you for being our partner, because if we have made any progress over the past three and a half years, and I think we have, it's because of you, because you have been our advocates.

You have been there working with us day in and day out to revolutionize the delivery of benefits and services to our nation's veterans.

I know and I appreciate your concerns about the funding, because I have the same concerns, and we need to work together to identify the right model, the right formula to ensure that our health care system and our benefits delivery system is adequately funded to meet this ever-growing demand for health care.

But I also want you to understand and know that because of your advocacy, support from the President and members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, our budget has gone up, and I'm very, very proud of that.

When I became Secretary, my budget stood at $48 billion, a sizable amount of money, and today it's about $65 billion, and in 2005 it will go up to almost $70 billion, and you made it possible. (Applause)

Your advocacy made it possible, and we need to continue to work together to make that happen. Because of that, one million more veterans, many disabled, have come into the VA health care system, and that's a good thing. (Applause)

Earlier the Vice President also mentioned the modernization of the VA health care system, and I can think of no more important undertaking than building a blueprint, a roadmap, for the future to ensure that 21st Century veterans, you and those coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan, have access to 21st Century facilities.

We need to build new hospitals in places like Nevada and Florida. We need to modernize our infrastructure in the middle part of this country. We need to build more spinal cord injury units, blind rehabilitation centers.

We need to open up more community-based outpatient clinics over the next several years so that veterans do not have to drive hour after hour to get into the VA. They can do it in their communities.

We need to be more of a patient-focused health care system than a hospital-centered health care system. I know it entails difficult decisions, but if we're true to our veterans, we need to undertake this important, important modernization effort.

I thank the DAV for working closely with me and my staff to ensure that we do it in the right way, and I promise you I will not change the mission of a hospital or close down an old facility until I'm absolutely convinced that there is a receiving facility in that community to take care of those veterans in a modern facility. (Applause)

You know that one of my highest priorities as Secretary has been to reduce the enormous backlog of disability claims, claims for pensions, death gratuities. Again, I think working closely with the DAV and the national service officers, the transition assistance officers, we have made great progress.

As Robert Frost said, we have miles to go before we sleep. But we have been fortunate in reducing the time it takes to get a decision and reducing the backlog.

I'm very proud that our people throughout our regional offices have increased our productivity from 40,000 decisions a month to close to 70,000 decisions a month.

We've done that through better training, better accountability, more people, and we need to continue to stay on course so that no veteran waits more than a hundred days for a decision on a new or a reopened claim for disability compensation. (Applause)

Finally, we need to honor our dead in national shrines, and I'm very proud that the President and the Congress have authorized me to open up eleven new national cemeteries between now and 2009.

By the end of next year, we'll open up five new national cemeteries, and then the following six by 2009; and when we're completed, we will have expanded our national cemetery system by 85 percent, the greatest expansion since the Civil War, because, unfortunately, so many of our comrades are passing on, and we need to have internment space so they rest in honored glory in one of our national shrines. (Applause)

In closing, I just wanted to say that I returned from Iraq a short time ago, and I was so very, very proud to be with this magnificent cadre of men and women in uniform.

I always believed that I fought with the best in Vietnam; and although I still believe that in my heart, I know that the men and women in harm's way today in Iraq and Afghanistan are the best our nation has ever had in uniform. (Applause)

They are smarter, they are courageous, and they are very compassionate. While I was there, a car bomb exploded outside the gate, and these young soldiers immediately rushed to the aid of these fallen Iraqis.

I watched this young soldier embrace the son, whose father was killed, the kind of images you don't always see on television or the media. But they are truly doing a magnificent job.

The Iraqis are so grateful to them, and we need to be there for them, and you held the torch of freedom high. You saved our world countless times, and you've passed that torch of freedom on to a new generation of warriors, who are serving this nation with such distinction and valor.

I promise you we will be there for them when they come home. God Bless you, God Bless our nation and the men and women who defend us. Thank you. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for those gracious remarks.

It is my honor once again to share the platform with DAV National Auxiliary Commander Janet Bennett. (Applause)

During my term as National Commander, I've had the pleasure of seeing her exemplify the love, the leadership and the dedication that so ably guides the Auxiliary throughout the past year.

As my Auxiliary counterpart, Jan has impressed me time and again with her untiring dedication, her limitless compassion and her capable leadership of the Auxiliary.

Commander Bennett and I have shared some travels and some experiences during our term, and I can tell you without reservation that this wonderful woman has dedicated herself to helping families of disabled veterans and has magnificently represented the Auxiliary.

Here to deliver her report to the National Convention is my friend, a truly exceptional woman, DAVA's National Commander, Janet Bennett. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER JANET BENNETT: Good morning. Thank you, Commander Bowers, very much for that lovely speech. Due to a medical problem that I have with my eyes and I can't read very well, I have asked our National Auxiliary Adjutant Maria Tedrow if she would please read for me. I hope that you all understand

that. Maria, would you please come forward. (Applause)

ADJUTANT MARIA TEDROW: Thank you, Jan. Last year we elected Jan Bennett as our National Commander, and she has had her own battles that she has fought bravely this year.

But never once has she shirked from her responsibilities, and she has been a great leader of this organization and has served it with dignity and grace. (Applause) I want you to remember that this is her message, and I am honored to be the messenger.

Thank you, Commander, for your kind introduction and for the opportunity I have had to serve with you this past year. It has been a truly amazing experience, made even more so by your leadership, your warm kindness, and sincere consideration.

I must also add that it is especially nice of you to hold the National Convention in the city where I live. But as everyone knows, you are just such a gentleman. (Applause)

Good morning, national officers, past national commanders, distinguished guests, delegates, and members of the Disabled American Veterans and Auxiliary at this, our 83rd National Convention here in my hometown, the Biggest Little City in the World, Reno, Nevada. (Applause)

I stand before you today honored to say in spirit we stand united as never before, building better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families. (Applause)

Helping to build better lives for those we care about so deeply is a special group of hard-working, dedicated and loving women, who have assisted me in guiding our Auxiliary so productively through the past year.

Please hold your applause until I have introduced all of them:

National Senior Vice-Commander Gertrude Tidwell of Oklahoma; National 1st Junior Vice-Commander Judy Steinhouse, North Dakota; National 2nd Junior Vice-Commander Donna Tanner of Massachusetts; National 3rd Junior Vice-Commander Catherine Wiley of Washington; National 4th Junior Vice-Commander Susan Henry of Tennessee; National Chaplain Donna Stennett of California; Immediate Past National Commander Linda Trulio of New Jersey; National Assistant Adjutant Judy Hezlep of Ohio; and National Adjutant and Past National Commander Maria Tedrow of Ohio. (Applause)

Also, on this stage are Past National Commander Lucille McCarthy, who will be making a presentation later this morning; Auxiliary State Department of South Carolina 1st Junior Lindsey Helms; and the Auxiliary National Convention Chairman, Helen Parsell, past state commander from Nevada. Thank you so much, ladies. (Applause)

Additionally, seated in front of me are the Auxiliary National Executive Committee women. Ladies, please stand and be recognized. (Applause) For all you do, thank you, ladies.

The tremendous dedication to aiding and assisting disabled veterans and their families by members in Auxiliary units nationwide is amazing and effective.

Auxiliary members are with them every step of the way. We know the pain disabled veterans suffer, and we stand united to nurture their needs and make a difference in their lives every single day. (Applause)

The Auxiliary is determined to continue its efforts to grow into a larger and more effective membership dedicated to doing its part to protect and improve the benefits and services depended on by those who were disabled while serving this nation.

We have just concluded a highly productive membership year alongside the DAV, working together to build better lives for

America's disabled veterans and their families.

We have demonstrated how working together we can build formidable legislative strengths to protect and to improve the benefits, the services and the programs our families need.

By our example, those who need us most have learned they can depend on us to be there for them. Auxiliary members are always busy assisting our dedicated legislative team at the DAV National Service and Legislative Headquarters when they call on us.

Our legislative team can depend on us to make telephone calls, write letters, send e-mails and personally visit our elected leaders, calling for their support of legislation that will benefit veterans and their families.

I was honored to join DAV members at the presentation table as Commander Bowers addressed the Joint Veterans Affairs Committee in our nation's capital last year.

Listening to his presentation, it was apparent the battle for veterans' benefits isn't over. There is so much more to be accomplished, and I can assure you the Auxiliary will stand firm with the DAV until victory is ours. (Applause)

As we continue the battle for benefits and services, Auxiliary members continue to volunteer at VA hospitals and other medical facilities providing care and comfort to hospitalized veterans within our communities.

Auxiliary members also serve as volunteer drivers, operating DAV Transportation Network vans donated to the VA. These vans and volunteer drivers make sure sick and disabled veterans get to and from VA medical facilities for needed care.

Using our Americanism Program as an effective outreach tool, the Auxiliary is successful in instilling respect for veterans and a better understanding of patriotism within our communities and especially to countless youth in schools and youth programs. It is indeed a worthy program.

During my year as your Auxiliary National Commander, I have witnessed Auxiliary members making positive differences in the lives of disabled veterans and their families.

I have seen the positive impacts the Auxiliary Service Support Program has on women who have no place left to turn. The donors who support this service demonstrate their limitless capacity for kindness to women who need it most. Through the continued support of this program, widows and women with children continue to have a place to turn for help. Auxiliary members who support this program can certainly be proud of what their support is accomplishing, and I encourage all to support this worthy cause.

Though my health prevented me from attending the National Disabled Veterans Ski Clinic in Colorado this year, I saw inspiring photographs of seriously disabled veterans skiing and participating in various programs many of them would never have dreamed possible before attending the clinic.

I also heard countless stories of the great good we do in helping to sponsor this life-changing event that affects the lives of hundreds of seriously disabled veterans each year.

There were a number of recently disabled veterans at the Winter Sports Clinic this year, veterans who had been disabled in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are reminders that our work is far from done.

The work we do today has an even more far-reaching and profound effect on the well-being of these most recently disabled veterans; and although I was not able to attend the Sports Clinic, we were well represented by our National VAVS Representative, Carrie Hurley.

Rest assured that the DAV Auxiliary will be there alongside

the DAV, forging the strength to implement and support our programs that assist disabled veterans and their families throughout our nation today and as far into the future as we are needed.

Though my health, again, prevented me from attending, I was also deeply moved, as I joined millions of Americans to watch the televised dedication of the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

In that time and place, it was easy to realize the great sacrifice of our nation's veterans. Thousands of World War II veterans were on hand to see and to celebrate the memorial their nation had dedicated to their service.

Many bore the physical scars of that terrible war, but all bore its memories. It is the reality of physical scars and the memory of forgotten promises that brings us to this 83rd National Convention of the DAV and Auxiliary.

This is where the DAV and Auxiliary establishes the future of our organization. This is where building better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families grow stronger than ever before.

In closing, I am happy to announce the Auxiliary has grown in strength with the addition of the great state of Hawaii as the newest Auxiliary state department. (Applause)

I wish to congratulate Hawaii and to all the members of this great organization for your truly dedicated work. God Bless all the members of this organization and God Bless America. Thank you. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you, Maria, I really appreciate it. Also now, I would like to ask Commander Bowers if he would come forward, please.

On behalf of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary, I would like to present you with this wonderful plaque to a wonderful and gentle man. (Applause) I'm going to let him read what it says, please.

COMMANDER BOWERS: It reads, "Presented to Alan W. Bowers, National Commander, in appreciation of distinguished service to the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary, 2003-2004, and it's signed by both Jan and Maria. Terrific! Thank you very much. (Applause)

Many of you will recall that in June of 2003, the Ford Motor Company celebrated its 100th anniversary. To help commemorate that milestone, the DAV's national organization and its departments and chapters donated a record 211 new Ford vans to the VA to provide transportation for sick and disabled veterans to medical facilities in forty-two states. (Applause)

While it's not a record setter, this year's donation is 144 new Ford vans. That is a substantial effort and it represents an investment of more than $2.6 million. (Applause)

The combined total of all vans donated since 1987 to VA medical centers nationwide now stands at 1,549 with a total value of more than $31 million. (Applause)

I think you, like me, could not help but see the Ford vans adorning the convention area today. They're beautiful vehicles and they will serve a worthy purpose.

Joining us today from the Ford Motor Company with some important news about these vehicles, as well as some good news, is Mr. Dennis Cirbes. He is the Vice President of Labor Affairs for the Ford Motor Company.

Mr. Cirbes oversees labor policy and negotiations covering the company's approximately 235,000 hourly employees nationwide. He has the responsibility for health care management in the company's collective bargaining with unions worldwide.

Mr. Cirbes joined Ford Motor Company in 1972 and during his

career has held various managerial positions in personnel planning and industrial relations, including several plant labor positions.

He is a native of Cleveland, Ohio, and he joins us today with his lovely wife, Carol. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm DAV welcome to Dennis Cirbes. (Applause)

MR. DENNIS CIRBES: Thank you, Alan, for that kind introduction. I wish he hadn't reminded me of 1972, but that's okay. I would like to extend my welcome to Reno. It's a pleasure to be here today at the 83rd Annual DAV National Convention.

I'm honored to represent Ford Motor Company at this year's event. For eighty-two years Ford has had a relationship with the DAV. Henry Ford and Ford Motor Company first partnered with this great organization in 1922 during the DAV's 2nd National Convention.

In fact, Henry himself organized the cross-country caravan to transport veterans to that event.

Bill Ford, our present Chairman and CEO, also believes it is important to support organizations like the DAV whose work and initiatives help to build better communications for all of us.

We're committed to improving the quality of life and the opportunities for all of the people who live and work in the communities where we do business.

We hope that our continued relationship with the DAV will help both of us to accomplish this together. We know that what you do is extremely valuable, and that is why we have supported your efforts through vehicle donations, scholarship programs and special purchase programs.

For 101 years now, Ford has manufactured cars and trucks that have helped to revolutionize transportation across the globe. Ford has played an integral role in shaping how transportation affects all of our lives.

Over the years, Ford has enabled people to travel further and to do more, basically to broaden their horizons in ways they never thought possible.

Our involvement with the DAV also has grown and evolved throughout the years. Today we are honored to help provide mobility and to serve veterans' transportation needs in every state in the U.S.A.

It is a way for Ford Motor Company to assist the veterans who have served our country. I'm here to reaffirm Ford's continued support of the DAV through a donation of an additional eight new E-350 passenger vans. (Applause)

Commander Bowers and National Adjutant Wilson, will you please join me at the podium? On behalf of every Ford Motor Company employee, I would like to present you with this ceremonial key. (Applause)

I would also like to announce today that Ford is providing $25,000 to the Jesse Brown Youth Memorial Scholarship Fund. (Applause) As you know, this gift honors the spirit of Jesse Brown, a man known for his selflessness, his leadership and his compassion. (Applause)

You know, the DAV has a wonderful history and a bright future because of its leaders. Today I want to recognize two very important individuals who have served this past year, National Commander Alan Bowers and Auxiliary National Commander Janet Bennett. (Applause)

What I've just presented is a Mustang 40th Anniversary Collectors Medallion and commemorative book, and forty years of Mustang history is a pretty heavy book, so we won't have them hold it up. (Applause) Again, Ford Motor Company would like to

thank you. You have truly made a difference in the lives of many veterans.

Now before I return to my seat, I have just a few additional comments. Having been a veteran myself, I served as a platoon sergeant in the infantry with the 101st Airborne in Vietnam in 1970. (Applause) I understand the importance of organizations like the DAV.

When I returned from Vietnam, as many of you did, I saw too many people confused and conflicted about their support for veterans who fought there and for America.

The DAV has always stood for America and the men and women that have served this great nation and so has Ford Motor Company.

Thanks to each of you for your leadership, dedication to service, and for your flat-out hard work. You are heroes in every sense of the word and a special thanks to those of you that drive Ford Motor Company products. (Laughter) We very much appreciate your support. Enjoy the rest of the convention and thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: I just told Dennis that I did buy my Grand Marquis through the X plan. Dennis, I want to say that we are deeply grateful and overwhelmed by Ford's compassion and kindness today, as always.

These eight new Ford vans are provided without cost to DAV, and they will continue the eighty-two year cooperation between the Ford Motor Company and DAV.

Since 1996, Ford has donated -- that's right, donated -- to the DAV a total of 98 vans worth approximately $2 million. (Applause)

As a worldwide leader in automotive engineering and innovation, Ford embodies the vision, benevolence, and wisdom that proves that the bottom line isn't always dollars and cents.

Ford's commitment to our nation's sick and disabled veterans beautifully illustrates the blueprint of Corporate America's citizenship in America.

On behalf of the more than 1.2 million members of the Disabled American Veterans and our Auxiliary, please accept our heartfelt thanks for providing these beautiful vans for our transportation network. (Applause)

Of course, I am truly pleased to acknowledge Ford's continuing support for the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program, which recognizes young men and women who donate their time and compassion to help sick and disabled veterans in the VA medical centers.

To say we are proud of our affiliation with Ford is a gross understatement. Thank you, Mr. Cirbes, Sandy Ulsh, Sandra Nicholls and all the great folks at Ford for the support that you provide the DAV services and programs. (Applause)

The Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year Award each year goes to an individual who exemplifies service to disabled veterans and their families.

It is the highest, most prestigious award and this year it is presented to Gregory Kulm. We'll learn a little bit more about our outstanding veteran of the year. Please watch this film.

(Whereupon, a film was shown.)

COMMANDER BOWERS: My fellow veterans and guests, accepting the award for Mr. Kulm is his wife, Jeanne. (Standing Ovation)

MS. JEANNE KULM: Wow! I didn't know when I married Greg, that I was also marrying a part of the Energizer Bunny. What that Marine has not put me through, thank God for Clairol. (Laughter)

On behalf of my husband, he wants to thank you all,

National Commander, very much for this honor. He shares it with all of you. You are all outstanding veterans.

You have all given a part of your lives for our country, as Greg has, and you'll be very thankful to know that the speech that Greg and I prepared together is upstairs in our room, because I forgot it. (Laughter)

But this is such an honor to be here today. Unfortunately, Greg had a little incident this morning, and he's upstairs. He watched as the Vice President spoke to you and also Secretary Principi, and I hope you all listened very closely to what they both had to say.

I know for a fact that Mr. Principi would do anything for any of you. By just making a phone call to him, he would find out and get the job done. That's the kind of person Greg is also.

I just can't tell you what a privilege it is to be here with all of you, listening to your stories. I just can't say enough of what an honor it is to be here. (Applause)

I want to thank our family, Greg's children, whom I feel like are my children, Eric and Allison, for being here. Allison is accompanied by her friend Dwight. He's more than a friend. (Laughter) We really want to keep him in the family.

I also want to thank Greg's brother Dave and his wife Lynn for coming. It's just such an honor. Thank you all very much. National Commander, thank you very, very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Let me take just a moment to read the inscription on that plaque:

"National Commander's Award to the Outstanding Veteran of the Year, Gregory Kulm, 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; and further, that such consistent and noteworthy accomplishment will ever serve as an inspiration and a challenge to your comrades."

It's signed by Alan Bowers, National Commander; and Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant.

I'm sure that each of you joins me in extending our thanks and appreciation to Gregory for his lifetime of service to disabled veterans and their families. (Applause)

Past Auxiliary National Commander Lucille McCarthy will now make a presentation for the outstanding Auxiliary member of the year.

PNC LUCILLE MCCARTHY: Thank you, Commander Bowers. Good morning, everyone, or is it almost noon? National officers, Past National Commanders, distinguished guests, delegates and members of the DAV and the Auxiliary, each year during the DAV and Auxiliary National Convention, the Auxiliary National Commander's Award is presented to an outstanding Auxiliary member, whose efforts have enhanced the goals of the DAV and the Auxiliary and service to the community.

The lady selected this year by the Past National Commanders is eligible through her late father, John B. Clark, Sr., a disabled World War II veteran; and her husband James, a disabled Vietnam War veteran.

She has held all unit offices and served as chairman or member of various units, state department and national committees and projects.

She is an active member of the Legislative Alert Team, attends meetings, conferences and conventions and helps publish her DAV chapter's newsletters.

She has served as assistant state adjutant, elected state 2nd and 1st junior Vice-Commander and state senior Vice-Commander. A self-employed cosmetologist for thirty-five years,

she always finds time to assist disabled veterans and their families in a variety of ways.

She organized the first forget-me-not drive for our unit in 1999. She organized state department fundraising events, and she actively participates in the Americanism Program, Flag Day and Memorial Day ceremonies and places flags at the graves of veterans.

She assists needy veterans and widows through financial aid for rent, food and medicine and encourages veterans and their survivors to seek professional assistance from DAV service officers. Additionally, she is the DAV Auxiliary Deputy VAVS representative at the Charleston VA Medical Center and at the Myrtle Beach VA Outpatient Clinic.

She is a VA certified van driver and volunteer in the DAV Transportation Network and provides free haircuts at homeless veteran stand downs in Charleston.

At this time, it is an honor to present to you the DAV Auxiliary Outstanding Member of the Year, Lynn C. Helms, Commander of the DAV Auxiliary 30 in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. (Applause)

Lynn, it's a privilege to present to you, on behalf of the Past National Commanders, the Past National Commander's Award, which reads:

"Lynn C. Helms, Outstanding Member of the Year, presented July 31, 2004." Congratulations, Lynn. (Applause)

MS. LYNN C. HELMS: Good morning and welcome to this wonderful day for me. I am so proud to be here. I would like to say good morning to DAV Auxiliary Commander Jan Bennett, DAV Commander Alan Bowers, Auxiliary Adjutant Maria Tedrow, DAV Adjutant Art Wilson, national officers, delegates and guests of this wonderful convention.

I bring you greetings from the Department of South Carolina and our Commanders, Prince Tucker and Monica Stroud. They've been a wonderful asset to South Carolina, and they've been a wonderful asset to my life.

It's an honor and a privilege to appear before you and receive this precious award. The rewards of being a volunteer and knowing that you have made a positive difference in someone else's life is priceless.

I am blessed that I have had the opportunity to serve our veterans by belonging to the DAV Auxiliary, and there is no way to measure the love and the commitment that I have for this organization, its members, and most of all, its purpose.

First of all, I want to thank my soul mate and my wonderful husband, Jim. He's not here this morning. He became ill yesterday, and I want you to please have him in your prayers.

He has been the wind beneath my wings. He has given me support, and he has lifted me up when sometimes I was down, and I hope that I was always there to lift him up.

I'm fifty-three years old, and we've been together forty years. I met him when I was thirteen years old, so that is my soul mate. (Applause)

I would like to say a little bit about him. He's dedicated to this organization, and we have worked together to do all that we can to help other veterans and their families in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and any other person that we can come in contact with to help them.

It's a privilege to actively serve with the other dedicated members of the DAV and the Auxiliary to accomplish the main goal of building better lives for disabled American veterans and their families, and that statement stands within itself.

I also want to thank members of my unit, Grand Strand 30, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. I truly appreciate the fact

that they nominated me and thought that I was deserving of this award.

Chapter and Unit 30 are working hard together to reach the goals of the organization, and I am proud to be a part of that family. Words cannot express the overwhelming excitement that I felt when I received my letter from the National DAV Auxiliary informing me that I had been selected the Past National Commander Member of the Year.

I am humbled and honored, and I promise that I will make every effort to conduct myself to the highest of standards and the expectations that reflect this honor.

It is impossible to name all the wonderful members of the Auxiliary and the organization that have influenced my life, but I do remember all of you, and I thank you.

I must say a special thank you to my state department commander, Monica Stroud. She and I have sat side by side for many years in the state department going through the chairs, and we've worked together close to make some good things happen for South Carolina.

I also want to thank National DAV Commander Jan Bennett. She has also been a wonderful asset and shown leadership that goes with this great honor that she has presented herself.

Next, I would like to thank my very best friend, and she's my partner in crime, Harriett Hudson. I have to thank her. She stands by my side, and sometimes she has to pull me out of trouble.

Then I would like to thank my friend and mentor, Past National Commander and National Judge Advocate Shelia Allred. She's also pulled me out of some things when I get into them too deep.

I would like to say thank you to Past National Commander Linda Trulio, who always makes you feel special with her warm smile and the nice things that she has to say.

I would like to thank Maria Tedrow for all the work that she has done. She wears many hats of many colors, and she does a great job in everything that she does.

To South Carolina Department Senior Commander Marian Truscello, I would like to say a special warm thank you to her. I hope to be making history with her at the 2005 South Carolina state convention.

If we are both elected, we will serve as commanders together for the state of South Carolina, and Marian will be the very first female commander for the Department of South Carolina, so that will be an honor.

Another thing I would like to do, but certainly not least, is thank our national service officers in South Carolina under the supervision of Issac Abnathey.

They are a dedicated team and they're working hard in getting the job done for the veterans in South Carolina.

In closing, I want to say from my heart to all of you veterans, thank you for the sacrifices that you made by serving our country and protecting our freedom.

I salute you and I am proud to say welcome home. God bless America, God bless our troops, and God bless this 83rd convention. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Mrs. Helms, congratulations. Each year we are proud to recognize the extraordinary commitment of DAV and Auxiliary volunteers through the George H. Seal Memorial Trophy.

This special tribute honors remarkable volunteers who best exemplify the spirit of our organization through their selfless dedication to hospitalized veterans under the VAVS Volunteer Service Program.

Ladies and gentlemen, this year's George H. Seal Award winners are Gene Lundeen of Williamsburg, Virginia, and Genevieve Heitkemper from Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Mr. Lundeen is a member of DAV Chapter 34 in Williamsburg, Virginia, and he is also the 2nd Junior Vice-Commander of the Department of Virginia. His DAV duties keep him busy, but he's not so busy that he couldn't donate nearly 6,000 hours to volunteer work at the Hampton, Virginia VA Medical Center, and that only scratches the surface.

There's no telling how many volunteer hours he really has put in, because to him hours are not what is important. Doing the job, caring for veterans is what is important to him.

He is a retired optician. Mr. Lundeen's skills were learned during his Navy career as a hospital corpsman. He works in the surgical service and also in the recreation and volunteer services, but his primarily involvement is in the medical center's eye clinic.

Mr. Lundeen is truly a sight for sore eyes, and I pardon the pun. But we are very proud of him, and he is truly an asset to the Hampton Virginia Medical Center.

Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2004 DAV member recipient of the George H. Seal Memorial Trophy, Mr. Gene Lundeen. (Applause)

MR. GENE LUNDEEN: Good morning. Commander Bowers, Adjutant Art Wilson, members of the staff, guests, this has been quite a privilege for me, a country boy, to come up here and get all this. Boy, it's mind boggling.

But I do have to thank -- and I believe that this reward should go to and include members of the DAV in the Tidewater area and the VA hospital at Hampton that have helped me so much through the years. (Applause)

I have asked for things, and every time I asked for something they're there to help me or to give me money or whatever I need, and it's really a pleasure to work with those folks.

I also want to thank Judy Curtis up here, the Director of the Volunteer Services. She's the one that wrote the letter that turned everything around, so she's a good writer. I've got to acknowledge her. Last, but not least, I had better thank my wife of fifty-four years for putting up with me this long. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Again, congratulations, Mr. Lundeen. Genevieve Heitkemper is a member of DAV Auxiliary Unit Number 1 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and is known at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center as a true leader.

She's a hands-on individual who leads by example and with contagious enthusiasm. She gets great joy from seeing smiles on the faces of the hospitalized veterans, and in her forty-one years of volunteering to help veterans, she has amassed 20,896 hours of volunteering. (Applause)

Genevieve is a live wire. It's absolutely amazing what keeps her going. She's a motivator, and now eighty-one, she volunteers at the nursing home unit where many of the patients no longer have family members.

Genevieve is a very special person, just as all of our DAV and Auxiliary volunteers are. She and they represent the true spirit of service to those who need it the most.

Ladies and gentlemen, Genevieve is not present today. We will make sure that she receives the George H. Seal Memorial Trophy for her tremendous work she does in volunteering and helping disabled veterans. (Applause)

The silver ball will read: "George H. Seal Memorial Award Winner, 2004, DAVA, Genevieve Heitkemper, Milwaukee VA Medical

Center, Wisconsin", and we extend our congratulations to her.

At the 2003 Mid-Winter Conference, our National Executive Committee approved the renaming of our Youth volunteer Scholarship Program in honor of the late Secretary Jesse Brown.

Naming the scholarship program in honor of Jesse's life commitment was a tribute to a man who was so instrumental to the DAV and to the lives of veterans everywhere.

Where people saw disabilities, Jesse saw opportunities. He sought achievement as well as success. Jesse's vision has become a role model for many generations, and the recipients of these scholarships embody the spirit of sacrifice and giving to others.

This year the Disabled American Veterans has selected twelve outstanding youth volunteers to receive the award. The top winner for the 2004 Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program is Christina Fay, a volunteer at the Teague VA Medical Center in Temple, Texas.

Miss Fay will receive a $15,000 Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship. Christina, 19, is a biomedical student at Texas A&M University with plans to attend medical school.

Even with the vigorous demands of college, Christina has volunteered more than 550 hours last year alone, and she is known for her strong will and her humanitarian spirit.

Christina brings sunshine to veteran patients, as well as to the staff and to the other volunteers. Her smile and enthusiasm radiate throughout the room. Ladies and gentlemen, may I present to you Christina Fay. (Applause)

MISS CHRISTINA FAY: Thank you, National Commander. Veterans and guests, howdy. (Laughter) I'm so excited to be here today accepting this Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship.

Thank you for allowing me to join you at this national convention. This scholarship is going to be a much-needed addition to the bottomless pit of college expenses.

I started volunteering when I was about thirteen at the Temple and Waco VAs. I volunteered in many divisions, EEO; Administration; Ear, Nose, and Throat and Psychiatry.

My time in Psychiatry influenced my attending Biomedical Science at Texas A&M University to pursue a career in medical with psychiatry.

I enjoy working with all the veterans and employees. They always made my day so much better with their smiles and the respect that they showed me. All the respect that they showed to all the teenagers always stood out in my mind.

I have the deepest respect for the men and women that have served our country overseas. They lay their lives on the line for us everyday and for that I have immense gratitude. Thank you so much. (Applause)

Volunteering has strengthened and developed my mind. It has set me on a strong path for life, and but for that, I don't know what I would do. I would like to thank the Chief of the Volunteering Service in Temple and Waco, Sherry Hughes, and my family for all their support they've given me through the years. Thank you for your time and gig them, Aggies. (Laughter and Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Again, Christina, congratulations. The other winners include: the second place $10,000 scholarship goes to Samuel Evans, Jr. of Jackson, Mississippi; third place, a $7,500 scholarship, to William Wardell of San Antonio, Texas and James Gray of Prescott, Arizona; and

$5,000 Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarships go to Ashlie Dickerson of Denver, Colorado; Hiram Desmond Shulin of Little Rock, Arkansas; Shakia Abrahm of Washington, D.C.; Diana

Rodriguez of Tampa, Florida; Thomas Hartlage of Louisville, Kentucky; Korey Woods of Alexandria, Virginia; and Justin Wagner of Albuquerque, New Mexico; and, finally, Corey Malone of Montrose, New York. (Applause)

We had many, many other deserving candidates for the Jesse Brown Memorial Scholarship this year. It is heartwarming to know that the dedication of those young men and women seek to serve those who have served them.

They are certainly rewarded by their service to disabled veterans not only by the scholarship, but also by the experience of volunteering.

Ladies and gentlemen, that concludes this morning's session. I will ask you to please rise and ask the chaplain for the closing prayer.

DR. SHELTON: Let us bow. Now unto Him who is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God, our savior, be glory, majesty, dominion, and power, both now and ever, Amen.

COMMANDER BOWERS: The convention stands recessed until 1:00 o'clock.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 11:50 o'clock a.m., July 31, 2004.)

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION

July 31, 2004

The First Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans convened in the Hilton Pavilion of the Reno Hilton, Reno, Nevada, Saturday afternoon, July 31, 2004 and was called to order at 1:15 o'clock p.m. by Commander Alan W. Bowers.

COMMANDER BOWERS: The convention will come to order. In the opening first business session of the 83rd National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans, it is fitting and proper that we render a proper salute to the flag. Please rise.

Standing in for our chaplain is John Regan.

MR. JOHN REGAN: Heavenly Father, we have returned to this convention hall refreshed and ready to continue our deliberations.

Bless us with Your presence and continue to guide our leaders in whose hands rest the reins of this great organization. Give them and us the wisdom we need to continue the work of helping our disabled veterans, our brothers, our sisters. All this we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Please be seated. In order for a delegate to be heard at this convention, you must be recognized by the Chair. Only those delegates at a microphone will be recognized.

The delegate must first state their name, the chapter number and the state they represent. Again, state your name, your chapter number and the state you represent.

I now call upon John Regan for the Credentials Committee's first report.

MR. REGAN: Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Credentials was called to order for its first business session on 7/31/2004 by Advisors Michael J. Walsh and Michael E. Dobmeier.

The first order of business was the election of a Credentials Committee chairman. John Regan was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, John Regan was elected chairman.

The next order of business was the nomination and election

of the secretary. Mary Bencivenga was nominated and elected as secretary.

The Credentials Committee met this morning in the Cascades 2 Room at the Reno Hilton Hotel. Roll call showed 1,121 delegates and 33 alternates present.

This is a partial report for informational purposes only and reflects the registration at the close of registration at 4:00 P.M. on 7/30/2004.

At the present time, we have 472 chapters, 45 departments, 31 national officers, 13 Past National Commanders for a total of 1,121 delegates and 33 alternates, for a total of 10,117.

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

COMMANDER BOWERS: Comrades, the rules are a continuing part of our bylaws. They are part and parcel of Article 3, and they remain in effect continually, but they are subject to amendments provided by the bylaws. Are there any proposed amendments to the rules?

MR. KEN MUSSELMANN: Ken Musselmann, Past National Commander, Chapter 19, California.

COMMANDER BOWERS: The chair recognizes Ken Musselmann.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Comrade Commander, I would like to propose a rule change at this time. I would like to make a motion to amend Article 3, Section 3.10, Rule 21(e), by omitting the words "and dues" from the title and the words "and dues" from the body of the paragraph, so that the new paragraph (e) will read as follows:

Committee on Finance: This committee shall consider those resolutions dealing with DAV finances.

COMMANDER BOWERS: You've heard the proposed amendment.

MS. DELPHINE METCALF-FOSTER: Delphine Metcalf-Foster, Department of California, Commander, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Ken, did you make the motion?

MR. MUSSELMANN: Yes, I did.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, sir. I have a motion and I have a second. All those in favor, signify by saying aye; any opposed. The motion is carried.

I'll now ask the National Adjutant to read the DAV's 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 and welfare of its wartime disabled. This principle envisions:

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

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

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

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

5. Adequate compensation to the surviving spouses and dependents of veterans whose deaths are held to be service-onneted under laws administered by the Department of eterans Affairs.

6. Enhance outreach to ensure that all disabled veterans receive all benefits that they have earned, and that the American people understand and respect the needs these veterans encounter as a result of their disabilities.

It, therefore, follows that we will not take action on any resolution that proposes legislation designed to provide benefits for veterans, their surviving spouses and dependants which are based upon 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 it is our first duty as an organization to assist the service-connected disabled, their surviving spouses and dependents, we shall, within the limits of our resources, assist others in the 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 of the Disabled American Veterans.

COMMANDER BOWERS: The chair will entertain a motion for the adoption of the DAV's Statement of Policy.

MR. SIDNEY BICK: Sidney Bick, PDC, Chapter 47, Illinois, moves for approval.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Is there a second?

MR. ALBERT H. LINDEN, JR: Al Linden, Gator 90, Florida, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: I have a motion and I have a second. All those in favor, say aye; any opposed. The motion is carried.

MR. ROB LEWIS: Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to introduce the National Executive Committee. Gentlemen, please stand as you are able. Ladies and gentlemen, please hold your applause until I've introduced all of the members:

John F. Regan, 1st District, of Massachusetts; Thomas F. Mazza, 2nd District, of New York; Steven C. Moffitt, 3rd District, of Rhode Island; Elwood A.D. "Woody" Lechausse, 4th District, of Connecticut; Kirk Lindsey, 5th District, of Pennsylvania; Jacob N. Stafford, 6th District, of West Virginia; Richard "Dick" Giese, 7th District, of Florida; Wilbur L. Trahan, 8th District, of Mississippi; Bobby G. Williams, 9th District, of North Carolina; Maurice Penermon, 10th District, of Michigan, Alternate; William L. Moseley, 11th District, of Ohio; Richard L. Fear, 12th District, of Wisconsin; William T. Caywood, 13th District, of Indiana; Jerome Krejci, 14th District, of Minnesota; Lyle J. Dean, 15th District, of Iowa; Astro "Al" Tortolano, 16th District, of California; Billy Jones, Sr, 17th District, of Oregon; Joseph J. McDowell, 18th District, of Arizona; Jimmey W. Mayo, 19th District, of Alaska; Dennis R. Nixon, 20th District, of Texas; and Wayne Douglass, Sr., 21st District, of Arkansas.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome our National Executive Committee. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: I would also like to recognize my National Chief of Staff, Roger Hamel; Officer of the Day, Joe Costa; and Sergeant at Arms, Owen "Mickey" Emery. (Applause)

Our organization is blessed with competent leadership. There are so many individuals who contribute to our mission on a daily basis, and leading our members and our professional staff is our National Adjutant, Art Wilson.

Art is a leader who demonstrates vision, initiative, but most of all, dedication to the mission. The DAV is a big organization and our mission is enormous.

It is with Art's leadership and steady hand that we universally succeed in what we do. We are fortunate to have

such a true leader at the helm of our organization.

Art's loyalty and steadfast commitment to service has not only greatly enhanced our organization, but, more importantly, the one million members of the Disabled American Veterans and their families.

His insight to recognize what is needed and necessary and his strength of character propel our organization to the forefront. Leaders in Washington, D.C., will quickly tell you that the DAV is the preeminent veterans' service organization, and that is clearly the result of Art's leadership.

For more than thirty-eight years, Art Wilson has dedicated himself to serving disabled veterans and their families with energy and integrity.

Initially a national service officer, the first Vietnam veteran to enter the DAV's National Service Officer Program, Art moved up through the ranks of the NSO Corps to supervisory positions and then on to the National Appeals Office on the Board of Veterans Appeals in Washington.

After his extensive experience as a top-notch service officer, Art was named the National Service Director in Washington, overseeing all of the DAV's service programs.

His twelve years in that position allowed Art to craft our National Service Corps into a professional, efficient and knowledgeable group of men and women with the total commitment to service to disabled veterans and their families.

Since Art's appointment as National Adjutant in 1994, his superb leadership and commitment to the organization's ideals led to an extraordinary revival of the DAV.

He energized the DAV with a power that hasn't been seen since the early days of Judge Marx. Ladies and gentlemen, I am here to present to you for his report to the National Convention, our friend, your friend, our National Adjutant, Arthur H. Wilson. (Standing Ovation)

ADJUTANT WILSON: Thank you all very much. Good afternoon to you all, Commander Bowers, officers, and staff, VIPs and members of this great organization.

Ladies and gentlemen, serving as your National Adjutant continues to be an honor for me, a privilege and an extraordinary experience. Everyday I witness firsthand the impact of our mission of service and hope on the lives of disabled veterans and their families all across America.

In a video you will see in just a few moments, we will share with you some of the best moments of this past year. And thanks to the steadfast support and commitment and exceptional leadership of National Commander Alan Bowers, this has been a truly extraordinary year. Thank you, Commander, for all that you do for the DAV. (Applause)

It's been a personal honor for me and the entire DAV staff and the membership everywhere to have you leading the way, Commander, and I know this has been a very busy for you, and I hope that it will be a year that you and Theresa will look back on with a well-deserved sense of pride and accomplishment.

Thank you and thank your line officers for everything you have done to help make this past year such a great success. Thank you again. (Applause)

Please, ladies and gentlemen, enjoy this short film highlighting a year of service. This film was produced by our National Communications Department and offers you sort of a mini-review of the life and times of the DAV during the past twelve months with a few light-hearted moments along the way.
(Video Presentation)

ADJUTANT WILSON: As you've just seen, we've certainly accomplished a great deal this past year, thanks to a lot of

hard work and dedication. In many ways, it's been a tough haul. But in the end, the DAV is an even stronger voice for America's disabled veterans, and we have much to be proud of.

One symbol of this pride, which we can all take credit, is the seal of approval from the Better Business Bureau Wise-Giving Alliance.

You will recall in my convention report last year, I mentioned the BBB Wise-Giving Alliance had issued a new charity accountability standard and established an approval program for qualified national charities that meet their standards of accountability to donors.

We welcome these new, tougher standards, because in addition to giving potential donors better information about our services, the fundraising practices make it more difficult for unscrupulous organizations to prey upon the public.

I was pleased to report also that the DAV already had met nearly all of the Alliance standards, with one major exception, in the establishment of a Board of Directors.

During the 2003 National Convention, delegates voted to create a Board of Directors, which was the last hurdle in earning the coveted BBB Wise-Giving Alliance seal.

Because most Americans acknowledge the Better Business Bureau as a trusted source of information on businesses and charities, the seal adds a rock-solid credibility to the DAV and to the scores of generous donors who support our organization.

Our membership continues to grow and provide our organization with truly outstanding leaders at every level, and one of the most exciting facts is that our membership has again this year reached another all-time high of 1,264,181 members. Congratulations. (Applause)

This record-setting membership comes during a year in which not only we experienced a war on terrorism and a difficult economy, but also witnessed a higher mortality rate among much of our admired World War II generation.

Working in concert with our National Membership Department, DAV recruiters and national service officers proved yet again that innovation and leadership can overcome adversity, both economic and social, and that membership in the Disabled American Veterans is a valuable asset.

An increase in life membership rates and a temporary reduction in monetary distributions to chapters and departments, the deposit of all incentives and commissions earned from our member benefit programs to the Life Membership Fund, combined with cost-saving measures, substantially increased the longevity of the Life Fund during the past year.

Without these key funding changes, the Life Membership Fund would nearly have been depleted in just four years, but I'm pleased to report that our actuaries have concluded that the fund should remain healthy through 2013. (Applause)

To ensure that funds are available for current and future distributions, DAV will continue to seek opportunities to boost our earnings from direct-mail solicitations and developing new revenue strains.

Our Voluntary Service Program continues to set new standards of excellence and our grassroots and legislative advocacy programs continue to lead the way in veterans' affairs.

We've been able to meet and exceed our strategic goals year after year because of our steadfast commitment to our core values of service, quality, integrity and leadership.

Everything that we do is all about one purpose, and that's building better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families, and we continue to show the way. (Applause)

The DAV continues to excel, also, because of support and

dedication of you, our membership, which is the source of our strength. All members contribute to varying ways to DAV, and what the national organization does to fulfill this mission of service and hope pays huge dividend to our members and to our nation.

That's why it's so vital that we continue our pledge to strengthen our membership recruitment effort. America's disabled veterans and their families are counting on a strong DAV to be there for them now and in the future.

One thing that they can count on is the compassionate and enthusiastic service that our chapter and department service officers provide every single day, and I would like all of our chapter and department service officers to rise so we can thank you for everything that you do to help meet the needs of our nation's sick and disabled veterans and their families. Please rise. (Applause)

Thank you so very much, and you can bet that America's disabled veterans and their families will be able to count on the men and women who have chosen to make their career of providing the very best advocacy and service for their fellow disabled veterans and our professional national service officers.

I would like all of our national service officers, both active and retired, to please rise and be recognized for your service. (Applause)

Thank you all so very much. Of course, none of what we've been able to accomplish in the past and what we need to accomplish in the future is possible without the strong, active and committed membership, and that's what you and all DAV members throughout the country whose dedication and support are absolutely crucial to our success. Thank you all so very much.

Your commitment and dedication to serving this nation's disabled veterans is what continues to inspire the American people to support us in a compassionate way and with their generosity, and that in turn makes it possible for us to continue providing our world class service to veterans and their families and that's what really matters. It's our mission and it's our duty. It is the very reason for the DAV to exist. Thank you so very much. (Applause)

Before I close this afternoon, I want to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my staff: Rick Patterson, who manages our National Headquarters in Cold Spring, Kentucky, which includes Susan Loft from the Fundraising Department and her staff; Inspector General Bob Gushee; General Counsel Christopher Clay; Greg Jackson and the staff at the Human Resources Department; Mike Walsh and everybody in the Membership Department; Gary Weaver and his crew in the Communications Department; Greg Nichols and the Information Technology Team; Nancy O'Brien, who administers our charitable programs and, of course, Comptroller Anita Bloom and all the folks who do such a fine job handling our financial matters, thank you so very much. (Applause)

Of course, my personal thanks to Dave Gorman and our Washington Headquarters team; Randy Reese and the staff of the National Service Department and the entire Corps of National Service Officers; Joe Violante and the team at our National Legislative Department; and Ed Hartman and the Voluntary Services staff. A very sincere thanks to our support staffs all around the country, including our National Headquarters and National Service and Legislative Headquarters.

In addition, I wish to offer my personal thanks and gratitude to two very special individuals, whom without I would certainly be in a state of turmoil most of the time, and that's

Administrative Assistant Sandy Buchanan and Executive Secretary Sally Miller. Thank you, ladies, for a job well done. (Applause)

A special thanks to our team, and, believe me, our success is an entire team effort; our employees, about 650 in all, who are on the job every single day to make sure that this organization keeps running smoothly.

I would also like to thank our Auxiliary and all the support that they provide to the DAV. From their volunteer programs to legislative programs, the Auxiliary has been there to lend their assistance and advance the causes to help disabled veterans and their families:

Janet Bennett, National Commander; Maria Tedrow, National Adjutant, thank you for your leadership as we strive to fulfill our mission of service and hope to our nation's veterans. (Applause)

I especially want to thank and express my gratitude to you and all of the DAV members all across the country for allowing me the privilege of serving this great organization and to serve each of you; and, finally, a salute to the men and women of our armed forces.

Whether at war overseas or they're defending on the home front, they continue to battle and preserve our freedom for the right of all the people to live in a world free of terror. Thank you so very much, and may God bless you all and thank you, Commander. That concludes my report.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Now you know why I am so very proud that Art Wilson is our National Adjutant. I will entertain a motion.

MR. NORMAN J. RESNER: Norm Renler, Chapter 42, Department of Illinois, moves for the adoption of National Adjutant Art Wilson's report with the thanks of the delegates of this convention.

COMMANDER BOWERS: We have a motion to accept Art's report. I need a second.

MR. ALFRED C. REYNOLDS: Alfred Reynolds, Adjutant and Treasurer, Department of Illinois, Chapter 17, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you. All in favor of the motion, say aye; all opposed, nay. The motion is carried. Again, sir, thank you.

Now in his twelfth consecutive term of the House of Representatives, Congressman Christopher H. Smith of New Jersey ranks among the most respected and effective legislative leaders in Congress.

Congressman Smith was unanimously reelected as Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee for the 108th Congress. He is the prime sponsor of several recent laws to provide new and expanded services and benefits to America's veterans.

Congressman Smith is, by far, one of the strongest veterans advocates we have in Congress, a steadfast friend to disabled veterans and someone veterans can count on to stand up for them, even when standing up for veterans might be at odds with some of the powers in Washington.

So it is truly an honor and a pleasure to introduce the Honorable Christopher Smith, Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. (Applause)

CONGRESSMAN CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH: Commander Bowers, thank you so much for that very, very kind introduction, and it is really an honor and a very distinct privilege to be here at the DAV.

I want to thank you for the invite and I am so happy to be here. You know, in watching that video -- and I heard Commander Bower's speech earlier today, and it was a great speech, but in

watching that video, it really did give further evidence to what I think is only a tip of the iceberg.

How much can a video really capture and that is that you have done truly remarkable things. You have had remarkable accomplishments over the last year and really over the last decade, and I want to thank you for that.

But in watching that video, you know, I played a lot of baseball in my time and when I saw that the pitchers were supporting the DAV and the disabled veterans, obviously, we're all happy to see that, but only the DAV, only the DAV, can make us love umpires. (Laughter)

I've lost count of the number of times, both as a spectator and a player, that I didn't have that view, so I want to thank you for that.

Let me also say how gifted and how grateful we are on the House Committee on Veterans Affairs for your national leadership, beginning with National Commander Bowers and working right on down through the leadership, your professional staff that works so well and so ably, Art Wilson, whom you know so well.

We work so closely with Joe Violante. I just want to put him really at the beginning. He's from my hometown. So we have a real good friendship that goes back many years, and it's great to see Joe and to know the good work he does.

But David Gorman, who is just absolutely persistent and relentless and very well informed and committed, does a remarkable job in Washington. I want to thank him publicly on behalf of both sides of the aisle, the Republicans and the Democrats. We're so grateful for the work that you do.

Much has been said about the work product that you produce, and I just want to say at the outset that the legislative program that you put together, the resolutions that you pass, the agenda that you sweat the details to create and to promulgate, the work, like I said, of your Washington office really does make a difference.

It leads to the enactment of new laws, policies that most people never hear about, that find their way into our laws, as Section 102, Part A, 103, 104, and right on down.

We literally read through this book, my staff, I, other members of the committee, and we pull out the gems that are contained within this, and we look to enact them into law. So thank you for that.

We not only take your leadership very seriously, we count on it to provide meaningful, timely, and accurate guidance. You are trusted in Washington, and I for one, and I, speaking for many, deeply appreciate your candor, your spirit and your thoughtfulness.

The DAV is the collective eyes and ears and voice of all disabled veterans. So I, today, want to encourage you to keep on keeping on. Don't grow weary or lose heart, because we do have setbacks from time to time.

Very often, indifference is one of the worst things we have to deal with, as well as ignorance, people who just don't get it. They don't take the time to understand the complexity of veterans issues, especially veterans' health care.

I also encourage you to continue that dialogue, to meet with the lawmakers and their staffs at all levels, local, state, and federal, because, again, you provide us the insight that we absolutely need.

I also want to congratulate you on your service, which, again, Commander Bowers pointed out so well. It's second to none. Whether it be the vans -- I think you said you're now up to about 1,600 vans.

Your national service officers are just the best of the best and help so many veterans throughout this country in a way that is, as he said earlier, professional and honorable, and I want to thank you for that as well.

You know, Bob Dole in the video a moment ago made a point, and it just sparked something in my own mind. Besides being chairman of the Vets Committee, I also am Vice Chairman of the International Relations Committee and Chairman of a creature of Congress known as the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

I work very hard on human rights issues, democracy building, efforts to mitigate disease around the world, particularly in the developing world, and human rights, like I said, religious freedom, human trafficking.

But every chance I get -- and I meet two, three, as many as five times per week with parliamentarians and lawmakers and foreign ministers from around the world, both in their country, but even more so in Washington -- I always make a point of bringing up veterans' issues, and I've been doing it for years.

As a matter of a fact, with members of the Russian Dumas, I said, if you want to create a stable middle class, you need to enact a GI Bill.

You need to enact laws that provide access to college or higher education or job training for those who serve in the military, and you need a home loan program to encourage that part of that stable middle class that makes all the difference in the world, and then I go on to tell them how we did it.

I give that booklet that the VA puts out on all the services. I give those things out like candy to these parliamentarians, and one thing that has struck me, and I think Bob Dole perhaps alluded to it in that video a moment ago, is that one of the reasons why these governments don't respond is that they don't have a sophisticated network of VSOs that contact and provide informed collective counsel to their parliamentarians.

They just don't know, in many cases. If they don't care, they're certainly not pressured in a benign way to do what is right. So it seems to me that one of the things that we have that absolutely surpasses anyone else on earth is a sophisticated group of VSOs led by the DAV that lets all of us know what we need to do to get it right, and, again, I want to thank you for that.

The value of your advocacy cannot be overstated, so please, I encourage you to continue on. And let me just say that all advocacy begins at home. Mary Bencivenga, whom I've known for many years, and the New Jerseyians -- she's the state commander -- do a wonderful job of keeping me and my thirteen other members of our delegation informed, our governor, our two senators, and we are very, very grateful, all of us, for that.

Let me just say, also, when I was elected chairman some four years ago -- I served as vice chairman for six years before that, and I've been on the committee for twenty-four years and served under Bob Stump, Sonny Montgomery.

One of the things that they tried to do, and I've tried to keep that traditional alive, and that is to promote very serious bipartisanship, not the superficial kind that says we love each other and rock back and forth, but to really roll up our sleeves at the member level, at the staff level, and to write law that really makes a difference.

With me today and behind me is Pat Ryan. Pat Ryan is our general counsel and chief of staff, and Pat, frankly, is the best of the best. He writes a lot of these policies, and I just

want to say how grateful I am.

But what we do, and I think we need to do more of it in Washington, is reach across the aisle and work with the Democrats and try to fashion policies and work out bills and amendments that will promote the veterans' agenda in a bipartisan way.

In my view, if the committee works well, the way that we increase our efficacy is by doing this, by getting everybody on board by trying to give ownership to all who are concerned.

I am a little bit concerned, frankly, that there are some, and they're found on both sides of the aisle, who like to isolate and to create problems, if you will.

You know, adversarial politics is what the founding fathers had in mind, but it can go too far. One cautionary tale that I keep in the back of my mind at all times is that we don't want to get to the point where veterans' issues become a political football, and people are out there trying to get one upsmanship in a way that is not sustainable, because they are just looking at the next election.

So I just share that with you because to me it's all about working together for common goals. Yesterday, and I'll give an example, I was picketed in my own home district.

I actually was in Rick Rensey's district going to four CBOCs in his district. We did about five hundred miles, because his district is so big, and we were picketed while we were there for not doing enough for veterans' health care.

I just want to tell you that both Rensey and I -- I mean, if you talk about losing sleep over something, we have worked this issue of veterans' health care to squeeze every dollar, and we haven't done enough, to make sure that our veterans are cared for in a way that Lincoln said, to care for him who has born this nation's battle, and with world class medicine, and yet yesterday in my own district I was picketed.

I would just like to share some of the frustrations of a lawmaker. I defy any of those who are out there picketing to say anything that we've done, I or my staff or our committee, on veterans' affairs.

I've often asked this at town meetings. When somebody raises their hand and says you haven't done anything; I say, "Have you read any of our laws?"

You know, Justice Scalia on the U.S. Supreme Court makes an interesting point. He says judges should be read and not heard. Well, I think increasingly politicians and lawmakers should be read and heard less and not heard even. (Applause)

Over the last four years, we have written seventeen laws that have been signed into law by President Bush, many of them sweeping, many of them historic, and then a number of other laws, like the Department of Defense law that had a major concurrent receipt reform, wasn't everything we wanted, but certainly was a step in the right direction, and that too was signed into law.

One of the things I tried to remind those who are -- you know, it's good to be a critic, a constructive one at that, but those who are harsh and, again, looking for the next election -- and I wonder about that picket at my office yesterday, what that was all about.

But I asked them what have we done? Homeless veterans were featured on that video and the DAV has been outstanding in its advocacy to reach out and reintegrate those who are homeless.

When I got the gavel, there were approximately 275,000 homeless veterans on the street on any given night. We then passed a sweeping bill, the Homeless Veterans Assistance Act, which authorizes a billion dollars over five years and tries to

put into motion a plan that will end chronic homeless within ten years.

It was my bill. I turned to these picketers and said, "Have you read it? Do you have any idea that this was signed into law?" Of course, they don't.

One of the other bills that we did that I think was very helpful was the Veterans Benefits Act mentioned by Vice President Cheney in his comments today.

That bill is seven chapters, seven large chapters, just chuck full of good things for veterans, any one of which could be its own bill. Where did we get them?

We've got so many of them, specially adapted housing and all the other provisions, from your input, which we got from David Gorman and all the others, and we deeply appreciate it. (Applause)

Still another bill that we worked on that was signed into law was to help the men and women who are deployed, and that legislation is designed -- it's an update, rewrite and expansion of the old Soldiers and Sailors Relief Act.

That legislation, the Service Members Relief Act, closed most, but not all -- we always find another one -- loopholes so that when a man or a woman is deployed, they don't find that their mortgage or their credit card and other debt builds like a mound only to crush them when they come back or their loved ones. This gives them an out and it gives them a way of breaking the lease for the leased car or for the house. (Applause)

We also passed the GI Bill increase, a sweeping education law that had as its centerpiece approximately $7 billion of new money to be spent over ten years for upgrades and expansions of the GI Bill, job training and the like.

That legislation, again, as its centerpiece, raised the GI Bill by 46 percent, and I think that's going to make a major difference for our veterans as they come home or our military men and women. (Applause)

Let me also say since 2001 -- and I think I heard Vice President Cheney mention this. I know I heard him say it; I was sitting out there -- we have seen increases.

It's not always easy to get there. There are challenges, believe me. But there have been significant increases, approximately 40 percent, in the area of medical care and 50 percent for all other, including medical care, spending for veterans.

We've gone from $48 billion in fiscal year 2001 to $71 billion, which is what we anticipate we will spend in the year 2005. Now it may not be, and I don't think it is, all that we need. But we are at least moving that ball down the field in the direction of the goal, and I think we're getting closer.

Let me also, finally, just say I know that the DAV is pushing hard, and very hard for mandatory spending. It was one of those ideas that the Bush Task Force on improving health care delivery had recommended in their area.

They pointed out 15 to 0, the task force, that there was a mismatch in funding between what is appropriated for health care and what is out there in terms of need, and it seems to me that our efforts should be all about what is the need and how do we meet it?

Now there are a number of ways of going about it. Mandatory is one. It's viable and the formula may work. And there's another that the task force recommended that may be as viable and may even be better, it may not be, but it needs to be vetted completely.

I've introduced a piece of legislation that seeks to at

least advance that and to find out whether or not that might work. In a nutshell, what that legislation does, it takes the Office of Management and Budget out of the equation.

Now that may sound like a simple process, why does that matter, and what we would put in its stead would be a process where the VA and actuaries would figure out what the real need is for veterans' health care.

They would give that to the President untouched, he would put that into his budget, send it to Capital Hill, and then what we would do is that we would have to vote up or down on it.

But, frankly, I can't believe that anyone, once we get a number that is real and vetted, that we would go below it. So it provides one way of getting to what is the real goal here, and that is full funding.

We even have a look-back provision, knowing that even early in the year, we may find that the amount of money that these actuaries said is needed for VA may not be enough.

So we have a provision that says one last look before we go to law to make sure we got it right, and if it has to go higher, well, then we do it.

Finally, I just want to say to all of you -- and, again, it was on the video and it's certainly on all of our minds, and that was the remembrance of the greatest generation, the World War II generation.

My father was a combat veteran from the Second World War. He fought in New Guinea. As a matter of a fact, he began in New Guinea and ended up in the Philippines.

He very rarely would tell my brothers and I about it, although we were able to pry much over the years, what that was like; and my wife's father was on a ship, the U.S.S. Cambra, also in the South Pacific, and our story is really everybody's story.

We all have loved ones, you in this room -- Bob Stump, our previous chairman, who is a World War II veteran. People like Henry Hyde and other sitting members who are also World War II veterans

But that dedication that was held this past Memorial Day was truly astonishing and moving, and I think it reminded every one of us that we can never cease in our vigilance, both on preserving peace, but also that commitment that we have to the veteran when he or she returns home.

I'm reminded of that statement that was made by Abraham Lincoln when he said that -- and I quote him: "All that a man has, he will give for his life and while all contribute to their substance as a soldier, puts his life at risk and at stake and often he yields it up in his country's defense."

The highest merit then is due to the soldier, and I would like to add today that when we always talk about Department of Defense and that we can't leave a stone unturned in making sure the funding and the commitment is there, the other side of that coin, the soldier in a couple of years, maybe many years removed, is the veteran.

So when we talk about paying the very important honor and dignity to the soldier, we need to flip that coin and also add the highest merit then is also due to the veteran as well, as Lincoln would say, and to paraphrase him.

Again, I want to thank the DAV for your work. It is extraordinary. It makes a difference. Keep sending it down and keep lobbying us. We do listen, and we will fight, and fight hard, for our veterans. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, Chairman Smith. My next introduction is National Membership Director Michael Walsh for his report and the presentation of the membership recruitment

awards.

MR. MICHAEL WALSH: Thank you, Commander. Commander Bowers, National Adjutant Wilson, national officers and delegates to this 83rd National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans, it's my pleasure to participate in the membership awards portion of this convention.

I'm really excited about being able to recognize the unparalleled achievements of our recruiters and the successes obtained by our departments and chapters that have for the second consecutive year resulted in DAV reaching all-time highs in total members and fully paid life members.

Our goal is to reach one million fully paid life members, and we are well on our way and getting closer to that goal each year.

Of course, from my biased point of view, this is the highlight of this week's activities. It gives us the opportunity to publicly recognize those individuals who have statistically shown tremendous success in assuring the continued and steady growth of the Disabled American Veterans as this nation's finest veterans' service organization.

On June 30, 2004, our total membership stood at 1,264,181. Of that, 953,656 were fully paid life members. (Applause) That is 30,644 over our goal that we set last year. This is a remarkable achievement.

In the time when World War II veterans are too quickly passing away, and, regretfully, many individuals feel that many organizations are no longer worthy of the time, effort and energy to participate, we continue to grow.

It tells us that we are doing something right for the disabled veterans of this country, and they recognize that the DAV truly is the organization that builds better lives for America's veterans and their families.

We want all those who are eligible to become members. Mixing the tried and true methods of recruiting with innovative techniques allowed by technology, we will continue to reach out to those who need us.

Very briefly, a few of the ways we are accomplishing this is completion and enhancement of the new membership database; continuing to expand and monitor the use of our member benefit package; and we continue to make our national conventions and mid-winter conferences activities that will attract more DAV members and their families.

Finally, we attempt to provide guidance and direction to chapters and departments on methods of increasing member participation in chapter programs and events.

I continue to believe our recruiters are successful, not because of the incentive plans or the possibility of reward and recognition, but because they see the DAV as an organization worthy of their efforts.

Once that realization sets in, recruiting becomes a lot easier. Everyone who recruited a member during this past year certainly made me look good as a membership director. You all have my deepest appreciation for that.

Now let's be honest. How many of you chapter and department officials looked at your goals last August and said what is he trying to do to us? You probably said to yourselves, is he crazy or what's he smoking or whatever came to your mind, I don't know.

I'll admit that I went out on a limb last year with an increased population goal that only appeared to be outrageous. We felt it necessary to help make up ground for the many members we lost in cleaning our membership files and keep us on track to the one million Life Member goal.

I was a little nervous at times, but by late May, as a result of a lot of hard work by you people, we met that goal and then surpassed it. Again, for that, you all have my appreciation. (Applause)

Commander, in an effort to move things along, I would be honored to assist you in the presentation of the membership awards. As you may know, there are a few surprises in this year's final standings.

In keeping with tradition, we will award the popular leather bomber jacket, along with the specially designed plaque for the department headquarters.

Starting with our smallest divisions, Commander, for Division V, those departments with fewer than 5,000 members, the Department of North Dakota finished at 104.44 percent of goal, or 174 fully paid members over goal. Accepting the award is current Department Commander Douglas Patenaude. (Applause)

In Division IV, those departments who have between 5,000 and 9,999 members, the Department of South Dakota took all honors with 109.03 percent of goal, or 366 fully paid life members over goal. Accepting for the department is H.G. Krosschell. (Applause)

In Division III, those departments with 10,000 to 17,999 members, the Department of Louisiana, Commander John Wenthe, finished at 104.42 percent of goal, or 412 life members over goal. (Applause)

In Division II, those departments with 18,000 to 34,999 members, the Department of Minnesota. Accepting for the department is Hank Sadler. The department finished with 962 fully paid members over goal, or at 106.15 percent. (Applause)

Commander, I wonder if you see a pattern developing here. Of those four division winners, three of them are from the 14th District. (Applause)

Finally, Division I, the Department of Florida. Commander Roger Sullivan leads this largest division, those with over 35,000 members. The department finished with 3,684 fully paid life members over goal, or finishing at 106 percent of goal, truly a remarkable achievement. (Applause)

The Judge Robert Marx Award, which goes to the department with the highest percentage increase over goal, is presented this year to the Department of South Dakota.

The Jonathon M. Wainwright Award for the highest numerical gain is presented to the Department of Florida and Commander Roger Sullivan. (Applause)

Finally, it is my pleasure to present this year's Recruiter of the Year. This man is no stranger to this stage. He was previously presented with this honor for seven consecutive years from 1993 to 2000, when he was unseated by this year's runner-up, Mr. Coy Hennis of North Carolina.

During this past year, this gentleman worked tirelessly in getting current partially paid members to become fully paid. It seemed that the Membership Department at National Headquarters received almost daily phone calls to provide him with lists and labels of New York members that he targeted effectively with invitations, suggestions, offers and well-reasoned, thought-out arguments on the advantages of becoming a fully paid life member.

It obviously worked. For the membership year, he obtained 601 partial-paid members and 615 fully paid members, for a total of 1,216. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome back Prosper Sodano of New York City. (Applause)

In addition to the truly remarkable achievement of Prosper, there are many recruiters who have earned a special recognition. Those recruiters added an immeasurable sense of achievement

throughout the membership department.

The top recruiters in each of the divisions are:

In Division I, Coy Hennis of North Carolina; Division II, Mike Stamper of Kentucky; Division 3, Herman Hilmer of Louisiana; Division IV, Jay Vierra of Rhode Island; and, finally, in Division V, Greg Seurer of North Dakota. (Applause)

Commander, as I close, I just want to say how much a pleasure it was to serve you and the DAV during the past year. Your successful year has helped make the DAV bigger and stronger than ever.

I also want to express my appreciation for the vision, dedication and guidance provided by our National Adjutant, Arthur Wilson.

Executive Directors Rick Patterson and Dave Gorman have also provided leadership, direction and support of our membership programs. And, finally, thanks to my Assistant National Membership Director, Andre Smith, and the Membership Department employees back at headquarters for their tireless efforts.

Thank you, Commander and members, for your attention this afternoon and the support you provide the membership effort. I'm excited about the future of this organization, and I know that you are, too. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, Mike. I might note that two of the recipients, as they came up, said please say thank you to all of the national service officers for the work they do in recruitment. I'm sure that's true for every one of them. I'll entertain a motion to accept Mike Walsh's report.

MR. LINDEN: AL Linden, delegate, Gator 90, Florida, so moves.

COMMANDER BOWERS: May I have a second?

MR. BICK: Sidney Bick, Past Department Commander, Chapter 47, Illinois, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: I have a motion. I have a second. All those in favor, say aye; any opposed. The motion is carried. (Applause)

I now call upon the Treasurer of the Board of Directors for his report, Jerome Krejci. My Senior Vice-Commander corrected me. He told me I'm supposed to introduce the Board first and since he knows the ritual, I'm going to do that.

MR. JEROME KREJCI: You're the boss. (Laughter)

CHAIRMAN BOWERS: I'll ask the members of the Board of Directors to please stand. Hold your applause until they're all standing:

Chairman of the Board of Directors is Ed Heath from Maine; Vice-Chairman, Jim Sursely from Florida; Secretary, Arthur H. Wilson; Treasurer, Jerome Krejci of Minnesota.

The directors are Thomas Mazza of New York; John Regan, Massachusetts; Bobby Williams, North Carolina; along with Judge Advocate Mike Dobmeier and myself, who serve as the advisors. For his report, Jerome Krejci.

MR. KREJCI: National Commander Bowers, fellow members, National Executive Committee, DAV members and guests, at our meeting this last Friday, it was our privilege that all delegates registered at that time to see a video and slide review by Art Wilson, Dave Gorman and Rick Patterson on the past decade of DAV progress, which has brought us to where we are today.

It is the record of outstanding accomplishments, of which we all can be very proud. It is now my honor and privilege to present a report on the financial affairs of our organization for the six-month period ending June 30, 2004.

The DAV's gross contributions from direct mail and

fundraising through that date were $50.8 million, with the support and revenue from all sources of $78.2 million.

By year's end, we expect to mail 60.6 million pieces of fundraising mail and generate $101.6 million in gross contributions.

Under the Department Fundraising Program, distributions to the departments in December 2003 and June 2004 totaled $3.6 million. Since the program began in 1994, $39.4 million have been distributed to departments for their service programs.

The Board would like to thank all our departments and chapters for their continued participation in this program and especially our members for their support.

Through June 2004, DAV had total expenditures of $77.5 million, of which $54.2 million was for service programs. This was an increase of 6.7 percent over the first six months of 2003.

Over the same period, expenditures for fundraising and administration declined by approximately one percent. As of June 30, 2004, the value of general fund long-term investment portfolio grew to $235 million, an increase of 8.7 percent over the same period in 2003.

The financial stability of the Life Membership Fund has been an ongoing source of concern to the board. But based upon actions taken by our predecessor, the National Finance Committee, we can report that on June 30, 2004, the Life Membership Fund reserve was $59.8 million.

At a projected earning rate on investments of 6.66 percent, and the reduction in distributions approved by the committee, we estimate that the fund will be depleted by the year 2013 with 614,000 members remaining.

I would like to thank National Adjutant Art Wilson and his staff for all their hard work, which makes this report possible. Let me thank you, Commander Bowers, for the support I received in my role as the Board of Directors Treasurer.

It has been an honor to serve as the treasurer of this important committee. Commander, that concludes my report to the National Convention, a report I feel honored to offer to our delegates. I thank you and move for the adoption of my report. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, Jerome. Jerome has moved for the adoption of the report.

MR. FRANK J. DROGO: Frank Drogo, Mercury Chapter 29 delegate, makes the motion to accept the Board of Directors report.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Frank, Jerome made the motion. Would you second that?

MR. DROGO: I second that motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: I have a motion and I have a second. All those in favor, say aye; any opposed. The motion is carried. Again, Jerome, thank you. That was very informative, and we appreciate it.

Disabled American Veterans

Financial Statements for the Year Ended December 31, 2003 and Independent Auditors' Report

Deloitte

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INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

Board of Directors
Disabled American Veterans:

We have audited the accompanying statement of financial position of Disabled American Veterans (DAV) as of December 31, 2003, 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 auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. 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, 2003 and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

March 8, 2004

Member of
Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 2003

ASSETS		LIABILITIES AND UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	
ASSETS:		LIABILITIES:	
Cash, interest bearing	$ 6,178,002	Accounts payable	$ 3,095,729
Receivables	1,320,658	Accrued expenses:	
Solicitation materials	3,462,820	Salaries and related taxes and withholdings	1,611,557
Prepaid expenses	4,295,868	Medical	650,000
Investments	249,341,421	Pension	9,843,730
Property and equipment, net	12,544,623	Postretirement benefits	35,952,388
Life Membership:		Deferred dues and service fees collected	
Cash, interest bearing	2,437,483	in advance	2,952,436
Investments	54,599,274	Other	2,131,730
		Life Membership:	
		Accounts payable	377,626
		Reserve for future distribution of life membership dues	56,659,131
		Total liabilities	113,274,327
		UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	220,905,822
TOTAL	$334,180,149	TOTAL	$334,180,149

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003

SUPPORT AND REVENUE:	
Support:	
Contributions received primarily from direct mail solicitations	$ 99,010,320
Contributed services and facilities, primarily services	30,987,134
Bequests	3,947,591
Total support	133,945,045
Revenue:	
Membership dues and fees	7,236,250
Income from investments, net	6,557,814
Realized investment gain	1,825,598
List royalties	599,988
Miscellaneous	128,408
Total revenue	16,348,058
Total support and revenue	150,293,103
EXPENSES:	
Program Services:	
National Service Program	37,870,863
Legislative Service Program	1,093,089
Voluntary Service Program	30,879,713
State Services, Disaster Relief, and Memorials	5,053,063
Publications and Other Communications	3,785,875
Membership Services	6,273,217
Public Awareness Outreach	19,811,954
Total program services	104,767,774
Supporting Services:	
Fund Raising Costs	26,660,868
Administrative and General	5,875,358
Total supporting services	32,536,226
Total expenses	137,304,000
EXCESS OF SUPPORT AND REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	12,989,103
INCREASE IN UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	23,876,234
EXCESS OF SUPPORT AND REVENUE AND INCREASE IN UNREALIZED APPRECIATION ON INVESTMENTS OVER EXPENSES	36,865,337
ADJUSTMENT TO MINIMUM PENSION LIABILITY	(1,378,218)
INCREASE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	35,487,119
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	185,418,703
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS—End of year	$220,905,822

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003

	National Service Program	Legislative Service Program	Voluntary Service Program	State Services Disaster Relief and Memorials	Publications and other Communications	Membership Services	Public Awareness Outreach	Total Program Services	Fund Raising Costs	Administrative and General	Total Supporting Services	Total
Salaries	$18,110,599	$ 518,253	$ 382,815		$ 544,728	$1,158,853	$ 3,093	$ 20,718,341	$ 3,601,191	$ 3,047,978	$ 6,649,169	$ 27,367,510
Employee benefits	9,890,716	238,046	231,454		269,930	561,601		11,191,747	2,028,640	1,491,137	3,519,777	14,711,524
Payroll taxes	1,399,930	36,443	34,048		39,882	76,127	266	1,586,696	286,369	217,892	504,261	2,090,957
DAV transportation network—volunteers			29,396,426					29,396,426				29,396,426
Winter sports clinic			402,008					402,008				402,008
Colorado Trust			52,270					52,270				52,270
Other grants		40,000		$ 10,008				50,008				50,008
Disaster relief				90,980				90,980				90,980
State Service Program				4,776,804				4,776,804				4,776,804
Memorials				122,070				122,070				122,070
Scholarship			41,250					41,250				41,250
Expenses of national convention						613,659		613,659				613,659
Expenses of national commander and committees						487,598		487,598				487,598
Travel, training and relocation	2,311,606	45,538	161,300		28,382	102,843		2,649,669	31,793	206,781	238,574	2,888,243
Facilities	1,590,708							1,590,708				1,590,708
Postage and shipping	592,671	48,681	22,716		1,151,400	323,765	3,529	2,142,762	7,742,461	238,942	7,981,403	10,124,165
Equipment rental and maintenance	283,470		108		3,086	29,741		316,405	744,267	316,800	1,061,067	1,377,472
Supplies	754,483	68,545	135,180		236,647	387,363	7,359	1,589,577	566,308	695,798	1,262,106	2,851,683
Insurance	148,439	879	4,435		651	76,689		231,093	43,358	179,669	223,027	454,120
Telephone	84,705	1,996	3,448		5,288	15,472		110,909	32,031	54,222	86,253	197,162
Outside service	321,258		120		1,605	22,280	16	345,279	296,236	14,047	310,283	655,562
Project costs	972	85,429	650	53,201	185,247	67,149		392,648	30,691	6,544	37,235	429,883
Printing of magazine					1,219,555			1,219,555				1,219,555
Cost of solicitation mailings—materials									29,095,840		29,095,840	29,095,840
Heat, light, water and power	109,552							109,552	379,939	345	380,284	489,836
Security service	105,038							105,038	255,345		255,345	360,383
Depreciation of property and equipment	735,181	9,279	3,511		12,498	358,922		1,119,391	1,587,374	432,893	2,020,267	3,139,658
Legal fees	85,346					31,735		117,081		187,642	187,642	304,723
Professional fees	155,312		2,974		28,965	480,661		667,912	70,878	682,019	752,897	1,420,809
Allocations (to) from other departments	1,148,328				57,034	1,470,957	19,797,691	22,474,010	(20,135,352)	(2,338,658)	(22,474,010)	
Other	42,549		5,000		977	7,802		56,328	3,499	441,307	444,806	501,134
Total, year ended December 31, 2003	$37,870,863	$ 1,093,089	$30,879,713	$ 5,053,063	$3,785,875	$6,273,217	$ 19,811,954	$ 104,767,774	$26,660,868	$ 5,875,358	$32,536,226	$ 137,304,000

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:	
Excess of support and revenue over expenses	$ 12,989,103
Adjustments to reconcile excess of support and revenue over expenses to net cash provided by operating activities:	
Depreciation	3,139,658
Gain on disposal of property and equipment	(203)
Realized investment gains	(1,825,598)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:	
Receivables	1,265,707
Solicitation materials	(852,951)
Prepaid expenses	300,855
Accounts payable	(1,399,062)
Accrued expenses	505,608
Deferred dues and service fees and other	(798,359)
Additions to the life membership fund	6,100,314
Distributions from the life membership fund	(11,222,730)
Net cash provided by operating activities	8,202,342
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:	
Payments for property and equipment	(2,322,592)
Proceeds from sales of property and equipment	6,450
Purchase of investments	(341,256,699)
Proceeds from the sale of investments	338,547,346
Net cash used in investing activities	(5,025,495)
NET INCREASE IN CASH	3,176,847
CASH—Beginning of year	5,438,638
CASH—End of year	$ 8,615,485

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003

1. ORGANIZATION

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) is a Congressionally chartered, not-for-profit service organization. Made up exclusively of 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;
- providing outreach concerning its program services to the American people, generally, and to disabled veterans and their families, specifically;
- 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 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 of accounting.

Investments—Investments are recorded at fair (market) value. The fair value of DAV's investments is determined based on the quoted market prices of the related securities. Gains and losses on the sale of investment securities are recognized based upon the specific identification method and, for general investments (also see Note 3), are reflected as a separate component of revenue.

The cost and market value of investments in securities and the net unrealized appreciation at December 31, 2003 are summarized below:

General	Cost	Market Value	Unrealized Appreciation/ (Depreciation)
Cash equivalents	$ 15,849,012	$ 15,849,012	$
Corporate bonds	73,490,717	75,062,842	1,572,125
U.S. Treasury obligations	26,653,590	26,547,042	(106,548)
Common stocks	94,118,794	106,581,947	12,463,153
Common stock funds	19,691,564	24,193,288	4,501,724
Subtotal	$229,803,677	248,234,131	$18,430,454
Interest and dividends receivable		1,107,290	
Total		$249,341,421	
Life Membership			
Cash equivalents	$ 1,989,009	$ 1,989,009	$
Corporate bonds	16,225,444	16,602,209	376,765
U.S. Treasury obligations	4,209,761	4,155,317	(54,444)
Common stocks	25,087,126	28,653,537	3,566,411
Common stock funds	2,924,516	2,943,630	19,114
Subtotal	$ 50,435,856	54,343,702	$ 3,907,846
Interest and dividends receivable		255,572	
Total		$ 54,599,274	

Investment income is composed of interest and dividend income of $6,923,923, net of fees paid to trustees of $366,109.

Property and Equipment—Property and equipment are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation, and are composed of the following at December 31, 2003:

	Cost	Accumulated Depreciation	Net Book Value
Land and improvements	$ 1,153,927	$ 431,662	$ 722,265
Buildings and improvements	9,907,456	5,565,655	4,341,801
Machinery and other equipment	23,625,905	16,173,696	7,452,209
Construction in progress	28,348		28,348
Total	$34,715,636	$22,171,013	$12,544,623

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

Contributions—Contributions received are recorded as unrestricted, temporarily restricted or permanently restricted support depending on the existence and nature of any donor restrictions. 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.

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 2,524,152 hours accounted for in 2003 – 1,777,293 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 $29,396,426. This value, together with the value of certain contributed facilities, is recorded as Support and Expenses in the accompanying Statement of Activities and Statement of Functional Expenses. The remaining 746,859 hours—valued at $12,353,048, are contributed to the DAV VA Voluntary Service Program. This amount and the value of any other volunteer time have not been recorded in the accompanying Statement of Activities and Statement of Functional Expenses because such hours do not meet the technical requirements set forth in accounting standards for recognizing contributed services.

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 accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America 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 support, revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual amounts could differ from those estimates.

Allocation of Joint Costs—In 2003, DAV incurred joint costs of $43,994,869 for informational materials and activities that included fund-raising appeals. Of those costs, $19,797,691 was allocated to public awareness outreach (program services) and $24,197,178 was allocated to fund raising costs.

3. LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Under the bylaws of DAV, any eligible person may become a life 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, department and national (DAV) per capita dues for life 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 chapter and department dues are distributed at the beginning of the membership year.

The following summary represents the changes during 2003 in the reserve for future distribution of membership dues:

Balance—January 1, 2003	$53,172,093
Additions:	
Membership dues received	4,792,122
Earnings on invested assets, net	1,204,641
Other income	103,551
Loss on sale of investments	(233,165)
Total	5,867,149
Distribution of membership dues:	
National Headquarters	6,357,774
Local Chapters	2,449,035
State Departments	2,415,921
Total	11,222,730
Increase in unrealized appreciation of investments	8,842,619
Balance—December 31, 2003	$56,659,131

Earnings on invested assets is comprised of interest and dividends of $1,294,409, net of fees paid of $89,768.

4. PENSION PLAN AND POSTRETIREMENT BENEFITS

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. In 2003, DAV funded amounts in excess of the recommended actuarially determined contribution amount. Contributions to the plan are based on the Projected Unit Credit Actuarial cost method.

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.

Summarized information for the plans is as follows:

	Pension	Other Postretirement Benefits
As of December 31, 2003:		
Projected benefit obligation	$ 74,467,823	
Accumulated postretirement benefit obligation		$ 46,657,000
Fair value of plan assets	51,407,766	
Funded status	(23,060,057)	(46,657,000)
Accrued benefit cost recognized in the statement of financial position	(9,843,730)	(35,952,388)

	Pension	Other Postretirement Benefits
For the year ended December 31, 2003:		
Benefit cost	$ 5,299,440	$ 4,499,000
Employer contribution	8,000,000	1,681,000
Plan participants' contributions		166,000
Benefits paid	(7,157,538)	(1,847,000)
Weighted-average rate assumptions used for the December 31 valuation:		
Discount rate	6.00 %	6.00 %
Expected return on plan assets	8.75 %	n/a
Rate of compensation increase	4.50 %	4.50 %

The provisions of SFAS No. 87, "Employers' Accounting for Pensions," required the DAV to recognize a minimum liability with an offsetting reduction of net assets of $20,972,898 at December 31, 2003. This liability represented the amount by which the accumulated benefit obligation, $(61,251,496) exceeded the sum of the fair market value of plan assets and prepaid amounts previously recorded. At December 31, 2002, a minimum liability was recognized with an offsetting reduction in net assets of $19,594,680, therefore, an additional $1,378,218 reduction in net assets was recognized in 2003.

The accumulated postretirement benefit obligation 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 15.0% in 2003 to 5.5% in 2013, after which the trend rate is expected to stabilize.

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 a percentage of the employees' base salary. DAV's contributions in 2003 were $1,237,992 and are included in employee benefits expense in the accompanying statement of functional expenses.

5. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Disabled American Veterans National Service Foundation—The accompanying financial statements do not include the net assets (or changes therein) of the Disabled American Veterans National Service Foundation ("Foundation") which are held by the Foundation and available to DAV only through appropriation by the Foundation's Board of Directors. The National Service Foundation is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. Based upon audited financial statements at December 31, 2003, net assets of the Foundation were $29,752,692. During 2003, DAV provided the Foundation with the use of DAV personnel, facilities and equipment. For the personnel services, DAV charged the Foundation $144,333. Facilities and equipment are provided by DAV at no charge. Additionally, in 2003, DAV contributed $52,270 to The Colorado Trust, a temporarily restricted fund established by the Foundation to provide funds for the service programs of needy DAV state departments and local chapters. At December 31, 2003, the Foundation owed $97,456 to DAV which is recorded as a receivable in the accompanying statement of financial position.

Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust—Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust ("Trust") is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt entity which was established in 1986. The Trust is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. During 2003, DAV provided the Trust with the use of DAV personnel, facilities and equipment. For the personnel services, DAV charged the Trust $49,916. Facilities and equipment are provided by DAV at no charge. The DAV also provides fundraising support to the Trust at no charge. At December 31, 2003, the Trust owed $52,848 to DAV which is recorded as a receivable in the accompanying statement of financial position.

Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation, Inc.—Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation, Inc. ("DVLMF") is a 501c(3) tax exempt entity which was established in 1998. The DVLMF is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. During 2003, DAV provided the DVLMF use of personnel and administrative assistance for a charge of $21,118. Also during 2003 the DAV donated $122,070 to the DVLMF.

* * * * * *

Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary National Headquarters

Financial Statements for the Year Ended December 31, 2003 and Independent Auditors' Report

Deloitte

Deloitte & Touche LLP
Suite 1900
250 East Fifth St.
Cincinnati, OH 45201-5340
USA
Tel: +1 513 784 7100
www.deloitte.com

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, 2003 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. The prior year summarized comparative information has been derived from the Auxiliary's 2002 financial statements and, in our report dated March 14, 2003, we expressed an unqualified opinion on those financial statements.

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. 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, 2003 and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Deloitte & Touche LLP
April 27, 2004

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 2003 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 2002

ASSETS	2003	2002
GENERAL ASSETS:		
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 565,872	$ 2,222,351
Investments at fair market value	5,517,709	3,869,718
Accrued interest receivable	26,514	35,734
Materials and supplies	107,698	119,669
Prepaid expenses	4,366	37,629
Other assets	17,124	30,278
Accounts receivable from the DAV	10,831	
SERVICE PROGRAM ASSETS—		
Cash and cash equivalents	346,098	321,423
DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAM ASSETS—		
Cash and cash equivalents	9,299	9,299
EDUCATION LOAN PROGRAM ASSETS:		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,075,742	1,058,198
Notes receivable (less allowance of $5,875 in 2003 and 2002)	178,524	169,499
LIFE MEMBERSHIP ASSETS:		
Cash and cash equivalents		88,196
Accrued interest receivable	56,320	67,491
Investments at fair market value	7,315,165	6,780,980
TOTAL	$15,231,262	$14,810,465

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	2003	2002
LIABILITIES:		
Accounts payable—DAV National Headquarters	$ 21,084	$ 385,792
Contributions distributable to state departments	147,609	135,463
Accrued vacation and sick leave pay	3,465	4,441
Deferred membership fees	620,757	598,830
Other	9,263	13,594
Life Membership:		
Cash overdraft	716,559	
Reserve for future distribution of life membership dues	6,654,926	6,936,667
Total liabilities	8,173,663	8,074,787
NET ASSETS:		
Unrestricted—General	5,447,936	5,177,259
Temporarily restricted—Service Program	346,098	321,423
Temporarily restricted—Disaster Relief Program	9,299	9,299
Permanently restricted—Education Loan Program	1,254,266	1,227,697
Total net assets	7,057,599	6,735,678
TOTAL	$15,231,262	$14,810,465

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 2002

	2003					
	Unrestricted General	Temporarily Restricted - Service Program	Temporarily Restricted - Disaster Relief Program	Permanently Restricted - Education Loan Program	Total	2002 Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:						
Membership fees and mandates	$ 388,546	$ 18,031		$ 6,759	$ 413,336	$ 335,995
Life Membership dues	885,304				885,304	877,380
Contributions	268,956	6,083		10,618	285,657	285,210
Contributed facilities	25,300				25,300	26,000
Sale of membership items, less related direct costs of $44,752	(2,552)				(2,552)	(6,882)
Conference and meetings	16,390				16,390	14,696
National convention	17,416				17,416	16,540
Interest income	164,834	3,771		9,192	177,797	227,961
Net assets released from restrictions	2,828	(2,828)				
Other	10,343	(382)			9,961	5,253
Total revenues	1,777,365	24,675		26,569	1,828,609	1,782,153
EXPENSES:						
Salaries and wages	400,124				400,124	420,800
Employee benefits	139,988				139,988	422,735
Distributions to state departments	139,424				139,424	154,378
Fundraising expenses	299,880				299,880	98,028
Payroll taxes	28,220				28,220	31,702
Conferences and meetings	69,512				69,512	61,451
Expenses of national convention	80,398				80,398	97,141
Printing, stationery and office supplies	67,274				67,274	33,053
Expenses of National Commander and officers	20,808				20,808	28,260
Contributed facilities	25,300				25,300	26,000
Postage	55,453				55,453	57,432
Travel	37,782				37,782	32,126
Professional fees	18,700				18,700	17,575
Service program benefits	2,828				2,828	5,340
VAVS, memberships and other awards	7,062				7,062	16,176
Other	104,839				104,839	77,290
Total expenses	1,497,592				1,497,592	1,579,487
EXCESS OF SUPPORT AND REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	279,773	24,675		26,569	331,017	202,666
CHANGE IN UNREALIZED DEPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	(9,096)				(9,096)	(69,276)
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	270,677	24,675		26,569	321,921	133,390
NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	5,177,259	321,423	$ 9,299	1,227,697	6,735,678	6,602,288
NET ASSETS—End of year	$5,447,936	$346,098	$ 9,299	$1,254,266	$7,057,599	$6,735,678

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003
WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 2002

	2003	2002
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Change in net assets	$ 321,921	$ 133,390
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to cash used in operating activities:		
Permanently restricted contributions and interest income	(26,569)	(35,452)
Change in unrealized depreciation in investments	9,096	69,276
Change in assets and liabilities:		
Accrued interest receivable	20,391	27,485
Materials and supplies	11,971	11,239
Prepaid expenses, other assets and accounts receivable	35,586	(34,071)
Accounts payable	(364,708)	115,112
Contributions distributable to state departments	12,146	(32,005)
Deferred membership fees	21,927	(7,352)
Reserve for future distribution of life membership dues	(281,741)	(596,664)
Other liabilities	(5,307)	2,765
Total adjustments	(567,208)	(479,667)
Net cash used in operating activities	(245,287)	(346,277)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Increase in general fund investments	(1,657,087)	(500,495)
Decrease (increase) in Life Membership investments	(534,185)	1,418,066
Education loans	(38,000)	(32,500)
Collections from repayment of education loans	28,975	30,870
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	(2,200,297)	915,941
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES—		
Permanently restricted education fund contributions and interest income	26,569	35,452
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	(2,419,015)	605,116
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS:		
Beginning of year	3,699,467	3,094,351
End of year	$ 1,280,452	$3,699,467

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003

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. The DAV Auxiliary is exempt from income taxes under Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

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

The accompanying financial statements include certain prior year information summarized from DAV Auxiliary's 2002 financial statements. Such information does not include sufficient detail, and is not intended, to constitute a presentation in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Contributions—Contributions received are recorded at their fair value and are classified as unrestricted, temporarily restricted, or permanently restricted support. 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—The DAV Auxiliary records investments at fair (market) value. The fair value of the DAV Auxiliary's investments is determined based on the quoted market price of the related securities. Gains and losses resulting from the sale of securities are recognized at the time of disposition and are computed using the specific identification method.

The cost and market value of investments in securities and the net unrealized gain (loss) at December 31, 2003 are summarized below:

	Cost	Market Value	Unrealized Net Gain/ (Loss)
Money market investments	$ 2,407,715	$ 2,407,715	
Corporate bonds	2,015,526	2,039,970	$ 24,444
U.S. Treasury obligations	5,297,896	5,373,013	75,117
Mutual funds	3,729,267	3,012,176	(717,091)
Total	$13,450,404	$12,832,874	$(617,530)

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 accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America 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.

Reclassifications—Certain 2002 amounts have been reclassified to confirm with the current year presentation.

3. FREEDOM FOUNDATION

The DAV Auxiliary has designated $8,211 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 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 2003 in the reserve for future distribution of dues:

Balance, January 1, 2003	$6,936,667
Additions:	
Membership dues received	265,856
Earnings on invested assets	350,715
Change in unrealized appreciation of investments	186,447
Total	803,018
Deductions:	
Dues to National Headquarters	885,304
Dues to Local units	69,712
Dues to State Departments	115,595
Investment fee	14,148
Total	1,084,759
Balance, December 31, 2003	$6,654,926

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 as 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 $1,500 per year for a maximum of four 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.

Disaster Relief Program—Donations from units and individuals are recorded as temporarily restricted net assets which are used for members of the DAV Auxiliary who are in need of temporary financial assistance due to natural disaster, such as flood, earthquake, etc. Benefits are paid directly to the individual.

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. Contributions are intended to provide not only for benefits attributed to service to date, but also for those expected in the future. In 2003, DAV charged the DAV Auxiliary $139,988 for its share of the retirement plan cost as well as other benefits for employees, including health and life insurance and contributions to a defined contribution plan.

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 2003, DAV did not charge the DAV Auxiliary for these benefits.

7. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The DAV Auxiliary occupies space in the DAV National Headquarters' 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 $25,300 in 2003, 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.

* * * * * *

During your district meetings, you elected delegates to serve on various convention committees. At this time, I would like to entertain a motion that the list of delegates and alternates selected by the twenty-one national districts and the National Blind Veterans Chapter to serve on convention committees be admitted into the record for the proceedings of this convention. I need a motion and a second.

MS. MARIANNE KECKLER: Keckler, 67 of Florida, makes the motion.

MR. BICK: Sidney Bick, Past Department Commander, Chapter 47, Illinois, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: I have a motion and I have a second. All those in favor, say aye; any opposed. The motion is carried.

2004 NATIONAL CONVENTION
Reno, NV

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

DISTRICT		NAME (DELEGATE & ALTERNATE)	CHAPTER NO. & STATE
01			
		Thomas J. Daley	MASSACHUSETTS 049
	(Alt)	Alfred A. Brodeur	MASSACHUSETTS 059
02			
		Jeffrey N. Sell	NEW YORK 135
	(Alt)	Chaney L. Tupis	NEW YORK 082
03			
		Richard W. Schatz	RHODE ISLAND 012
	(Alt)	JUNIOUS B. OWENS	NEW HAMPSHIRE 013
04			
		Maurice E. Ames	CONNECTICUT 012
	(Alt)	Willie Jones	NEW JERSEY 032
05			
		Robert L. Dubay	PENNSYLVANIA 052
	(Alt)	John W. Neeves	PENNSYLVANIA 048
06			
		Wilbert B. Forbes	MARYLAND 017
	(Alt)	German Bravo-Perez	PUERTO RICO 001
07			
		David L. Tannenbaum	FLORIDA 004
	(Alt)	Mary L. Redding	FLORIDA 016
08			
		James K. Steward	MISSISSIPPI 043
	(Alt)	Gerald E. Humphries	MISSISSIPPI 011
09			
		Wallace E. Tyson	NORTH CAROLINA 046
	(Alt)	George E. Balch	NORTH CAROLINA 017
10			
		Morris Penermon	MICHIGAN 001
	(Alt)	Edward E. Reeves	MICHIGAN 130
11			
		Robert H. Bertschy	OHIO 047
	(Alt)	Daniel J. Smiley Jr.	OHIO 109
12			
		Allen J. Anderson	WISCONSIN 026
	(Alt)	Edward Reed	ILLINOIS 016
13			
		James S. Huff	KENTUCKY 004
	(Alt)	James P. Balmer	KENTUCKY 149
14			
		Richard C. Amos	SOUTH DAKOTA 001
	(Alt)	Scott D. Berndt	MINNESOTA 039
15			
		Kristine S. Childers	NEBRASKA 007
	(Alt)	Terence W. Rigby	IOWA 002
16			
		Kenneth G. Musselmann	CALIFORNIA 019
	(Alt)	Wallace J. Brown	CALIFORNIA 021
17			
		Edwin G. Cooke	NEW MEXICO 029
	(Alt)	Silverio Joe Armijo	NEW MEXICO 003
18			
		Floyd W. Buell	NEVADA 012
	(Alt)	Eric R. Jackson	ARIZONA 002
19			
		Jerald A Royse Sr.	WASHINGTON 046
	(Alt)	Jesus Torres	WASHINGTON 001
20			
		Albert D. Owens	TEXAS 005
	(Alt)	William P. Brown	TEXAS 009
21			
		Ronnie D. Driscoll	OKLAHOMA 032
	(Alt)	Robert D. Cohoon	OKLAHOMA 039
BLIND VETS			
		Terry M. Livingston	BLIND VETERANS 001
	(Alt)	Gerard R. Boucher	BLIND VETERANS 001

ADVISORS: Kenneth G. Musselmann - Barry A. Jesinoski

2004 NATIONAL CONVENTION
Reno, NV

COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT

DISTRICT		NAME (DELEGATE & ALTERNATE)	CHAPTER NO. & STATE
01			
		John V. Hogan	MASSACHUSETTS 013
	(Alt)	Lorraine Ahern	MASSACHUSETTS 079
02			
		Keith A. Robinson	NEW YORK 015
	(Alt)	Theodore Barbuto	NEW YORK 030
03			
		RON . REILLY	NEW HAMPSHIRE 004
	(Alt)	Frederick J. Moore Jr.	MAINE 006
04			
		Jenny E. DeRaffele	NEW JERSEY 032
	(Alt)	Allen Gumpenberger	CONNECTICUT 005
05			
		Kirby C. Lindsey	PENNSYLVANIA 075
	(Alt)	Vincent P. Darcangelo	PENNSYLVANIA 055
06			
		Michael G. Knight	WEST VIRGINIA 006
	(Alt)	James B. Strawder Jr.	DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA 014
07			
		Albert M. Sorrentino	FLORIDA 109
	(Alt)	Brian A. Moore	FLORIDA 023
08			
		CHAD Richmond	ALABAMA 004
	(Alt)	Thomas Tucker	ALABAMA 012
09			
		Nathan H. Godwin Jr.	GEORGIA 070
	(Alt)	Freddie L Hooks	GEORGIA 001
10			
		Duane F. Getzmeyer	MICHIGAN 016
	(Alt)	Richard J. Dehnke	MICHIGAN 129
11			
		Joseph R. Lenhart	OHIO 073
	(Alt)	T. Regis Cooney	OHIO 108
12			
		Sidney Bick	ILLINOIS 047
	(Alt)	Merrill D. Cornell	WISCONSIN 018
13			
		Eric D. McGinnis	INDIANA 003
	(Alt)	Steven D. Girdler	KENTUCKY 019
14			
		Delbert J. Foster Jr.	SOUTH DAKOTA 001
	(Alt)	Roy M. Fillion	NORTH DAKOTA 002
15			
		Steven A. Henre	KANSAS 001
	(Alt)	MICHAEL STOKES	MISSOURI 002
16			
		Ruben R. Trejo	CALIFORNIA 039
	(Alt)	Jeff P. Fisher	CALIFORNIA 125
17			
		Terry D. Schow	UTAH 004
	(Alt)	Douglas K. Wells Jr.	UTAH 006
18			
		Jose P. Garcia	NEVADA 013
	(Alt)	Robert T. Fletcher	ARIZONA 020
19			
		Francis P. Reding	IDAHO 025
	(Alt)	LARRY W Metzler	ALASKA 007
20			
		James K. Hackney	TEXAS 011
	(Alt)	Douglas G Herrle	TEXAS 061
21			
		Russell T. Dority	ARKANSAS 005
	(Alt)	Donald R. Cox	ARKANSAS 057

ADVISORS: Norbert Wenthold - Garry J. Augustine - Brian E. Lawrence

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COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND DUES

DISTRICT		NAME (DELEGATE & ALTERNATE)	CHAPTER NO. & STATE
01			
		Donald R. Burning	MASSACHUSETTS 004
	(Alt)	Joseph A. Costa	MASSACHUSETTS 056
02			
		Anthony L. Mirando	NEW YORK 145
	(Alt)	Nicola L. Luciani	NEW YORK 018
03			
		Edward S. Lastowski	NEW HAMPSHIRE 001
	(Alt)	Gary P. Burns	MAINE 001
04			
		Albert E. Church II	CONNECTICUT 005
	(Alt)	Edward F. Norman	CONNECTICUT 006
05			
		Carmen A. De Santi	PENNSYLVANIA 021
	(Alt)	Scott C. Havelka	PENNSYLVANIA 008
06			
		Stephen C. Doll	WEST VIRGINIA 045
	(Alt)	Dennis C. Hurley	WEST VIRGINIA 056
07			
		Grant L. Raulerson	FLORIDA 011
	(Alt)	Phillip G. Meskin	FLORIDA 009
08			
		Joseph D. Weatherford	TENNESSEE 003
	(Alt)	Stephan J. Krasinski	LOUISIANA 033
09			
		Michael J. Truscello	SOUTH CAROLINA 051
	(Alt)	Clarence Brown	SOUTH CAROLINA 044
10			
		Roger L. Jansen	MICHIGAN 014
	(Alt)	Carl W. Poest	MICHIGAN 014
11			
		Joseph W. Johnston	OHIO 063
	(Alt)	Robert L. Cupp	OHIO 036
12			
		Dennis W. Thompson	ILLINOIS 103
	(Alt)	Joshua J. Sniegowski	WISCONSIN 017
13			
		Carlos Arambula	INDIANA 017
	(Alt)	Arnold E. Tilley	INDIANA 055
14			
		Jerome G. Krejci	NORTH DAKOTA 002
	(Alt)	Keith E. Beach	MONTANA 019
15			
		James A. Shuey	NEBRASKA 007
	(Alt)	Joseph Christian Kramer III	KANSAS 003
16			
		Clyde Maddox	CALIFORNIA 028
	(Alt)	James M. Galliher	CALIFORNIA 002
17			
		Thomas L. King II	NEW MEXICO 033
	(Alt)	Robert E. Lougee	COLORADO 007
18			
		W. D. Brzezinski	NEVADA 013
	(Alt)	Arthur E. Forcier	HAWAII 003
19			
		Bruce K. Jeppesen	OREGON 022
	(Alt)	Stan Barton	OREGON 001
20			
		B. E. Baumgardner Jr.	TEXAS 009
	(Alt)	Arthur C. Walker	TEXAS 017
21			
		Robert D. Everhard	OKLAHOMA 039
	(Alt)	Andrew T. Smith	ARKANSAS 010

ADVISORS: Jerome Krejci - Richard E. Patterson

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COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

DISTRICT		NAME (DELEGATE & ALTERNATE)	CHAPTER NO. & STATE
01			
		James H. Tanner	MASSACHUSETTS 010
	(Alt)	Lorie J. Mathias	MASSACHUSETTS 056
02			
		Ronald D. Tears	NEW YORK 015
	(Alt)	Chester Wisnesky Jr.	NEW YORK 182
03			
		Mason J. Sullivan	RHODE ISLAND 021
	(Alt)	Don Paul Izzo	RHODE ISLAND 010
04			
		Anthony C. Giantonio	NEW JERSEY 032
	(Alt)	Joseph J. Harris	NEW JERSEY 044
05			
		Wilbert O Neill Jr.	PENNSYLVANIA 061
	(Alt)	Rafael A. Ramirez	PENNSYLVANIA 008
06			
		Eliud S. Rodriguez	PUERTO RICO 016
	(Alt)	Helen A. Campbell	VIRGINIA 048
07			
		Roger H. Sullivan	FLORIDA 087
	(Alt)	Lawrence M. King	FLORIDA 009
08			
		Mark S. Moore Sr.	ALABAMA 063
	(Alt)	James D. Graves	ALABAMA 076
09			
		Horace Adams	SOUTH CAROLINA 014
	(Alt)	ERNEST H. STROUD	SOUTH CAROLINA 014
10			
		Eugene C. Clark	MICHIGAN 093
	(Alt)	Rolly D. Lee Sr.	MICHIGAN 105
11			
		Thomas K. Keller	OHIO 103
	(Alt)	Howard A. Griffin Sr.	OHIO 003
12			
		Mark M. Aaron	ILLINOIS 001
	(Alt)	Steven B. Hicke	WISCONSIN 014
13			
		Paul F. Wiggins	KENTUCKY 019
	(Alt)	Joseph F. Eckerle	INDIANA 077
14			
		Richard Mc Laughlin	MONTANA 003
	(Alt)	Douglas R. Patenaude	NORTH DAKOTA 002
15			
		Charlie L. Stephens	KANSAS 011
	(Alt)	Howard I. Braman	NEBRASKA 035
16			
		Roderick G. Ramier	CALIFORNIA 011
	(Alt)	David Diehl Holcomb	CALIFORNIA 012
17			
		Henry M. Mutka	COLORADO 016
	(Alt)	ANTHONY Rioux	UTAH 014
18			
		Jane B. Overy	NEVADA 012
	(Alt)	Melvin T. Adkins	NEVADA 001
19			
		Sarah J Royse	WASHINGTON 046
	(Alt)	Richard J Bohnhoff	OREGON 014
20			
		Alphonso R. Altieri	TEXAS 005
	(Alt)	Donald H. Fritz	TEXAS 017
21			
	(Alt)	John W. Freeman	OKLAHOMA 007
BLIND VETS			
		Joseph B. Link	BLIND VETERANS 001
	(Alt)	Robert H. Dawson	BLIND VETERANS 001

ADVISORS: Rick Surratt - Andre D. Smith

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COMMITTEE ON HOSPITAL AND VOLUNTARY SERVICES

DISTRICT		NAME (DELEGATE & ALTERNATE)	CHAPTER NO. & STATE
01			
		Edward J. Bryan	MASSACHUSETTS 119
	(Alt)	Ralph Barrett	MASSACHUSETTS 040
02			
		Dennis L. Krulder	NEW YORK 190
	(Alt)	Anthony E. Merolle	NEW YORK 173
03			
		Raymond S. Sanchas	RHODE ISLAND 013
	(Alt)	Francis J. Patten	VERMONT 003
04			
		Herman M. Wischmann	DELAWARE 001
	(Alt)	Timothy J. Kelly	CONNECTICUT 019
05			
		Raymond A. Moody	PENNSYLVANIA 014
	(Alt)	Richard C. Boarts	PENNSYLVANIA 036
06			
		Theodore Campbell	DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA 014
	(Alt)	Marshall R. Harless	VIRGINIA 003
07			
		Salvator E. Uccello	FLORIDA 042
	(Alt)	Maryann Keckler	FLORIDA 067
08			
		Billy R. Worley	LOUISIANA 030
	(Alt)	Hilmer P. Hermann Jr.	LOUISIANA 033
09			
		James T. Hatley	NORTH CAROLINA 012
	(Alt)	James H. Wright	NORTH CAROLINA 005
10			
		Dennis N. Emery	MICHIGAN 129
	(Alt)	Harold E. De Forest	MICHIGAN 129
11			
		Harlan F. Plummer	OHIO 071
	(Alt)	Raymond H. Hutchinson	OHIO 063
12			
		Henry E. Williams	WISCONSIN 054
	(Alt)	Ramon N. Calderon	ILLINOIS 016
13			
		Lee S. Ewing	KENTUCKY 089
	(Alt)	William A. Reinhart	KENTUCKY 019
14			
		Wayne W. Blue	MINNESOTA 001
	(Alt)	Pamela K. Nielsen	MINNESOTA 013
15			
		Ralph M. Haney	IOWA 020
	(Alt)	Clifford W. Dillard	KANSAS 004
16			
		George H. Steese Jr.	CALIFORNIA 001
	(Alt)	John R. Stinnett	CALIFORNIA 106
17			
		Stephen H. Spitzer	NEW MEXICO 003
	(Alt)	Ray Larribas	NEW MEXICO 033
18			
		Carl Vacco	ARIZONA 001
	(Alt)	Les E. Laberre	NEVADA 007
19			
		Emelda Henson	IDAHO 002
	(Alt)	Timothy R Moore Sr.	ALASKA 007
20			
		Leonard F. Humes	TEXAS 114
	(Alt)	David A. Cuellar	TEXAS 014
21			
		David W. Spurgin	ARKANSAS 046
	(Alt)	Jonathan M. Trimble	ARKANSAS 001

ADVISORS: Norman J. Resner - Joy J. Ilem - Edward E. Hartman

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COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION AND VETERANS RIGHTS

DISTRICT		NAME (DELEGATE & ALTERNATE)	CHAPTER NO. & STATE
01			
		Raymond Richards	MASSACHUSETTS 006
	(Alt)	Richard J. Vaccari	MASSACHUSETTS 065
02			
		William Novak Jr.	NEW YORK 005
	(Alt)	Samuel Danial	NEW YORK 030
03			
		Beth A. Greenwood	RHODE ISLAND 017
	(Alt)	Jay Vierra	RHODE ISLAND 006
04			
		Carmine E. Onofrio	CONNECTICUT 006
	(Alt)	Harry R. Newell	CONNECTICUT 047
05			
		George I. Ford Sr.	PENNSYLVANIA 014
	(Alt)	Franklin L. Homme	PENNSYLVANIA 007
06			
		LEONARD RENCHER	MARYLAND 016
	(Alt)	Jacob N. Stafford	WEST VIRGINIA 056
07			
		Richard E. Giese	FLORIDA 028
	(Alt)	Philip J. Condon	FLORIDA 004
08			
		Hollis O. Bridges	ALABAMA 026
	(Alt)	Walter F. Bates	ALABAMA 006
09			
		William L. Coward Sr.	GEORGIA 040
	(Alt)	Emanuel J. Dixon	GEORGIA 001
10			
		Ronald R. Schrieber	MICHIGAN 135
	(Alt)	David C. Martin	MICHIGAN 007
11			
		Frank D. Williams	OHIO 013
	(Alt)	Howard D. Brandt	OHIO 071
12			
		Thomas W. Rymer	WISCONSIN 045
	(Alt)	Ted Buck	ILLINOIS 028
13			
		Donald G. Inns II	INDIANA 060
	(Alt)	William Bibbs Jr.	KENTUCKY 006
14			
		Henry H. Sadler	MINNESOTA 010
	(Alt)	H. G. Krosschell	SOUTH DAKOTA 003
15			
		Howard R. Johnson Jr.	MISSOURI 002
	(Alt)	Dean W. Butt	NEBRASKA 007
16			
		Glen M. Halsey	CALIFORNIA 006
	(Alt)	Michael Joe O Neal	CALIFORNIA 019
17			
		Annette M. Tolito	NEW MEXICO 033
	(Alt)	Franklin D. Maughan	UTAH 004
18			
		Frank J. Greenwood	NEVADA 001
	(Alt)	Paul M. Petrash	ARIZONA 027
19			
		Judith L Gordon	WASHINGTON 023
	(Alt)	Bert D Erwin	WASHINGTON 047
20			
		Jay E. Johnson	TEXAS 128
	(Alt)	Conrad A. Myers	TEXAS 017
21			
		TIMOTHY D. HEDGECOCK	OKLAHOMA 056
	(Alt)	Wesley E. Daniel	OKLAHOMA 039

ADVISORS: Joseph A. Violante - Marc Burgess

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COMMITTEE ON NOMINATION OF NATIONAL OFFICERS

DISTRICT		NAME (DELEGATE & ALTERNATE)	CHAPTER NO. & STATE
01			
		Leo R. Mooney	MASSACHUSETTS 033
	(Alt)	Thomas J. Daley	MASSACHUSETTS 049
02			
		John J. Skyler	NEW YORK 001
	(Alt)	Anthony L. Mirando	NEW YORK 145
03			
		Edward R. Heath	MAINE 011
	(Alt)	Russell R. Tanguay	NEW HAMPSHIRE 001
04			
		Salvatore Lo Sauro	NEW JERSEY 015
	(Alt)	Howard R. Hudes	NEW JERSEY 032
05			
		Jim Wyatt	PENNSYLVANIA 115
	(Alt)	David F. Ross	PENNSYLVANIA 008
06			
		Jeffrey B. Martin	VIRGINIA 013
	(Alt)	Stephanie A. Cooper	MARYLAND 017
07			
		Albert H. Linden Jr.	FLORIDA 090
	(Alt)	Fred R. Bristol	FLORIDA 097
08			
		Kevin A. Wenthe	LOUISIANA 020
	(Alt)	Jimmy D. Davis	LOUISIANA 020
09			
		Tim E. Hammons	GEORGIA 006
	(Alt)	Jimmie B. Frazier	GEORGIA 023
10			
		Thomas A. McMasters III	MICHIGAN 129
	(Alt)	Billie-Nita Clark	MICHIGAN 093
11			
		James S. Britton	OHIO 045
	(Alt)	David T. May	OHIO 050
12			
		Alfred C. Reynolds	ILLINOIS 017
	(Alt)	Jon C. Price	WISCONSIN 001
13			
		Michael A. Whellhan	INDIANA 052
	(Alt)	James V. Thurau	INDIANA 052
14			
		Eugene A. Murphy	SOUTH DAKOTA 001
	(Alt)	Joseph M. Litzinger	NORTH DAKOTA 002
15			
		Lyle J. Dean	IOWA 010
	(Alt)	John P. Hughes	MISSOURI 002
16			
		Larry A. Polzin	CALIFORNIA 073
	(Alt)	Astro A. Tortolano	CALIFORNIA 011
17			
		William B. Taylor	COLORADO 025
	(Alt)	James K. Andrade	NEW MEXICO 020
18			
		Gerald L. Ogle	NEVADA 012
	(Alt)	Arthur D. Jones	NEVADA 015
19			
		Bruce O. Young	OREGON 001
	(Alt)	Charles W Chapin	IDAHO 022
20			
		Bruce W. Burgess	TEXAS 005
	(Alt)	Percy A. Spence III	TEXAS 017
21			
		Irvin D. Eddy	OKLAHOMA 057
	(Alt)	David Reeves	OKLAHOMA 017
BLIND VETS			
		Anthony Martino	BLIND VETERANS 001
	(Alt)	Joseph F. Wallace	BLIND VETERANS 001

ADVISORS: Gene A. Murphy - Richard E. Marbes

I'll now ask the National Adjutant to read the names of the convention committee advisors that I have appointed and who received the approval of the National Executive Committee at their most recent meeting.

ADJUTANT WILSON: Thank you, Commander. The committee advisors are: Credentials, Michael J. Walsh and Michael E. Dobmeier; General Resolutions and Membership, Rick Surratt and Andre D. Smith; Legislation and Veterans' Rights, Joseph A. Violante and J. Marc Burgess; Constitution and Bylaws, Kenneth G. Musselmann and Barry A. Jesinoski; Finance and Dues, Jerome Krejci and Richard E. Patterson; Employment, Norbert Wenthold, Garry J. Augustine and Brian E. Lawrence; Hospital and Voluntary Services, Norman J. Resner, Joy J. Ilem, and Edward E. Hartman; Nomination of National Officers, Gene A. Murphy and Richard E. Marbes.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, Art. Ladies and gentlemen, please rise, and we will be led in closing prayer.

MR. REGAN: Let us pray. Thank you, Lord, for Your assistance here this afternoon. Bless our committees as they meet today and guide each chairman and member as they go about their work.

When we finish today, we will reassemble at the Commander's Reception this evening, where we will have the opportunity of enjoying the friendship of our fellow veterans and their families. So Father, continue to be with us in all our undertakings this day. Amen.

COMMANDER BOWERS: The convention stands in recess until 9:00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 2:40 o'clock p.m., July 31, 2004.)

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION

August 1, 2004

The Second Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans convened in the Hilton Pavilion of the Reno Hilton, Reno, Nevada, Sunday morning, August 1, 2004 and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by Commander Alan W. Bowers.

COMMANDER BOWERS: The convention will please come to order. Please rise and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

(Pledge of Allegiance)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Please remain standing. I call upon John Regan for the prayer.

MR. REGAN: Let us pray. Once again, we come before You, O, Lord, in convention assembled. We thank you for the guidance you have provided us at yesterday's opening session.

Continue to stay with us on this day also as we work to publish, enhance, and expand our services to our disabled comrades and veterans. All this we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Please be seated. I call John Regan back to the podium as the chairman of the Credentials Committee.

MR. REGAN: Commander, delegates, the Credentials Committee met this morning in the Cascade 2 room at the Reno Hilton Hotel. Roll call showed 1,297 delegates and 40 alternates present.

This is a partial report for informational purposes only and reflects the registration at the close at 4:00 p.m. on 7/31/2004.

At the present time, we have 508 chapters, 49 departments, 33 national officers, 13 Past National Commanders, for a total of 1,297 delegates and 40 alternates, for a total vote of

10,721. This completes the partial report of the Credentials Committee, Commander.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you again, John. The World War II Memorial is now a reality. This long-awaited tribute to America's greatest generation was dedicated in our nation's capital on May 29th, and the DAV was a big part of the four-day dedication celebration over the Memorial Day weekend.

The ceremony on the National Mall was attended by hundreds of thousands of World War II veterans and their families. It was followed by an exciting DAV reception, in which more than a thousand DAV members and guests attended.

Topping off the celebration, the DAV National Service Foundation supported documentary, *The World War II Memorial: A Testament to Freedom* was broadcast on PBS nationwide on Sunday, May 30, to a huge audience. Let's take a brief look at this remarkable celebration.

(Whereupon, a video was shown.)

COMMANDER BOWERS: The World War II Memorial will stand as an important symbol of America's national unity, a timeless reminder of the moral strength and the awesome power that can flow from a free people, who are at once united in a common cause.

You can watch an encore presentation of the sixty-minute documentary, *World War II Memorial: A Testament to Freedom*, tonight in the Hilton Theater beginning at 6:45 p.m., 1845 for the military troops.

Intelligence, experience and wise leadership are the hallmarks of our organization's management team, and DAV's Washington Headquarters Executive Director David Gorman certainly embodies all of those qualities and more.

David has been with the DAV for more than thirty-four years, making worthy contributions to our mission while gaining valuable experience in both as a national service officer and National Legislative Department before assuming duties as the Executive Director of DAV's Washington Headquarters in 1995.

Dave is responsible for the day-to-day performance of our service, legislative, and volunteer operations. Here to give his report is our Executive Director, Dave Gorman. (Applause)

MR. DAVID GORMAN: Thank you, Commander. National Commander Bowers, distinguished guests and delegates to the 83rd National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans, as Executive Director or our National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, it is truly an honor to present this annual report to our national convention.

First, I want to thank National Commander Alan Bowers for his active and his inspired leadership. His steadfast dedication to our mission to build better lives for our nation's disabled veterans and their families has inspired all of us.

Over the past year, Alan has been a powerful motivational force as National Commander, garnering the utmost respect from those in Washington and the admiration of countless people across our great country.

Alan has become a steadfast advocate for our cause, and for the 2.3 million service-connected disabled veterans and their families, he has kept the promise.

It's been an eventful year, Commander, and please accept our profound thanks and appreciation for all that you have done to support disabled veterans. (Applause)

I also want to express my appreciation and deep respect to our National Adjutant, Art Wilson. Art's guidance, his wise counsel, his inspired leadership and his unwavering support have been invaluable in our efforts to serve you and your families.

His wisdom, his vision, and his dedication have maintained

DAV's standing as the envy of all other veterans' service organizations.

Art has repeatedly demonstrated the unique ability to use sound business practices with his unwavering commitment to our mission of compassion and service to make the DAV the leader in veterans' services. Thank you, Art. (Applause)

I would also like to recognize the outstanding national directors at our Washington headquarters: National Service Director Randy Reese; National Director of Voluntary Services Ed Hartman; and National Legislative Director Joe Violante. (Applause)

None of our accomplishments would have been possible without the terrific work carried out by National Headquarters Executive Director Rick Patterson and his great staff and their employees in Cold Spring, Kentucky, and I want to express my appreciation to Rick also. (Applause)

At the vanguard of our efforts to secure fair and adequate benefits for our nation's disabled veterans is our corps of National Service Officers. Today we have the largest NSO staff in our history, 270 men and women, all disabled veterans themselves, who are dedicated to obtaining the benefits earned by those who sacrificed for our country.

Our role in veterans' advocacy is critically important today as our young men and women are engaged in combat in Iraq, Afghanistan and other places in the war on terror.

Daily, wounded and injured active military folks arrive at military hospitals and VA medical centers to begin their lifetime journey of rehabilitation.

They are taking the first steps that each of us has taken. We had the DAV with us, and now it is our turn to be there for them.

Thanks to improved technology on the battlefield, fewer of our service members are being killed, but many who survive are suffering catastrophic disabilities. They return completely unaware of what benefits and services they are entitled to, and that's where the DAV steps in.

Today's veterans are the same kind of veterans we welcomed home from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and other theaters of combat, and they will need the same kind of services that were there that were provided to our veterans.

Our NSOs are at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and Bethesda Naval Hospital on a continuous basis, ready to offer DAV services and extend whatever assistance they need.

It has been a heartwarming duty for us and one we will continue to do. We have no finer calling then to serve those who have served and sacrificed for our nation.

Approximately, 16,000 service members have been wounded or injured in Iraq. They need our help, and we are obligated by our mission to render all the assistance we can.

We have a dedicated staff of NSOs who operate and staff our mobile service offices. Our outreach to those who are geographically isolated from our national service offices are getting our very best service. We are doing our best to bring our services to veterans where they live.

We are also very proud of the assistance provided by our twenty-six transition service officers assigned to eighty military installations across the nation.

During 2003 alone, they provided benefit information to nearly 63,000 separating service members and submitted 23,000 claims for VA benefits, quite an accomplishment.

Our department service officer and chapter service officer training program is now in its third year of operation. It has proven to be a great success.

This program helps to ensure the vitality and the growth of our local service programs, both now and well into the future. During 2003, thirty departments participated in the training, and 898 DSOs and CSOs were certified.

As always, the role of our thousands of dedicated and giving DAV volunteers will continue to play an important role in what we do. The men and the women of the DAV at VA medical centers and the corps of our drivers in the DAV Transportation Network are doing an absolutely superlative job of supporting those who have sacrificed for their country.

Last year our volunteer drivers donated nearly 1.8 million hours and have taken about 735,000 sick and disabled veterans to their VA medical center appointments and then back to their homes.

By far, the largest DAV program is our Voluntary Services Program. In 2003 more than 17,000 DAV and Auxiliary volunteers provided well in excess of two and a half million hours of service to veterans, far more than any other veterans service organization could dream of contributing.

For that, the DAV thanks each of you for everything you do. You all personify the meaning of veterans giving back to assist and to comfort other veterans.

Yesterday we heard Vice President Cheney tell us the nation is grateful for our service and our sacrifice, and he said the wounded and injured in Iraq and Afghanistan will need the DAV.

He said that the Administration is working to give us the respect we have earned, but that respect has not yet fully transformed to the adequate health care we have earned with our sacrifices. (Applause)

Secretary Tony Principi praised the DAV for our contributions in securing significant increases in VA health care funding. He says that it's because of you that funding for medical care has risen to meet the needs of veterans.

He, like us, is concerned about health care funding in the future, and his message was very clear. It is up to us to advocate for adequate VA health care funding, and we can achieve success by using the same unified spirit of the DAV in support of our goal.

One of our most important legislative goals is mandatory funding for the VA health care system. What this means to you will be more timely access to quality VA health care.

No more long waits for health care services. No longer will veterans be asked to wait months for appointments because funds are unavailable. Under mandatory funding, the VA will have the funds it needs to carry out its mission.

No longer will the VA supporters have to lobby and fight Congress every year for meager, inadequate annual increases of 3, 4 or 5 percent.

The VA, itself, has testified before Congress that the health care system requires a 13 to 14 percent annual increase just to stay even. No longer will dedicated VA leaders such as Secretary Tony Principi have to do battle with the White House's Office of Management and Budget and then watch as they deprive him of about $1.2 billion he said he urgently needed.

I am alerting you now that mandatory funding will continue to be an issue, and we will look to you for your support by contacting your elected members of Congress as you've done in the past.

You must visit them, call them, write letters, send telegrams and send e-mails to make your voices heard. You must contact and visit the district offices of your representatives.

There, you can have even greater effect, because those elected to Congress listen closely to their constituents, and

you must follow up to ensure success.

A single contact often isn't enough in today's world of advocacy. To make an impression and to make a difference, you must make repeated contact. The idea is to drive the point home over and over again, as long as it takes, for them to do the right thing for veterans.

Our organization has the tools necessary for effective grassroots lobbying. We have all worked together to achieve advances for programs vital to the best interests of disabled veterans, and we can do it again, and we will do it again.

Remember, these issues have a direct impact on millions and millions of veterans, probably including yourself, if not today, then certainly in the future.

Another tool is the DAV Commander's Action Network, DAV CAN. It is a system that alerts our members to take action on legislation. You get the word quicker, and you can act quicker.

If you use electronic messaging, you can get e-mails informing you to contact your elected representatives on certain issues. The DAV's website provides almost direct access to any elected representative.

In just a few clicks, letters can be sent to all of your elected representatives to act on a particular legislative proposal. The tools are there and it's simply up to us to use them to be most effective.

One recent DAV legislative achievement has been the passage by Congress to allow certain military longevity retirees to receive disability compensation and their earned military retirement benefits.

Over the last two years, we have advanced these issues incrementally. But right now the injustice remains in place for many disabled military retirees.

The removal of this injustice will come up again, and DAV members must, again, be ready to act quickly to eliminate this unfair practice of using retirement benefits to pay for disability compensation.

Contained in that concurrent receipt legislation, however, is a troubling provision that creates a thirteen-member Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission to study the appropriateness of disability and death benefits to service-related conditions, including the appropriate standard for determining whether a disability or a death should be compensated.

The commission has yet to meet. However, its creation is troubling in that it signals a renewed attack on the programs aimed at service-connected disabled veterans benefits.

In November our nation will go to the polls to decide who will govern our country for the next four years. It is imperative that veterans vote. It is incumbent on all of us to vote for whomever we feel is best for our nation, but also who is best for veterans. As an organization, we back no political party.

We are bipartisan. That is part of our bylaws and our charter. We do not support, nor do we oppose, political parties.

We do, however, as individuals, express our support for those who support us. As disabled veterans, we are advocates who expect our nation to fulfill the promises made to us when we served and sacrificed for our nation.

Individuals can make informed decisions only if they are informed about the candidate's position on issues, as revealed by either their voting records or their stated position on issues.

A fundamental role of an advocacy organization is to inform

its members about the performance of their elected representatives. Assessing their performance is merely providing objective information.

Alone, it does not support or endorse an endorsement, support or opposition for political office. But it is essential to fulfillment of our organization's purpose, and that is to advance the interests of disabled veterans.

Our national bylaws provide in part that our non-partisanship shall not prevent activism on political issues that have a direct bearing upon the welfare of disabled veterans.

Thus, when we state a simple fact that one elected official or a group of officials has supported us or not supported us, we're not only acting in accordance with our constitution and bylaws, but we are acting in accordance with our essential organizational purpose and mandate.

There are those who do not want their voting records exposed and will complain when we do so. But if we allow that to inhibit our actions, we lose our effectiveness as the advocacy organization that is the recognized voice of America's disabled veterans.

It is our duty to report on the actions of any elected official or any group of elected officials without regard to political parties. We have both praised and criticized the actions of members of both major parties, and we do so because of the nature of their actions and not because of their party affiliation.

We are the veterans of former wars, two of which will mark anniversaries next year. The year we are about to begin marks the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II and the 30th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War.

This room is filled with men and women who served during those wars and some who served in both. Therefore, it is fitting that we note the end of these wars, because it is at the end of a war that our work is its hardest.

Perhaps, the end of combat in Iraq is in sight, and perhaps 2005 will also mark the end of the war in Iraq. For that, we can only hope. (Applause)

Each of you will be called on to lend your assistance in the coming year. I know that you will answer the call, because you have done so so many times before.

That is the essence of the DAV, dedicated veterans helping veterans. It's our turn. Let's not let America's newest veterans down.

Washington is filled with memorials to our nation's heroes. The World War II Memorial is the latest to grace our nation's capital, and soon the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial will join them.

We remember those who served and sacrificed for our nation, but in the Halls of Congress the memory of that sacrifice and the debt owed to disabled veterans is sometimes misplaced.

It is, in the final analysis, up to us to ensure our elected leaders remember the price that must be paid for the defense of freedom.

Those injured today will still need the DAV's support fifty years from now, but it is what we do today that will mean the difference in health care, in compensation, in veterans' rights fifty years from now.

I hope that I have somehow impressed upon you the responsibility that you have and the need for your support as we carry forward our agenda. The success of our DAV continues in service, legislation, and volunteerism.

The members of Congress, the VA and other influential policymakers in Washington are very well aware that the DAV

speaks with accuracy, authority and credibility.

To be sure, the staff at National Service and Legislative Headquarters has done an outstanding job providing the very best services to you and your families.

But there's another critical ingredient. We would not be able to accomplish all that we have without you, our members, and that, ladies and gentlemen, is simply a fact.

So on behalf of the entire Washington Headquarters staff, I want to thank you for making it possible for us to serve you. We couldn't do it without every one of you and the faith and the support you provide as we carry on the DAV's proud mission of service and hope for America's disabled veterans and their families. Thank you so very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, Dave. May I have a motion to accept Mr. Gorman's report?

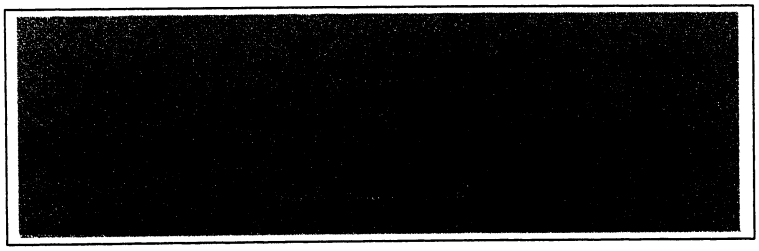
MS. KECKLER: Marianne Keckler, Cadahaden 67 in Florida, moves to accept the report.

COMMANDER BOWERS: I have a motion; do I have a second?

MR. BOBBY WILLIAMS: Bobby Williams, Ninth NEC, seconds it.

COMMANDER BOWERS: All in favor, say aye; those opposed. The motion is carried.

(The following written annual report was submitted by Mr. Edward R. Reese, National Service Director:)



The Sacrifice for Freedom

As National Service Director, I am honored to report on the achievements of the National Service Department as we continue to serve those who have sacrificed for America's freedom. Webster's defines sacrifice as "surrender of something for the sake of something else." The "something" that America surrenders for the *sake of our freedom* is the health and welfare of our nation's service men and women . . . or for those who have paid the ultimate price . . . the sacrifice of life.

America's veterans and their survivors have realized sacrifices for freedom for generations. Of the nearly 5 million service men and women who served during WWI, over 115,000 sacrificed their lives and over 200,000 were injured. During WWII, more than 16 million from "The Greatest Generation" served to protect our freedom. Over 400,000 died and almost 700,000 sacrificed their health and well-being. Of the nearly 6 million citizen soldiers that served during the Korean War, approximately 36,000 gave their lives and 103,000 were wounded. Nearly 9 million Americans served during the Vietnam War, with over 58,000 giving their lives and over 153,000 returning home disabled. The Persian Gulf War resulted in nearly 400 deaths and 500 injuries. And we must not forget those who sacrificed during other military operations such as Lebanon, Grenada, Panama and Somalia.

Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, "Freedom has its life in the hearts, the actions, the spirit of men and so it must be daily earned and refreshed—else like a flower cut from its life-giving roots, it will wither and die." Those words ring true as today we continue to count the lives of those who have fallen for freedom. Nearly 1,000 young men and women serving in today's military, fighting to ensure tomorrow's freedom, have sacrificed their lives during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

Those who have given so much to ensure our freedom are from many walks of life. Twenty-five service women have given their lives since October 2001, and 179 have been wounded in action. The Korean War took the lives of over 3,000 African Americans and nearly 400 Asian Americans. Nearly 400 Hispanic Americans and over 200 Native Americans sacrificed their lives during the Vietnam War. The average age of those service men and women sacrificing their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan is 28 years old, a drastic difference from Vietnam where the average age of combat casualties was 20 years old. At least 40 percent of the combat dead in Iraq had children, which all too clearly illustrates the fact that surviving spouses and children also bear the burden of our freedom.

DAV took care of those who sacrificed life and limb in yesteryear's wars by training National Service Officers (NSOs) from "The Greatest Generation" at the American University in Washington, DC over 50 years ago. DAV continues our mission of *building better lives for all of America's disabled veterans and their families* by hiring NSOs from today's conflicts to care for tomorrow's veterans. DAV's first NSOs from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom were hired in July of this year. Douglas MacArthur said, "Duty, honor, country: Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be." Our next generation of NSOs understands the honor in representing those who have sacrificed life and limb for our freedom, as they have sacrificed a great deal for America in their own right. The awarding of the Silver Star, Purple Heart and other commendations recognizing their duty and honor to America illustrate their sacrifices.

In 88 offices throughout the United States and in Puerto Rico, approximately 260 NSOs, with the assistance of 26 Transition Service Officers (TSOs) assigned to various military installations, diligently represent veterans and their families with claims for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD). Veterans need not be DAV members to take advantage of this service, which is provided free of charge. NSOs and TSOs provide free services, such as information seminars and counseling, as well as assistance to discharging service men and women through the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and the Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP). DAV's NSOs also represent veterans and active-duty military personnel before Discharge Review Boards, Boards for Correction of Military Records, Physical Evaluation Boards, and many other official panels. With outlays of $35,446,725 in 2003, these direct hands-on services make up the largest item in the DAV's budget for program services. Between July 1, 2002, and June 30, 2003, our NSOs and TSOs, all wartime service-connected disabled veterans, represented nearly a quarter of a million veterans and their families in claims for VA benefits, obtaining nearly $3 billion in new and retroactive benefits.

DAV's newest NSOs have just begun their initial training, which is a structured, 16 month on-the-job training program developed by DAV's most seasoned NSOs. However, in order to maintain the level of excellence necessary to remain the Nation's most respected veterans service organization, training never stops throughout the career of an NSO. DAV's Structured and Continued Training Program is designed to provide continual up-to-date training on the multifaceted and everchanging aspects of veterans law. As a result of such comprehensive training, DAV's NSOs are highly trained advocates and skilled experts in developing and prosecuting veterans' claims.

DAV Structured and Continuing Training Program

DAV NSOs are the catalysts in fulfilling our ongoing mission of providing service to our wartime disabled and their families. Therefore, it is even more essential that training reflect the changes in the laws and regulations affecting veterans' benefits.

The DAV's Structured and Continuing Training Program is designed for use by all NSOs and Trainees. Recognized by the highly regarded American Council on Education (ACE), the DAV's course of study uses the latest technology to provide updates and enhance the NSO's base knowledge. The program incorporates extensive training in areas of anatomy; physiology; pathology; medical terminology; communications; legal research and writing; VA laws and regulations; and interpretation of precedent decisions from the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC). This comprehensive course was developed for the purpose of ensuring effective job-related skills, involving paralegal and paramedical principles necessary in representation of veterans before VA Regional Offices (VAROs), VA Medical Centers

(VAMCs), the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA or Board) and before the CAVC. Additionally, this training is inherent to representation of active duty military personnel before Medical Evaluation Boards and Physical Evaluation Boards.

The training is administered by Supervisory NSOs with subject matter expertise. National Service staff members at National Service and Legislative Headquarters monitor the program and the instructors. NSOs are required to pre-test, successfully complete each of the 32 training modules and post-test following completion. DAV administers computer-based testing through an Internet service provider (ISP), and the National Service Director is provided computer-generated reports of each NSO's progress.

Upon successful completion of the course of instruction, NSOs are able to describe the basic structures and functions of the major human body systems, describe pathophysiological and neuropsychiatric conditions, define related medical terms and utilize research methodology necessary to interpret, evaluate and apply VA regulations and CAVC decisions.

In addition to this training program, supervisory personnel and selected NSOs from field offices across the nation receive specialized training in management and leadership skills. The goal of DAV's National Service Program is to produce the most highly skilled NSOs available for veterans and their families.

National Appeals Office

The Board of Veterans' Appeals is the highest appellate level within the VA and is responsible for entering the final decision on behalf of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs concerning appeals for entitlement to veterans' benefits. Ninety-five percent of the appeals before the Board deal with disability compensation. DAV's highly skilled National Appeals Officers (NAOs) provide an invaluable service to appellants by preparing an appellate brief prior to the Board reviewing a case. DAV maintains the largest staff of any group doing this work, representing 30 percent of all cases decided by the BVA in 2003.

DAV's NAOs represented 9,336 appellants that received a Board decision in 2003, either by submitting a written legal brief on their behalf or assisting them in a formal hearing. This represents a 25 percent increase from 2002. From those appeals decided by the Board, 2,129 (22.8 percent) were favorably resolved and 4,017 (43 percent) were remanded to a VA Regional Office for additional development. DAV's 22.8 percent grant rate and 43 percent remand rate are above the Board's average of 22.1 percent and 42.6 percent, respectively. These figures reflect the DAV's continued commitment in providing quality representation to our nation's wartime disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors.

Judicial Appeals Office

During 2003, the DAV maintained its leading position among veterans' service organizations in representing veterans and their dependents before the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims and the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit (Federal Circuit). The DAV Judicial Appeals Office filed 181 appeals during 2003. Of the 148 DAV cases for which a disposition was reached by the CAVC during 2003, 145 were reversals or remands. The CAVC affirmed only 3 Board of Veterans' Appeals decisions in which DAV provided representation. DAV therefore had a remarkable 97.9 percent success rate before the CAVC.

The DAV Judicial Appeals Office receives Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA) fees for those prevailing cases in which the BVA was not substantially justified in its decision. During 2003, the Judicial Appeals Staff generated $264,919.17 in EAJA fees, all of which was donated to DAV's National Service Foundation. It appears the office will exceed that figure in 2004 as $175,510.14 in EAJA fees has been generated since January.

When a Board decision is reversed by CAVC, the Court's decision is favorable to that appellant. However, some CAVC reversals establish case law that may potentially help other veterans in future appeals. One particular DAV case decided by CAVC during this reporting year resulted in what the DAV believes to be such favorable case law. In *Mariano v. Principi*, 17 Vet.App. 305 (2003), the CAVC determined that the failure of a physician to review a

veteran's claims file prior to an examination undermines the examiner's conclusions as it is essential that each disability be viewed in relation to its history. The DAV also remains active before the Federal Circuit and has recently prevailed in a case that also sets favorable precedent for all veterans. In *Wagner v. Principi*, 370 F.3d 1089, the Federal Circuit correctly shifted the burden of proof from the veteran to the VA in establishing whether or not a veteran is in sound condition when entering into service.

Veterans also recently realized an extremely unique consequence to one of DAV's Federal Circuit challenges. In response to *DAV v. Principi*, 327 F.3d 1339 (*The DAV Case*), the Veterans Benefits Administration created an entirely new entity; the Appeals Management Center (AMC). The AMC is now the authority within the Veterans Benefits Administration that develops and decides 96 percent of appeals that require additional development. The annual projected workload of the AMC is 20,000 remands per year, with DAV representing an estimated 30 percent. The 4 percent of cases the AMC does not develop and decide are remands involving hearing requests, attorney fee agreements, pension income calculations, waiver decisions, veterans health administration issues, national cemetery administration issues, and non-compensation and pension issues, such as education, insurance, loan guaranty and vocational rehabilitation and employment.

Military Affairs and Transition Service Program

For those enlisted soldiers, sailors, airmen and officers making the all-important transition back into civilian life, the DAV participates in formal Transition Assistance Programs, Disabled Transition Assistance Programs, and Pre-Separation Programs. While some NSOs participate in these programs, the majority of services are provided by DAV's specially trained Transition Service Officers. DAV's TSOs are principally stationed on military installations and their primary mission is to provide benefits counseling and assist service members with filing initial claims for VA benefits. Our TSOs provide services to more than 80 military installations throughout the nation. By filing compensation claims at military separation centers where service medical records and examination facilities are readily available, we are able to provide better, more prompt service to these soon-to-be veterans.

During 2003, DAV TSOs conducted 1,467 formal briefing presentations for 62,755 transitioning service men and women. During that same time, our TSOs conducted 31,148 personal interviews, reviewed 24,966 service medical records, accepted 13,206 new powers of attorney and filed 22,796 claims for veterans benefits.

In addition, our NSOs provide representation before Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military Records. Counsel and representation was provided for 103 active duty service members during their transition through the military's Disability Evaluation System, which primarily consists of Medical Evaluation Boards and formal hearings before Physical Evaluation Boards.

Mobile Service Office Program

The Mobile Service Office (MSO) Program continues to increase accessibility to the benefits our nation provides by reaching out to veterans where they live. Not all veterans are able to visit a National Service Office for various reasons, including distance, lack of transportation and health concerns. The MSO Program allows knowledgeable NSOs to take their expertise to claimants in their home towns. MSOs are equipped with sophisticated telecommunications which allows verification of various benefit-related information, including checking the status of a claim. The roomy MSOs also offer private interview areas for confidential counseling and discussion with each claimant.

The DAV National Organization currently has 10 of these specially equipped MSOs on tour to make stops in communities across the country. The program started with 12 MSOs, however recognizing the importance and value of this service, the Departments of Florida and Missouri each purchased one for more frequent service in their states.

During 2003, our MSOs traveled nearly 100,000 miles, visiting 563 locations. Our NSOs, with the assistance of TSOs, Department Service Officers, and Chapter Service Officers, interviewed 14,665 veterans and other potential claimants. 5,335 new powers of attorney to

provide representation to claimants were accepted and 12,835 applications for benefits were completed. In addition, 606 new DAV members were recruited.

DAV looks forward to the future of this program and NSOs will continue to be on the road providing outreach to those in need.

Outreach

During the past year DAV entered into a new era of outreach by having NSOs offer services at air shows throughout the nation. DAV attended 7 air shows since October 2003, which resulted in 725 interviews, 153 powers of attorney, 936 claims and 157 new DAV members. DAV has also sponsored the Panchito, a B-25J Mitchell Bomber, in all 7 seven air shows.

Information Seminars continue to be used by DAV's NSOs as an avenue to reach veterans and their families. During 2003, DAV NSOs conducted 36 Information Seminars at various locations throughout the country. There were 1,879 attendees, with 751 interviews being conducted, 392 claims taken and 51 new members recruited. DAV mailed out over 100,000 notices to ensure that all veterans living in the local area were aware of the time and place of the Information Seminars. Information Seminars not only provide the opportunity for veterans to discuss veterans benefits with DAV NSOs, DSOs and CSOs, they also are a great way for DAV Chapters to recruit members and volunteers and encourage chapter involvement.

DSO/CSO

The Department Service Officer/Chapter Service Officer Certification Training Program is in its third year of operation and has proven to be a great success. An enormous amount of hard work, dedication and teamwork goes into serving those that have sacrificed so much for our freedom. The National Service Department is fortunate to have the cooperation, support and assistance of DSOs and CSOs from around the nation, and we want to ensure that each of them continues to receive the training and information necessary to assist those we serve.

The training program contains information and instruction related to the DAV's mission and programs, general VA benefits and the legal and ethical responsibilities of a Service Officer. Upon successful completion of the program, participants receive certification as a DSO or CSO. This program helps to ensure the vitality and growth of our local service programs both now and well into the future. During 2003, 30 Departments participated in the training and 898 DSOs/CSOs were certified.

Homeless Veterans

Another issue that has received our support and assistance is that of homeless veterans. DAV's Homeless Veterans Initiative, established to help homeless veterans break the cycle of poverty and isolation and move from the streets to self-sufficiency, has helped us focus attention on the needs of homeless veterans. Many of our Departments and Chapters are actively involved in homeless veterans programs in their communities. Since 1989, homeless veterans programs and projects have benefited from the $1.6 million in grants that have been provided through the DAV Charitable Service Trust.

Women Veterans

Throughout history women have sacrificed along side their male counterparts in fighting for America's freedom. The number of service women has grown steadily since the Vietnam War. Women currently make up 15 percent of America's armed services. However, women veterans still use VA health care and other earned benefits at lower rates than their male counterparts.

The DAV is continuing its advocacy for women veterans on a variety of fronts. This year DAV again co-sponsored the VA's National Summit on Women Veterans Issues held June 18-20, 2004, in Washington, DC. National Service & Legislative Headquarters staff participated in the Summit as moderators, facilitators and participants in a variety of panels and sessions,

including Veterans Benefits, the Legislative Process, VA Claims and Appeals Process and the Role of Veterans Service Organizations. DAV's National Director for Voluntary Services is a member of the VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans.

In addition to this VA committee, the DAV has its own women's advisory committee made up of women veterans from the DAV's membership nationwide who meet annually at DAV National Conventions. Furthermore, the DAV continues its quest to staff our NSO corps with eligible disabled women veterans.

Retirements

Our professional NSOs who have retired this past year will forever be remembered through the lives they changed throughout the course of their careers. William James once said, "the greatest use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it." These departing NSOs have certainly spent their lives for a grand cause that will outlast us all. They not only protected America's freedom through their own sacrifices, but also served their fellow comrades as advocates for fair and equitable benefits. From the National Service Staff, we wish each of these NSOs good health and happiness during their retirement. We appreciate their commitment and dedication to our nation's veterans and their families. For the record, those who retired in the past year are: Richard L. Healy, Kenneth P. Hale, Keith L. Gustin, Hector D. Salgado and James C. Ebele.

Deaths

As the nation's veteran population rapidly declines, the attrition takes its toll on our NSO ranks. Our departed NSOs have provided services and helped improve the quality of life for scores of disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors. We shall recall and preserve the legacy of the following departed NSO: Earnie Massey.

Conclusion

At this time, I wish to recognize the leadership, professionalism and personal sacrifices made by our National Commander Alan W. Bowers and all the National Line Officers, members of the National Executive Committee, Board of Directors and all of the Officers and Board Members for both the National Service Foundation and Charitable Service Trust. We extend our thanks and salute you for a job well done.

I thank National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson for his leadership, vision and direction. Our success is a reflection of his tireless efforts to inspire and ensure quality and professionalism in all that we do. Additionally, I wish to extend my appreciation to National Headquarters Executive Director Richard E. Patterson and his staff for the support provided to the National Service Department, and I thank Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman for his guidance, direction and active involvement in helping to manage the National Service Department.

I also thank National Legislative Director Joseph A. Violante; National Director of Voluntary Services Edward E. Hartman; National Director of Communications Gary Weaver; National Director of Human Resources Gregory Jackson; National Director of Charitable Programs Nancy O'Brien; National Membership Director Michael J. Walsh, National Information Technology Director Greg Nichols and all of their staffs for the assistance they have provided the National Service Department.

Appreciation is extended to the National Service Department staff members with whom I have the pleasure of working; Deputy National Service Director Garry Augustine and Assistant National Service Directors Robert Plante, Brian Austin, Barry Jesinoski, and Marc Burgess, and our staff of devoted Service Support Specialists.

Our successes are not single-handed. We receive the dedicated and capable assistance and cooperation of the DAV Auxiliary, Department and Chapter Service Officers and Hospital Service Coordinators. Thank you all for your support.

Last and most important of all, I wish to thank our loyal and dedicated corps of National Service Officers, Transition Service Officers and support staff members who advocate for those that have sacrificed so much for our way of life. The National Service Department will continue to do everything possible to ensure all of our country's disabled veterans and their families receive the rights and benefits they have earned.

> It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause, who at best knows achievement and who at the worst if he fails at least fails while daring greatly so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt; from a speech given in Paris at the Sorbonne in 1910.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
Recapitulation of Service Activities
July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004

Office: National Totals	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	57,385
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	66,263
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	66,430
4. PENSION	11,720
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	9,695
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	7
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	24,004
8. MISCELLANEOUS	2,722
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	2,144
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	89
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	5
12. DEATH PENSION	1,903
13. INSURANCE	61
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	3,359
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	145
16. TOTAL AWARDS	245,932
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$167,714,950.70
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$2,600,342,817.95
19. FULL AMOUNT	$2,768,057,768.65
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	235,113
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	91,016
22. INTERVIEWS	160,027
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	198,045
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	72,812
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	209
26. NEW CLAIMS	182,038
27. MEMBERSHIP	17,051

Office: Montgomery, Alabama	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	828
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,236
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,463
4. PENSION	220
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	273
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	432
8. MISCELLANEOUS	118
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	32
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	43
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	49
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,694
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,028,093.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$51,633,308.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$54,661,401.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,416
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,736
22. INTERVIEWS	4,172
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,701
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	2,524
27. MEMBERSHIP	591

Office: Phoenix, Arizona	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	743
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,062
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,224
4. PENSION	100
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	46
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	882
8. MISCELLANEOUS	39
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	28
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	3
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	47
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,174
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,324,926.95
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$44,406,275.46
19. FULL AMOUNT	$47,731,202.41
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,416
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,647
22. INTERVIEWS	4,971
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,975
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,769
27. MEMBERSHIP	122

Office: Little Rock, Arkansas	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,067
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,221
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,497
4. PENSION	492
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	73
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	2
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	478
8. MISCELLANEOUS	65
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	76
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	64
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	113
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	5,148
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,322,752.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$50,585,716.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$53,908,468.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	11,668
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,632
22. INTERVIEWS	5,377
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	10,957
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	420
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	26
26. NEW CLAIMS	3,691
27. MEMBERSHIP	288

Office: Los Angeles, California	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,963
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,054
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,760
4. PENSION	457
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	243
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	1,235
8. MISCELLANEOUS	55
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	37
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	55
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	88
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	7,447
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$5,168,017.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$87,457,923.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$92,625,940.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	5,106
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,653
22. INTERVIEWS	3,410
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,229
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1,204
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,347
27. MEMBERSHIP	194

Office: Sacremento, California	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	281
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	232
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	223
4. PENSION	12
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	1
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8. MISCELLANEOUS	0
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	6
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	755
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$538,486.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$7,188,543.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$7,727,029.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	380
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	922
22. INTERVIEWS	741
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	393
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	855
27. MEMBERSHIP	

Office: Oakland, California	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,643
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,857
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,459
4. PENSION	91
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	852
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	773
8. MISCELLANEOUS	32
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	36
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	3
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	42
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	6,789
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,829,182.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$81,619,307.59
19. FULL AMOUNT	$86,448,489.59
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	5,040
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,400
22. INTERVIEWS	2,013
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,033
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	416
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	2,241
27. MEMBERSHIP	173

Office: San Diego, California	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	2,275
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,217
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,527
4. PENSION	87
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	57
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	1,260
8. MISCELLANEOUS	38
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	28
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	21
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	13
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	7,524
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,660,725.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$71,011,377.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$75,672,102.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	5,725
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,849
22. INTERVIEWS	7,042
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,834
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	25,612
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,542
27. MEMBERSHIP	306

Office: Denver, Colorado	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	3,064
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,572
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,085
4. PENSION	228
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	404
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	1,710
8. MISCELLANEOUS	144
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	89
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	3
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	65
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	144
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	10,508
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$6,443,854.50
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$93,083,790.14
19. FULL AMOUNT	$99,527,644.64
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	9,507
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	3,507
22. INTERVIEWS	2,591
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	7,992
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	3,035
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	6,047
27. MEMBERSHIP	334

Office: Hartford, Connecticut	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	352
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	385
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	500
4. PENSION	9
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	66
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	55
8. MISCELLANEOUS	3
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	23
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	20
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,415
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,129,951.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$17,845,915.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$18,975,866.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,100
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	554
22. INTERVIEWS	904
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,581
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	34
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	822
27. MEMBERSHIP	117

Office: Wilmington, Delaware	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	50
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	87
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	39
4. PENSION	4
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	4
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	26
8. MISCELLANEOUS	2
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	1
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	3
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	9
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	225
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$115,681.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$1,610,470.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$1,726,151.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	486
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	67
22. INTERVIEWS	371
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	108
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	249
27. MEMBERSHIP	

Office: Washington, D.C.	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	139
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	341
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	371
4. PENSION	29
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	508
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	426
8. MISCELLANEOUS	12
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	11
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	15
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	6
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	43
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,903
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,300,587.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$21,975,535.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$23,276,122.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,489
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	796
22. INTERVIEWS	3,311
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	7,601
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1,045
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	13
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,155
27. MEMBERSHIP	148

Office: Board of Veterans Appeals	
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. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	0
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$0.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$0.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$0.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	0
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	0
22. INTERVIEWS	0
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	0
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	0
27. MEMBERSHIP	58

Office: St. Petersburg, Florida	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	5,419
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	4,155
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	4,747
4. PENSION	423
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	195
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	1,177
8. MISCELLANEOUS	244
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	245
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	3
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	78
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	275
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	14,961
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$9,894,188.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$152,094,052.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$161,988,240.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	17,236
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,949
22. INTERVIEWS	4,749
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	14,034
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,912
27. MEMBERSHIP	1,707

Office: Miami, Florida	
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. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	0
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$0.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$0.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$0.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	217
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	116
22. INTERVIEWS	2,269
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	0
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	31
27. MEMBERSHIP	

Office: Orlando, Florida	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	222
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	156
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	220
4. PENSION	36
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	7
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8. MISCELLANEOUS	26
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	12
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	4
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	4
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	8
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	695
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$392,533.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$5,627,291.40
19. FULL AMOUNT	$6,019,824.40
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	344
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	666
22. INTERVIEWS	1,186
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	483
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,049
27. MEMBERSHIP	86

Office: Atlanta, Georgia	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	786
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,285
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,019
4. PENSION	106
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	56
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	327
8. MISCELLANEOUS	14
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	25
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	8
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	25
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	3,651
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,227,507.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$38,515,081.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$40,742,588.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,806
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,258
22. INTERVIEWS	5,136
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	981
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1,431
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,143
27. MEMBERSHIP	243

Office: Boise, Idaho	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	433
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	751
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	448
4. PENSION	126
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	245
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	305
8. MISCELLANEOUS	7
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	18
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	4
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	10
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,349
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,412,329.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$16,749,458.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$18,161,787.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	728
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	553
22. INTERVIEWS	2,786
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,281
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	572
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	3,047
27. MEMBERSHIP	110

Office: Chicago, Illinois	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,074
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,083
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	989
4. PENSION	332
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	195
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	357
8. MISCELLANEOUS	31
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	33
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	9
13. INSURANCE	23
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	216
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,344
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,519,730.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$41,089,964.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$43,609,694.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,246
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,269
22. INTERVIEWS	2,448
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,433
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2,586
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	3,822
27. MEMBERSHIP	423

Office: Indianapolis, Indiana	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,194
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,211
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	796
4. PENSION	272
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	60
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	586
8. MISCELLANEOUS	190
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	40
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	51
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	99
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,500
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,801,356.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$34,344,334.15
19. FULL AMOUNT	$37,145,690.15
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	5,152
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,107
22. INTERVIEWS	1,391
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,562
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	3
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,977
27. MEMBERSHIP	312

Office: Des Moines, Iowa	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	551
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	529
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	861
4. PENSION	188
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	157
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	167
8. MISCELLANEOUS	13
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	45
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	31
13. INSURANCE	17
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	24
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,584
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,831,093.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$28,767,906.55
19. FULL AMOUNT	$30,598,999.55
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,404
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,067
22. INTERVIEWS	840
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,367
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	21
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,945
27. MEMBERSHIP	126

Office: Wichita, Kansas	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	330
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	306
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	496
4. PENSION	46
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	22
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	260
8. MISCELLANEOUS	32
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	11
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	28
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	1
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,532
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,046,207.82
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$15,370,156.68
19. FULL AMOUNT	$16,416,364.50
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,609
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	581
22. INTERVIEWS	1,710
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,614
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	51
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,654
27. MEMBERSHIP	44

Office: Louisville, Kentucky	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,911
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,024
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,171
4. PENSION	809
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	465
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	393
8. MISCELLANEOUS	40
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	68
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	10
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	202
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	293
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	8,386
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$5,670,377.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$98,793,445.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$104,463,822.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	4,892
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	3,333
22. INTERVIEWS	2,121
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,679
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1,100
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	19
26. NEW CLAIMS	6,882
27. MEMBERSHIP	1,064

Office: New Orleans, Louisiana	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	691
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	932
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,227
4. PENSION	261
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	161
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	281
8. MISCELLANEOUS	39
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	17
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	4
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	22
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	31
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	3,666
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,621,818.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$40,802,050.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$43,423,868.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	4,019
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,267
22. INTERVIEWS	4,875
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,054
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	695
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,922
27. MEMBERSHIP	407

Office: Togus, Maine	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	502
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	535
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	437
4. PENSION	25
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	8
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	83
8. MISCELLANEOUS	0
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	16
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	2
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	7
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,616
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,286,714.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$18,905,818.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$20,192,532.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,782
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	414
22. INTERVIEWS	1,405
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,630
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,084
27. MEMBERSHIP	231

Office: Baltimore, Maryland	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	504
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	682
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	861
4. PENSION	24
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	176
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	183
8. MISCELLANEOUS	21
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	19
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	2
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	41
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,513
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,818,039.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$28,853,490.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$30,671,529.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,043
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	471
22. INTERVIEWS	1,273
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,492
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,408
27. MEMBERSHIP	49

Office: Boston, Massachusetts	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,011
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,211
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,234
4. PENSION	61
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	32
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	371
8. MISCELLANEOUS	9
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	38
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	14
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	181
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,162
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,231,736.60
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$51,755,062.97
19. FULL AMOUNT	$54,986,799.57
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	4,673
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,014
22. INTERVIEWS	2,379
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,083
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	2,233
27. MEMBERSHIP	791

Office: Detroit, Michigan	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	573
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,014
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	954
4. PENSION	546
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	189
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	434
8. MISCELLANEOUS	99
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	84
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	1
12. DEATH PENSION	98
13. INSURANCE	1
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	242
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,235
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,662,898.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$40,855,105.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$43,518,003.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	6,695
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,080
22. INTERVIEWS	1,010
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,003
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	5,252
27. MEMBERSHIP	525

Office: St. Paul, Minnesota	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,951
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,323
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,354
4. PENSION	147
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	53
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	6
8. MISCELLANEOUS	18
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	52
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	32
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	62
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	5,000
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,401,176.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$57,410,945.18
19. FULL AMOUNT	$60,812,121.18
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	5,809
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,616
22. INTERVIEWS	1,366
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,529
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,756
27. MEMBERSHIP	511

Office: Jackson, Mississippi	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	248
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	509
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	723
4. PENSION	145
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	50
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	1
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	22
8. MISCELLANEOUS	18
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	13
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	26
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	13
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,770
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,125,152.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$16,426,044.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$17,551,196.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,730
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	168
22. INTERVIEWS	744
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,035
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	888
27. MEMBERSHIP	72

Office: St. Louis, Missouri	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,728
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,886
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,886
4. PENSION	354
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	859
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	498
8. MISCELLANEOUS	137
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	71
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	4
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	1
12. DEATH PENSION	29
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	45
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	7,498
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,804,872.53
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$69,837,135.45
19. FULL AMOUNT	$74,642,007.98
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	6,010
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,801
22. INTERVIEWS	2,754
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,465
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1,788
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,944
27. MEMBERSHIP	444

Office: Fort Harrison, Montana	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	197
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	285
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	388
4. PENSION	75
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	53
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	59
8. MISCELLANEOUS	10
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	9
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	7
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	6
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,089
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$767,529.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$10,734,868.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$11,502,397.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	189
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	192
22. INTERVIEWS	766
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,112
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	406
27. MEMBERSHIP	69

Office: Lincoln, Nebraska	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	207
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	140
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	236
4. PENSION	13
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	62
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	122
8. MISCELLANEOUS	7
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	4
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	7
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	17
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	816
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$625,185.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$7,816,161.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$8,441,346.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	802
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	263
22. INTERVIEWS	140
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	804
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	932
27. MEMBERSHIP	18

Office: Reno, Nevada	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	415
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	667
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	607
4. PENSION	109
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	68
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	264
8. MISCELLANEOUS	28
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	12
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	11
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	34
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,215
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,479,109.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$24,157,870.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$25,636,979.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,457
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	652
22. INTERVIEWS	2,949
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,291
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	60
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,140
27. MEMBERSHIP	72

Office: Las Vegas, Nevada	
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. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	0
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$0.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$0.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$0.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	0
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	0
22. INTERVIEWS	0
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	0
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	0
27. MEMBERSHIP	49

Office: Manchester, New Hampshire	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	167
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	304
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	381
4. PENSION	19
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	8
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	126
8. MISCELLANEOUS	3
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	11
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	1
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,021
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$797,396.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$10,291,920.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$11,089,316.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,114
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	167
22. INTERVIEWS	719
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	800
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	5
26. NEW CLAIMS	382
27. MEMBERSHIP	48

Office: Newark, New Jersey	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	742
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	463
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	684
4. PENSION	37
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	10
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8. MISCELLANEOUS	17
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	14
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	7
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	11
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,986
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,356,920.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$27,689,008.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$29,045,928.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,717
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,037
22. INTERVIEWS	2,605
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,134
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,652
27. MEMBERSHIP	241

Office: Albuquerque, New Mexico	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,197
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,899
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,130
4. PENSION	147
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	211
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	2
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	254
8. MISCELLANEOUS	19
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	27
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	25
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	28
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,939
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,901,974.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$63,454,155.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$67,356,129.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,307
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,156
22. INTERVIEWS	4,576
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,068
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	26
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,976
27. MEMBERSHIP	156

Office: New York, New York	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	878
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	888
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	946
4. PENSION	40
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	43
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8. MISCELLANEOUS	1
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	27
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	1
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,826
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,953,908.37
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$47,351,017.17
19. FULL AMOUNT	$51,304,925.54
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,620
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,057
22. INTERVIEWS	4,783
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,912
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,916
27. MEMBERSHIP	281

Office: Albany, New York	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	15
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	18
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2
4. PENSION	0
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	1
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	9
8. MISCELLANEOUS	0
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	0
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	1
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	46
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$29,004.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$351,740.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$380,744.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	27
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	416
22. INTERVIEWS	1,284
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	675
27. MEMBERSHIP	70

Office: Buffalo, New York	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	555
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	721
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	597
4. PENSION	54
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	27
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	1,343
8. MISCELLANEOUS	15
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	17
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	2
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	37
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	3,368
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,127,595.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$30,198,938.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$32,326,533.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,152
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	365
22. INTERVIEWS	1,330
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,340
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	813
27. MEMBERSHIP	187

Office: Syracuse, 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	2
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8. MISCELLANEOUS	0
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	0
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$336.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$9,712.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$10,048.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	12
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	135
22. INTERVIEWS	777
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	0
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	6
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,014
27. MEMBERSHIP	25

Office: Winston-Salem, North Carolina	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	892
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,982
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,481
4. PENSION	75
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	66
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	720
8. MISCELLANEOUS	4
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	21
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	7
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	5
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	5,253
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,179,225.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$68,444,135.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$72,623,360.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	4,985
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	3,524
22. INTERVIEWS	2,980
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,596
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2,886
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	16
26. NEW CLAIMS	5,749
27. MEMBERSHIP	283

Office: Fargo, North Dakota	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	570
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	623
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	604
4. PENSION	127
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	110
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	222
8. MISCELLANEOUS	26
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	29
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	41
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	62
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,414
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,456,367.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$21,693,645.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$23,150,012.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,120
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	736
22. INTERVIEWS	862
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,527
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,448
27. MEMBERSHIP	264

Office: Cleveland, Ohio	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,805
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,667
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,876
4. PENSION	541
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	199
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	512
8. MISCELLANEOUS	38
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	103
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	7
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	66
13. INSURANCE	1
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	141
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	6,956
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,431,235.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$77,656,458.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$82,087,693.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	10,505
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	3,122
22. INTERVIEWS	1,667
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	8,835
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	53
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	5,031
27. MEMBERSHIP	839

Office: Cincinnati, Ohio	
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. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	0
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$0.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$0.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$0.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	116
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	410
22. INTERVIEWS	563
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	54
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1,081
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	946
27. MEMBERSHIP	85

Office: Muskogee, Oklahoma	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,593
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,604
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,339
4. PENSION	415
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	189
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	269
8. MISCELLANEOUS	111
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	40
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	55
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	18
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	5,635
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,645,513.83
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$58,548,964.46
19. FULL AMOUNT	$62,194,478.29
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	4,485
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,285
22. INTERVIEWS	2,862
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	6,324
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,265
27. MEMBERSHIP	276

Office: 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. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	0
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$0.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$0.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$0.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,499
22. INTERVIEWS	1,888
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	0
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2,447
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	2,017
27. MEMBERSHIP	147

Office: Portland, Oregon	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	694
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,289
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	919
4. PENSION	215
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	177
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	556
8. MISCELLANEOUS	22
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	27
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	34
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	30
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	3,963
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,221,489.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$51,781,778.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$55,003,267.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	5,388
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	432
22. INTERVIEWS	1,028
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,104
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,258
27. MEMBERSHIP	66

Office: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,424
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,153
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,702
4. PENSION	1,353
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	1,350
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	337
8. MISCELLANEOUS	72
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	35
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	1
12. DEATH PENSION	332
13. INSURANCE	18
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	101
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	8,879
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,865,335.75
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$79,219,851.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$84,085,186.75
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	4,006
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	870
22. INTERVIEWS	2,781
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,140
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	2,502
27. MEMBERSHIP	176

Office: 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
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	0
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$0.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$0.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$0.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	0
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	69
22. INTERVIEWS	326
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	0
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	178
27. MEMBERSHIP	

Office: Sioux Falls, South Dakota	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	407
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	489
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	586
4. PENSION	133
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	102
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	291
8. MISCELLANEOUS	29
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	20
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	35
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	67
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,159
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,327,697.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$18,066,740.16
19. FULL AMOUNT	$19,394,437.16
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,703
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	563
22. INTERVIEWS	600
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,316
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,683
27. MEMBERSHIP	304

Office: Nashville, Tennessee	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,557
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,777
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,262
4. PENSION	469
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	178
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	476
8. MISCELLANEOUS	132
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	67
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	49
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	43
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	7,010
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$5,375,766.93
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$70,705,635.30
19. FULL AMOUNT	$76,081,402.23
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	6,556
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,440
22. INTERVIEWS	1,423
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	6,077
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	707
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	55
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,150
27. MEMBERSHIP	377

Office: Waco, Texas	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	2,597
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	3,167
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	3,516
4. PENSION	572
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	319
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	1,699
8. MISCELLANEOUS	381
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	124
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	54
13. INSURANCE	1
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	140
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	12,370
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$7,735,667.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$114,191,293.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$121,926,960.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	14,712
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	5,760
22. INTERVIEWS	3,617
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	11,758
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2,105
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	8,879
27. MEMBERSHIP	683

Office: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	498
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	858
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	805
4. PENSION	134
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	35
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	176
8. MISCELLANEOUS	20
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	35
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	16
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	70
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,647
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,736,737.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$27,228,374.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$28,965,111.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,910
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	953
22. INTERVIEWS	2,366
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,564
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,579
27. MEMBERSHIP	288

Office: Providence, Rhode Island	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	503
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	491
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	597
4. PENSION	38
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	45
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	88
8. MISCELLANEOUS	1
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	20
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	5
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	57
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,847
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,537,657.50
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$27,188,711.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$28,726,368.50
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,653
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	573
22. INTERVIEWS	1,973
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,343
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,293
27. MEMBERSHIP	327

Office: Columbia, South Carolina	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	955
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,310
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,790
4. PENSION	83
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	66
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	380
8. MISCELLANEOUS	94
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	26
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	15
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	10
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,729
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,249,326.74
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$46,912,644.89
19. FULL AMOUNT	$50,161,971.63
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,213
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,375
22. INTERVIEWS	4,070
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	816
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1,850
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	2
26. NEW CLAIMS	2,213
27. MEMBERSHIP	124

Office: Houston, Texas	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	3,075
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,762
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,658
4. PENSION	397
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	376
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	199
8. MISCELLANEOUS	40
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	62
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	55
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	99
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	9,723
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$6,504,116.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$110,419,150.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$116,923,266.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	11,017
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,160
22. INTERVIEWS	5,104
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	9,431
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,685
27. MEMBERSHIP	607

Office: San Antonio, Texas	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	63
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	5
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	4
4. PENSION	0
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	0
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8. MISCELLANEOUS	0
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	0
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	102
16. TOTAL AWARDS	174
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$288,207.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$3,634,265.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$3,922,472.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	481
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	6,210
22. INTERVIEWS	8,129
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	180
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2,185
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	11,669
27. MEMBERSHIP	163

Office: 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. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	0
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$0.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$0.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$0.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,634
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	909
22. INTERVIEWS	7,288
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	60
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	12
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,552
27. MEMBERSHIP	17

Office: Salt Lake City, Utah	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,161
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,030
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,481
4. PENSION	61
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	19
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	284
8. MISCELLANEOUS	8
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	22
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	5
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	7
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,078
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,763,556.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$37,949,923.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$40,713,479.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	4,210
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	437
22. INTERVIEWS	1,527
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,382
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	3,115
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	2,985
27. MEMBERSHIP	125

Office: White River Junction, Vermont	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	207
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	208
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	183
4. PENSION	12
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	8
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8. MISCELLANEOUS	0
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	15
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	634
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$726,139.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$9,443,383.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$10,169,522.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,442
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	183
22. INTERVIEWS	2,352
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	762
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,908
27. MEMBERSHIP	49

Office: Roanoke, Virginia	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,377
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,702
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,291
4. PENSION	91
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	16
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	704
8. MISCELLANEOUS	23
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	39
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	19
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	2
12. DEATH PENSION	4
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	25
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	5,293
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,399,418.39
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$57,743,588.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$61,143,006.39
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,576
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	3,135
22. INTERVIEWS	964
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,104
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	5,149
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	5,304
27. MEMBERSHIP	238

Office: Seattle, Washington	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	2,531
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,465
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,919
4. PENSION	156
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	117
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	1,157
8. MISCELLANEOUS	16
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	72
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	7
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	5
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	65
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	7,510
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$5,132,958.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$73,279,709.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$78,412,667.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	978
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,407
22. INTERVIEWS	1,702
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,943
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	8,800
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,327
27. MEMBERSHIP	174

Office: Huntington, West Virginia	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	594
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	858
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	700
4. PENSION	32
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	39
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	139
8. MISCELLANEOUS	40
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	11
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	5
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	4
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,422
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,641,799.79
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$25,340,421.90
19. FULL AMOUNT	$26,982,221.69
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,037
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	644
22. INTERVIEWS	2,049
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,926
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	886
27. MEMBERSHIP	303

Office: Milwaukee, Wisconsin	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	739
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,552
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,719
4. PENSION	263
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	151
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	597
8. MISCELLANEOUS	74
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	47
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	63
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	125
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	5,330
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,909,041.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$60,664,243.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$64,573,284.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	6,101
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,144
22. INTERVIEWS	2,901
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,436
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	6,343
27. MEMBERSHIP	199

Office: Cheyenne, Wyoming	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	154
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	154
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	205
4. PENSION	27
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	13
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	87
8. MISCELLANEOUS	13
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	3
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	2
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	658
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$420,794.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$6,254,327.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$6,675,121.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	674
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	127
22. INTERVIEWS	608
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	544
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	18
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	506
27. MEMBERSHIP	

Office: San Juan, Puerto Rico	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	364
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	567
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	985
4. PENSION	402
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	181
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	211
8. MISCELLANEOUS	23
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	16
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	88
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	24
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,861
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,830,931.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$33,046,111.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$34,877,042.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,770
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	711
22. INTERVIEWS	2,195
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,480
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	5
26. NEW CLAIMS	909
27. MEMBERSHIP	115

Office: Honolulu, Hawaii	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	479
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	407
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	394
4. PENSION	12
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	6
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	34
8. MISCELLANEOUS	11
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	16
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	3
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	37
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,399
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$945,875.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$18,193,057.50
19. FULL AMOUNT	$19,138,932.50
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,082
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	478
22. INTERVIEWS	1,124
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,200
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2,303
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,158
27. MEMBERSHIP	130

(The following written annual report was submitted by Mr. Edward Hartman, National Director of Voluntary Services:)

ANNUAL REPORT
EDWARD E. HARTMAN
NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF VOLUNTARY SERVICES
TO THE
83RD NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF THE
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
RENO, NEVADA
July 31-August 3, 2004

NATIONAL COMMANDER ALAN W. BOWERS, NATIONAL OFFICERS, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, AND DELEGATES TO THE 83RD NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS:

Ours is an organization that will always remember the sacrifices of disabled veterans, and for 59 years now we have demonstrated this through the DAV and Auxiliary VAVS programs. Today I would like to take a moment to salute all of those DAV and Auxiliary members who have made our organization and its programs the envy of the veterans' community. This report focuses on the past year's successes, and while we can and should be proud of our achievements, we must also look ahead. Let us focus on innovation in volunteerism. Let us focus on where the DAV and Auxiliary will find new volunteers to meet the growing needs of 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.

Our volunteer programs have withstood the test of time and will continue to soar to new heights in the years to come. 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 also 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 represent statistics totaling the money spent, the hours donated, and the number of people who participate in our volunteer effort. 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 and Auxiliary members, families, and 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, 14,936 DAV VAVS volunteers donated 2,236,833 hours in the 12 months ending September 2003.

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 16 State Chairmen, 152 VAVS Representatives, 8 Associate Representatives, 216 Deputy Representatives, and 5 Associate Deputy Representatives.

The DAV volunteer effort is enhanced by a very active corps of 2,994 Auxiliary volunteers who donated 287,319 hours last year. Together, DAV and Auxiliary volunteers

provided 2,524,152 hours of VAVS service over the past year – considerably more than any other service organization. This is equivalent to the VA having an additional 1,214 full-time employees with an estimated value of nearly $42 million in hourly wages alone.

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, DAV Hospital Service Coordinators (HSCs) operate 202 active programs. They've recruited 9,585 volunteer drivers who logged 27,535,751 miles last year, taking 738,681 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 1,549 vans to VA medical centers nationwide at a cost of $31,562,656.

At the DAV's 82nd National Convention, Ford Motor Company donated 11 new passenger vans to the Disabled American Veterans Transportation Network. The VAMCs that received these vans were: Little Rock, Arkansas; Sepulveda, California; West Palm Beach, Florida; Marion, Indiana; Louisville, Kentucky; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Durham, North Carolina; Reno, Nevada; Albany, New York; Charleston, South Carolina and Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

As a further demonstration of its commitment to the DAV Transportation Network, Ford Motor Company is donating eight new 12-passenger vans. This will take place during the opening session at this National Convention. The VAMCs receiving these vans are: Montgomery, Alabama; Lexington, Kentucky; Columbia, Missouri; Syracuse, New York; Asheville, North Carolina; Roseburg, Oregon; Murfreesboro, Tennessee (and outstationed at the Chattanooga VA Outpatient Clinic); and Madison, Wisconsin.

This generous gift reflects Ford Motor Company's continued commitment to veterans. From the start, they have shown great interest in the DAV's mission of service and transportation to the many veterans who have no other means of getting to their VA medical appointments. Ford's participation with us is a real boost to the DAV Transportation Network program.

THE GEORGE H. SEAL MEMORIAL TROPHY

The George H. Seal Memorial Trophy 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 H. Seal.

During the 27 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 Voluntary Service Program Managers throughout the nation are each encouraged to submit nominations for DAV and Auxiliary volunteers. These nominations are then thoroughly evaluated by an independent committee of authorities in the field of voluntary service. The volunteers selected by the committee are brought to the DAV National Convention for the award presentation. After reviewing the nominations of DAV and Auxiliary volunteers, the committee chose as this year's winners:

DAV

Donald G. Lundeen, Adjutant of DAV Patrick Henry Chapter 34, in Williamsburg, Virginia, has over 5,983 volunteer hours since 1984 at the Surgical Service and Recreation and Voluntary Services at the Hampton VA Medical Center. Mr. Lundeen serves as the VAVS Representative, the Department of Welfare and Relief Committee, and as Assistant Adjutant for the DAV Department of Virginia.

Mr. Lundeen has been instrumental in getting the Peninsula area DAV Chapters involved in the needs of the patients at the VAMC by requesting and receiving donations of patient

comfort items and funds for equipment. Further through his tireless efforts, the medical center had eight patients approved to attend the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, but insufficient funds to pay for all eight. Through Mr. Lundeen, the DAV Department of Virginia donated funds to assure that these deserving veteran patients attended the clinic.

DAV Auxiliary

Genevieve Heitkemper, a member of DAV Auxiliary Unit 1, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, has been a VAVS volunteer for 34 years at the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center's Nursing Home Care Unit (NHCU). She has accumulated 20,896 hours as a volunteer.

As a regularly scheduled volunteer at the NHCU, Mrs. Heitkemper has contact with many of the patients who no longer have family members. Knowing this, she often volunteers on weekends and holidays. Nothing stops Mrs. Heitkemper from her volunteer assignments, not even her own health problems. She inspires both her peer and youth volunteers and VA staff personnel alike with her upbeat and energetic enthusiasm.

Mrs. Heitkemper's volunteer assignments are valuable to the Voluntary Service Program Manager because she makes any assignment look appealing. Her motto is "just give the assignment a chance, you may like it!"

Mr. Lundeen and Mrs. Heitkemper will be presented their awards during the opening session of the 2004 DAV and Auxiliary National Convention in Reno, Nevada.

The DAV and Auxiliary can be proud of people like Mr. Lundeen and Mrs. Heitkemper for the service and dedication they display every day. Whenever any of us wears the DAV emblem, we know that it is a symbol of greatness because of people like Donald and Genevieve and all the others who each day, without fanfare or recognition, provide friendly service and compassionate support to disabled veterans. They are great people, and they help make the DAV a great organization.

2004 JESSE BROWN MEMORIAL YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program was created to honor outstanding young volunteers who are active participants in the VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) program. The scholarships are awarded to deserving young men and women who have generously donated their time and compassion to sick and disabled veterans in their communities. The DAV is deeply appreciative of Ford Motor Company for helping DAV recognize the thousands of hours these outstanding students have donated to care for and comfort disabled veterans.

Candidates for the scholarships must be age 21 or younger and must have volunteered a minimum of 100 hours in a VA medical center during the previous calendar year. The scholarship will be available for any accredited institution of higher learning, to include universities, colleges, community colleges or vocational schools, etc. In addition, the recipient must utilize the scholarship prior to reaching age 25. Employees of the DAV National Organization and their families are not eligible for this award.

Nomination forms were mailed to each Department Commander and Voluntary Service Program Managers at all VA medical centers across the country. The committee, Chaired by National Commander Alan W. Bowers, is responsible for selecting the scholarship recipients.

The winners of the 2004 Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarships have widely divergent interests, but they have one thing in common – they honor those who defended our nation's freedom by donating their time to assist disabled veterans.

1st Place	($15,000)	Christina Fay, Temple, TX VAMC
2nd Place	($10,000)	Samuel Evans, Jr., Jackson, MS VAMC
3rd Place	($7,500)	William Wardwell, San Antonio, TX VAMC
	($7,500)	James Gray, Prescott, AZ VAMC

Eight 4th Place ($5,000)

I. Ashlie Dickerson, Denver, CO VAMC
II. Hiram Demond Sumlin, Little Rock, AR VAMC
III. Shakia M. Abrom, Washington, DC VAMC
IV. Diana Catalina Rodriguez, Tampa, FL VAMC
V. Thomas E. Hartlage, Louisville, KY VAMC
VI. Korey Elyse Woods, Alexandria, LA VAMC
VII. Justin Anthony Wagner, Albuquerque, NM VAMC
VIII. Corey Malone, Montrose, NY VAMC

The outstanding service provided by this dedicated group of young volunteers is inspiring to those veterans who are the recipients of their care and to the families of those veterans. They prove that our nation's youth care about veterans and the service and sacrifice they made for our nation. They have proven their desire to help disabled veterans, and they clearly have gained a great deal from their association with our veterans. It is a privilege to have these young men and women working to assist our sick and disabled veterans. The tremendous response we have received for the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program is growing. In the future, it will encourage increased volunteerism to help our nation's veterans.

Christina Fay will be presented with her scholarship during the opening session of the 2004 DAV and Auxiliary National Convention in Reno, Nevada.

The selection committee once again stated that all of the nominees are very special volunteers, and it was a very, very difficult job to choose a winner. Each nominee has been awarded a certificate of merit for outstanding volunteer performance in meeting the needs of disabled veterans.

SPORTS FOR THE DISABLED

Athletic programs for handicapped veterans have always been important to DAV. We have a long, proud 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 Health care 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 experience fewer medical problems than those who aren't, therapists say. Athletics help maintain cardiovascular conditioning, increase circulation to the extremities, and 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 as non-disabled individuals to participate in these activities.

The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic -- On April 4-9, 2004, 325 severely disabled veterans took part in the 18th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic at Snowmass Village, Colorado. With more than 430 volunteers -- including 197 ski instructors, most of whom are certified in teaching the disabled -- it was one of the best winter sports clinics 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.

We want to thank the sponsors of the 2004 National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic for their generous support. A special note of thanks to the several DAV and Auxiliary entities who are committed to this event. Our sponsors this year were:

HOST ($30,000 +): Ford Motor Company and Sprint

NATIONAL ($20,000 – $29,999): Anheuser-Busch, Inc., AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals, Independence Technology a Johnson & Johnson Company, Pfizer, Inc., Prince Bandar bin Sultan, QTC Management, Inc., The Coca-Cola Company, and Veterans Canteen Service/Burger King.

GOLD ($10,000 – $19,999): Baxter Health care Corporation, Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, DAV California Rehabilitation Foundation, Inc., DELL, DUOFOLD, ELAN, Eli Lilly and Company, Fifth Third, Moore Wallace North America, Inc., United Airlines, and 3M Health care.

SILVER ($5,000 – $9,999): Bula America Corp, Elks National Veterans Service Commission, GE Medical Systems, Healthlink Incorporated, Lockheed Martin Orincon Corporation, Lois Pope LIFE Foundation, Merck & Company, Inc., Pride Mobility, Purdue Pharma Fund, The American Board for Certification in Orthotics and Prosthetics, Inc., The ROHO Group, The Taylor Family, and Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 57.

BRONZE ($2,500 – $4,999): Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS), AMSUS Sustaining Members Section, Carrera, DAV Auxiliary, DAV Department of Colorado, DAV Department of Florida, DAV Department of Nebraska, DAV Department of Virginia, DAV H. H. MacKenzie, Chapter 3, Roanoke, Virginia, DAV State Commanders and Adjutants Association, Fox River Mills, Inc., Gordini, Homecare Products, Inc., Invacare, Frank Pacello, Inc., PSA Health care, Radventures, Inc., Rusch, Inc., Sanofi-Synthelabo, The Fischer Family, Mary C. Thomas, and THOR-LO, Inc.

CONTRIBUTOR ($2,499): AGFA Health care, DAV Auxiliary Robert P. Illig Chapter 47, New York, DAV Auxiliary 116, Ohio, DAV Chapter 4, DAV Auxiliary #4, DAV Bremerton Chapter 5, DAV Auxiliary #5, DAV Yakima Valley Chapter 8, DAV Clarence M. Caskey Chapter 9, DAV Auxiliary Clarence M. Caskey Unit 9, DAV Harmony Chapter 18, DAV D. J. Kerstetter Chapter 22, DAV Auxiliary 46, DAV Tri-City Chapter 46, DAV Auxiliary Tri-Cities #46 in the state of Washington, John F. Heilman, Jr., Mail-Well Envelope, National Order of Alley Cats, and Robert C. Thomas.

SUPPLIER: Grabber Performance Group and Masterfoods USA.

The world's largest rehabilitation program of its kind, the clinic affords severely disabled veterans the opportunity to learn new recreation activity skills and to sharpen existing ones. Veterans were introduced to downhill and cross-country skiing, rock climbing, self-defense, sled hockey, horseback riding, fishing, trap shooting, and other activities.

The 19th Annual National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic promises to be better and bigger and will be held April 3-8, 2005, in Snowmass Village, Colorado.

DAV Freedom Award -- In 1992 we instituted the DAV Freedom Award at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports 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 the 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 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." Among those veterans from our ongoing war in Iraq was Erick Castro, an Army veteran from Santa Ana, California.

Mr. Castro, 24, a combat veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, is an amputee who receives care at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. He lost a leg after being struck by a rocket propelled grenade when his unit was ambushed near Fallujah in August, 2003.

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 Golf 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 championship tournament. Additionally, it recognizes the contributions the winner has made in his or her own community in furthering the opportunities of disabled veterans. Last year's 55th annual tournament at the Hazeltine National Golf Club, Chaska, Minnesota, September 7-12, 2003, drew 162 entries, 39 of them veterans. The winner of the DAV National Commander's trophy was John Devine of Massapequa, New York.

First Swing Golf -- This is the DAV's 15th 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 before becoming disabled. It has also introduced the sport to countless disabled people who never dreamed golf would be part of their lives. During 2003, 36 First Swing seminars and Learn to Golf Clinics included 324 disabled veterans as participants.

DAV CELEBRITY ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAM

Continuing to provide a morale boost to disabled veterans, the DAV Celebrity Entertainment Program assures that hospitalized patients are not forgotten...that the American people still appreciate what they have done for all of us.

We're truly fortunate to sponsor some very talented people with a great deal of compassion for these 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 Major League Baseball Umpires Larry Barnett and Jerry Layne. 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 have demonstrated that they care very deeply about the needs of disabled veterans.

Detroit Tigers' Mike Maroth

Detroit Tigers pitcher Mike Maroth has visited veteran patients at the Gainesville, Florida, VA Medical Center five times this year.

Mike was the Boston Red Sox's 2nd overall pick in 1998 and was traded to the Tigers in 2000. Mike was immediately ranked as the Tigers #11 prospect in the organization and is often compared to Tom Glavine of the Atlanta Braves. Mike was born in Orlando, Florida, attended the University of Central Florida, and currently makes his home with his wife Brooke in Jacksonville, Florida.

We are grateful Mr. Maroth took time from spring training to visit with our veterans at the hospital. DAV wishes him well and much success in his Major League career, and we are hopeful he will continue to visit VA health care facilities in the future.

These DAV-sponsored celebrities signed autographs, presented patients with photographs, and helped brighten the day for sick and disabled veterans in VA medical facilities all across the country.

IN CLOSING

Many deserve our thanks for the great year the DAV volunteer programs have had. If it were not for their support, the many programs mentioned in this report would not have been realized.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jim Delgado, who heads up the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Program, his staff, and the VAVS leadership team across the nation for their devotion to volunteerism.

The Voluntary Services Department during this past year has been very fortunate to have the support of DAV National Commander Alan W. Bowers and Auxiliary National Commander Janet W. Bennett, and their staffs, the National Line Officers, National Executive Committee, National Finance Committee, DAV Interim Hospital Committee, National Service Foundation, and the Charitable Service Trust. Their assistance and support were essential ingredients of our 2004 success story. My sincere gratitude for the support of 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. My personal thanks to Assistant National Director of Voluntary Services Chad Moos; Voluntary Services Support Specialists Linda DeMartino and Linda Chester, and correspondents Joyce Barrett, Wilma Henderson, and Heather Workman for their invaluable assistance.

We've experienced outstanding support from DAV's corps of National Service Officers and Hospital Service Coordinators who have played a vital role in support of Voluntary Service Programs. The success of those programs can in part be attributed to their participation and support. The successes reflected throughout this report were not by chance. National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson has always been totally supportive of DAV's Voluntary Service Program and, on behalf of the Voluntary Services Department, we wish to thank him for his leadership and guidance.

I would be remiss not to mention the true champions – the men and women who care enough to make a difference in the lives of so many, the volunteer corps of the DAV and Auxiliary. Your devotion, compassion and commitment to DAV's mission of building better lives for America's disabled veterans is truly second to none. Thank you.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
VA VOLUNTARY SERVICE (VAVS)
October 1, 2002 through September 30, 2003

NUMBER OF REGULARLY SCHEDULED VAVS VOLUNTEERS	14,936
NUMBER OF HOURS BY REGULARLY SCHEDULED VOLUNTEERS	2,190,218
NUMBER OF HOURS BY OCCASIONAL VOLUNTEERS	46,615
NUMBER OF HOURS BY ALL VAVS VOLUNTEERS	2,236,833

VAVS APPOINTED POSITIONS

NUMBER OF STATE CHAIRMEN	13
NUMBER OF STATE CHAIRMEN ALSO SERVING AS REPRESENTATIVES	21
NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES	147
NUMBER OF DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVES	240
NUMBER OF ASSOCIATE REPRESENTATIVES	23
NUMBER OF ASSOCIATE DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVES	3
NUMBER OF HONORARY REPRESENTATIVES	1
NUMBER OF APPOINTED POSITIONS	448
ANNUAL JOINT REVIEWS RECEIVED FOR THE YEAR	67

DAV TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM
(January 1, 2003 through December 31, 2003)

TOTAL NUMBER OF HOSPITAL SERVICE COORDINATORS (HSCs)	185
NUMBER OF VETERANS TRANSPORTED	738,681
TRANSPORTATION HOURS	1,477,350
TRANSPORTATION MILES	27,535,751

2003 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK GRANTS

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK HSC PROGRAM GRANTS	$ 776,748
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK VAN GRANTS (211 vans purchased and delivered in 2003)	$ 4,877,220
2003 Total National Grant Expenditures	**$ 5,653,968**

(The following written annual report was submitted by Mr. Joseph A. Violante, National Legislative Director:)

ANNUAL REPORT
of the
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT
for
2003-2004
by
JOSEPH A. VIOLANTE
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR
for presentation to
THE 83RD NATIONAL CONVENTION
RENO, NEVADA
JULY 31-AUGUST 3, 2004

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NATIONAL COMMANDER ALAN W. BOWERS AND DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES:

During the past year, as we had our sons and daughters dispatched to fight a war in Iraq and terrorism around the world, the Disabled American Veterans marched on here at home to build better lives for America's disabled veterans of today and tomorrow. Against the backdrop of a Nation faced with anxieties and challenges of war, we had our own challenging, but successful, year overall. Once again, we made many advances in improving the rights and benefits of disabled veterans and their families. Once again, we upheld the proud tradition of the DAV as an organization devoted first and foremost to securing and preserving benefits and services for veterans suffering from disabilities incurred in service to their county, and for their eligible dependents and survivors. Though we must continue to look to the future with prudent caution, I am pleased to report to you on a productive year. For the DAV's leaders, legislative staff, and members, it was a year that justifies a sense of pride and accomplishment, and a sense that we are continuing to fulfill our organizational mission.

Budget & Appropriations

Fiscal Year 2004

After another typical hard fight for adequate funding for veterans' programs throughout 2003, Congress finally passed fiscal year (FY) 2004 appropriations in late January 2004. Following the initial steps in the annual budget process in which the President submitted his FY

2004 budget to Congress in February 2003, the Veterans' Affairs Committees submitted their views and estimates to the Budget Committees, and Congress adopted its budget resolution in April 2003, the House of Representatives approved its appropriations bill for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in July 2003.

The President's budget had requested only $1.4 billion above the FY 2003 appropriations for veterans' medical care. The President's budget requested legislation to require certain veterans to pay a $250 annual enrollment fee for medical care and, in addition, to require them to pay higher pharmacy and outpatient treatment co-payments. The goals of this legislation were to shift more of the costs of veterans' medical care from the government to veterans themselves and to make veterans' medical care more expensive and thereby save additional money by driving an estimated 1.2 million veterans away from the VA medical care system.

During contentious negotiations on the congressional budget resolution for FY 2004, House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Chris Smith (R-N.J.) and a few of his colleagues had leveraged an agreement from the House Budget Committee Chairman and the House leadership to accept the funding for veterans medical care provided in the Senate's budget resolution. This would have provided $1.8 billion above the President's request for medical care. Despite the funding level provided in the concurrent budget resolution and despite intense lobbying by the DAV and other veterans' organizations, the VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies appropriations subcommittee included in its bill only the $27.2 billion requested by the Administration. The bill reported by the appropriations subcommittee also included provisions for the $250 enrollment fee and increased co-payments sought in the President's budget. During consideration by the full Appropriations Committee, Congressman Chet Edwards (D-Tex.) offered an amendment to reduce tax cuts for persons earning more than $1 million a year and to use the money to add $2.2 billion for veterans' medical care. The amendment was defeated by a vote along party lines. Veterans achieved one victory, however. Responding to strong criticism, the Appropriations Committee stripped from the bill the provisions for an enrollment fee and increased co-payments.

On July 25, 2003, the House passed H.R. 2861, its 2004 appropriations bill for VA and other agencies. To adhere to the tight caps on discretionary spending sought by the President and agreed to by the congressional leadership to limit spending on domestic programs and allow for tax cuts, the House provided only the $27.2 billion for veterans' medical care sought by the President. This was below the level earlier agreed to in the concurrent budget resolution. Chairman Smith again attempted to add more money for medical care, but the House leadership beat back his efforts and those supporting him by threatening members with the loss of funding for projects in their districts and threatening to strip Congressman Smith of his chairmanship. We then took our fight to the Senate, where we hoped the influence of the Administration would not be as great and where the independent-minded senators would be more willing to do right by veterans.

On September 5, 2003, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its bill which included $28.4 billion for veterans' medical care, but $1.3 billion of that was designated as emergency spending which the President could choose not to spend. With the full Senate unable to agree on an appropriations bill for veterans' programs, VA began operating under temporary funding bills on October 1, 2003, the beginning of FY 2004.

On October 17, 2003, the Senate included an additional $1.3 billion for veterans' medical care in a separate emergency supplemental appropriations bill for FY 2004. The House version of the emergency supplemental, passed on the same day, contained no additional funding for veterans' medical care. The $1.3 billion was removed from the bill in the conference agreement between the House and Senate.

The Senate passed its version of H.R. 2861 on November 18, 2003. The appropriations bill for VA was combined with other appropriations bills still pending at the end of the session and included provisions for $1.3 billion above the President's request for medical care. The House approved the conference report for this omnibus spending bill, H.R. 2673, on December 8, 2003, but the Senate could not agree on the conference report before the end of session and resumed consideration of it with the beginning of the second session of the 108th Congress on January 20, 2004. With Senate agreement of the conference report on January 22, 2004, and the President's signature on January 23, H.R. 2673 became Public Law 108-199, and VA finally had a regular appropriations bill, nearly four months into the fiscal year. While Congress was

persuaded to reject the President's request for a $250 annual enrollment fee and increased co-payments and while Congress provided $1.3 billion more in budget authority and $1.6 billion more in appropriated dollars than the President requested for medical care, this amount still fell about $571 million below the amount we recommended in *The Independent Budget* that we prepared in partnership with AMVETS, PVA, and VFW.

With an annual appropriation finally approved for FY 2004, a repeat of the same battle began anew with the release of the President's FY 2005 budget on February 2, 2004.

Fiscal Year 2005

The President's budget for FY 2005 proposes deep cuts in funding for veterans' programs. The President recommended only a $310 million increase for veterans' medical care, which would represent about a 1% increase over the FY 2004 amount but would actually amount to a net reduction in funding because it does not cover the costs of inflation. The Administration's budget again seeks legislation to increase co-payments and impose a $250 annual fee for medical care. The budget would reduce staffing in the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) by 540 full-time employees (FTE) and would cut funding for medical and prosthetic research by $50 million. The President's budget would substantially scale back investments in ongoing programs to modernize VBA's essential information technology. The budget requests more than $7 million less than the amount needed by VA to continue two of its projects to develop and install modern information technology systems to aid in the administration of benefit programs.

While the President's budget requests specified dollar amounts of funding for Federal programs, it is not merely a presentation of raw numbers. It includes the underlying justification for the amounts requested to operate programs and to meet Government obligations. It includes explanations of the workloads and projected workloads and the strategies and methods for achieving program purposes and for improving efficiency. In addition, the budget includes the President's recommendations for legislation to implement the Administration's public policy objectives.

Historically, presidents' budgets have included modest proposals to improve benefits and services for veterans. Presidents' budgets have also occasionally included proposals to reduce or eliminate certain veterans' benefits. The Administration's budget for FY 2005 contains very little in the way of recommendations to improve veterans' programs and calls upon Congress to enact some legislation to limit or reduce veterans' entitlement to benefits. Other than some minor technical changes in benefit programs, the President's budget includes only one recommendation for beneficial legislation, and that is the typical recommendation that Congress enact a cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) for compensation and related benefits under that account. In addition to the enrollment fee and increased co-payments, the President's budget seeks legislation to bar service-connected benefits for the effects of the added disability that results when veterans resort to alcohol to escape the extreme distress, disturbing symptoms, or pain associated with some service-connected disabilities such as posttraumatic stress disorder. Inexplicably, the Administration also requested that Congress enact legislation to limit veterans to a one-time use of VA home loan guaranty.

Earlier this year, we testified in four separate congressional hearings to state the DAV's position on the President's FY 2005 budget recommendations and to present our own alternative budget recommendations as set forth in *The Independent Budget*. We appeared before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee on February 4, 2004, and before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee on February 10, 2004. We testified before the House Budget Committee on February 12, 2004, and before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies on March 25, 2004. Consistent with our primary responsibility as the author of the sections of *The Independent Budget* concerning the nonmedical benefit programs, we focused our testimony on those areas, although we did depart from our usual practice to communicate our strong views about the need to change the funding mechanism for veterans' medical care.

In our testimony, we agreed with the President's recommendation for a compensation COLA but urged Congress to repeal provisions that require rounding down of the adjusted rates to the nearest whole dollar. We reminded Congress that, although rounding down does not cause

a significant loss of buying power in one year, rounding down for many years in succession will have a compounding effect and will substantially erode the value of the already modest compensation rates.

Noting that the law provides for service connection of disabilities that are caused by other service-connected disabilities, we argued that alcohol abuse innocently acquired as a secondary effect of other serious distressing or painful service-connected disability should be treated no differently. We argued that disability benefits should cover the effects of alcohol abuse along with the primary service-connected disability under such circumstances. We opposed the Administration's request for legislation to prohibit benefits for such secondary alcohol abuse. With objections from the veterans' community, we were able to forestall legislation for that purpose last year and urged the congressional committees to reject the Administration's request again this year.

We urged Congress to again increase the grants for specially adapted housing and specially equipped automobiles provided for eligible service-connected veterans. We recommended that the legislation include provisions for automatic annual adjustments.

We opposed the Administration's recommendation that veterans be limited to use of their home loan guaranty entitlement to one time. To improve the home loan program for veterans, we recommended an increase in the maximum loan guaranty, and we urged Congress to repeal funding fees imposed upon some veterans.

To improve life insurance programs for veterans, we recommended that Congress exempt dividends, proceeds, and the cash value of VA life insurance policies from consideration in determining entitlement to other Federal benefits. We recommended that Congress authorize modern mortality tables instead of 1941 mortality tables to determine life expectancy for purposes of computing premiums for Service Disabled Veterans' Insurance (SDVI). We recommended that Congress increase the maximum coverage under SDVI from $10,000 to $50,000. We recommended that Congress increase the maximum coverage under Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI) from $90,000 to $150,000.

Noting that, insofar as Congress had removed the prohibition against concurrent receipt of military retired pay and disability compensation for some service-connected disabled military retirees, it had left the injustice in place for the remainder. We called for legislation to remove entirely the offset between military longevity retired pay and disability compensation.

Rather than reduce employee levels in VBA, we recommended that Congress provide approximately 216 more direct program staff for VA's Compensation and Pension Service than sought by the President's budget. We recommended that VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service be provided 255 more direct program employees than the President requested in his budget. We recommended that VA's Education Service be provided 29 more employees than the President requested. We recommended that Congress provide approximately $7.2 million more than the amount requested by the President for improvements in information technology systems for VBA.

We stressed the importance of putting a mechanism in place to end what has unquestionably proven to be an unsatisfactory process for funding veterans' medical care. We urged Congress to change the funding source from discretionary appropriations to mandatory funding.

During hearings on the budget before the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees, members expressed objections to the President's recommendation to impose a $250 user fee and higher co-payments for medical care. Members expressed doubts that Congress would enact legislation to increase costs for veterans.

DAV National Commander Alan W. Bowers reinforced many of our positions on the FY 2005 budget in his testimony before a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees on February 24, 2003.

The House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees agreed with our objections to the President's budget and our complaint that it requested insufficient funding, especially for veterans' medical care. In reporting to the Budget Committees their "Views and Estimates" of

the resources necessary for veterans' programs, both Veterans' Affairs Committees recommended higher appropriations for medical care, rejected the President's recommendations to impose a user fee and increased co-payments, recommended higher levels of staffing for VBA, and recommended higher appropriations for information technology.

The House and Senate Budget Committees formally began work on the annual congressional budget resolution in early March 2003. Under the congressional budget process, each chamber formulates its own budget resolution, and then conferees attempt to work out differences to adopt a uniform concurrent budget resolution. Although not a law, the budget resolution sets broad spending and revenue plans for Congress.

On March 12, 2004, the Senate passed its budget resolution, S. Con. Res. 95, which would increase funding for veterans' medical care by $1.2 billion above the President's request. On March 25, the House passed its budget resolution, H. Con. Res. 393, by a narrow majority of 3 votes after a contentious debate. The House also added $1.2 billion to the President's request for medical care. The House agreed to the conference report on May 19, 2004. However, the Senate leadership has been unable to amass enough votes for passage because of objections to provisions that would require any legislation that increases entitlement spending to be offset by equal reductions in spending elsewhere but would not require offsetting reductions in spending for revenue loss from tax cuts. Even without a budget resolution, the appropriations process must move forward.

The House, having adopted the conference report for the budget resolution, passed another resolution "deeming" the conference report as its budget although not agreed to by both chambers. Procedurally, this allowed the House to begin the appropriations process without being subject to procedural objections. Despite the spending set in the House budget resolution, Congressman Chet Edwards introduced a bill to provide $1.3 billion more for medical care. Because of time constraints, Senate appropriators began work on their appropriations bills in early June, despite the lack of a budget resolution.

Because of the tight limits on spending, appropriators expect difficulty finding enough money for popular programs and expect to have difficulty passing appropriations bills, prompting speculation that most appropriations bills will be consolidated into one large bill and passed after the November elections and after the beginning of FY 2005 on October 1, 2004.

Medical Care

Mandatory Funding

One of our greatest and recurring challenges during the budget debates each year is obtaining sufficient funding for veterans' medical care programs. Every year, the President's budget requests from $2 billion to $3 billion, on average, less than the minimum necessary to maintain veterans' medical care programs. That makes it an uphill battle to convince Congress to provide more, especially in the climate of tight budgets. Congress typically squeezes out an increase that falls around midway between the difference in what the President requested and what we seek in *The Independent Budget*. Obtaining any amount of funding above the amount requested in the President's budget is becoming an even greater challenge under current circumstances of substantially less money in the Federal treasury due to major tax cuts, at a time when we are burdened with the added costs of homeland security and massive spending on the military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, all adding to a mushrooming Federal budget deficit.

Primarily, funding for Federal programs is authorized through two different means—direct spending and annual appropriations. Direct spending is more commonly referred to as "mandatory" spending because the funding necessary to pay for an entitlement or to pay for a program is mandated by the law that authorized the program. In accordance with the law, Congress provides whatever amount of funding is necessary to meet the obligations of the law.

Expenditures for other programs must be funded through annual appropriations. Here, the amount is not set and predetermined by law, but is determined each year according to the amount of money available and the political priorities of Congress, as influenced by the President. Congress divides the available money among the many programs according to its own

judgment or discretion. Congress has no obligation in law to provide any specific amount of money to operate a "discretionary" program. Congress is guided and constrained only by its own political will. The proponents of various discretionary programs compete for the limited dollars available, and spending on national defense always takes precedence over domestic programs in dividing up the discretionary dollars.

Without a funding level assured, VA operates its medical care program on a year-to-year basis and has no way to budget and plan strategically, to use its money most efficiently over the long term. Without any guarantee of money available for salaries and other operating expenses, VA is disadvantaged in hiring physicians, nurses, and other health care workers and is unable to plan effectively for other multiyear projects. Veterans have no assurance that VA will be able to provide the medical care they need in the future. When funding is inadequate, as it almost always is, VA must limit expenditures, and it must therefore limit hiring, equipment purchases, upgrading of facilities, and new construction. With limited capacity, VA cannot provide timely treatment to all veterans who seek it. VA must cut corners in providing medical care, and, for those who are fortunate enough to receive VA care, VA must delay appointments. With the necessity to ration medical care due to inadequate resources, VA must deny some veterans medical care altogether. Veterans' medical care is held hostage by an erratic process and doubtful future. To the DAV, this is no way to operate a medical care system, and it is no way to treat America's veterans.

We determined that the only practical solution to this persisting problem and unacceptable situation is to remove funding for veterans' medical care from the uncertainties, whims, and shifting priorities of the political process of annual appropriations. There is no justification for Congress to shortchange veterans' medical care, and there is no justification for Congress to play politics with the lives of veterans.

The solution is to guarantee adequate and stable funding for veterans' medical care through direct spending mandated by permanent law, and thereby immune to the perils of purely political decisions. Through a formula in law that would match resources to actual demands upon the system, the funding source would change from discretionary spending to mandatory spending.

With the solution to such a serious problem for veterans so obvious, resistance by the President and Congress would seem wholly unwarranted. However, the President and some in Congress do not want to lose their power to spend money on their own priorities rather than on the well-being of our Nation's veterans. We recognized the magnitude of the challenge, but we initiated a campaign for mandatory funding despite the many formidable hurdles to obtaining the necessary support and legislation.

By Executive Order Number 13,214 of May 28, 2001, the President established the President's Task Force to Improve Health Care Delivery for Our Nation's Veterans. Our January 2002 appearance before the Task Force to testify provided an excellent forum for us to state our case and launch our campaign for legislation to fund veterans' medical care through direct spending. We gained consensus within the veterans' community and organized "The Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform," made up of nine major veterans' organizations, to press for mandatory funding legislation. House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Chris Smith, with cosponsorship from Ranking Member Lane Evans (D-Ill.), in July 2002, introduced a bill to make funding for veterans' medical care mandatory. Senator Tim Johnson (D-S. D.) introduced a companion bill in the Senate in September 2002. In its May 2003 report, the President's Task Force found that a root cause of VA's inability to provide timely, quality care to all veterans seeking it is quite simply a significant mismatch between demand for VA medical care and the funding provided by appropriations. As a solution, the Task Force recommended full funding under a mandatory funding mechanism. This panel of experts readily saw the problem and quickly adopted the most appropriate and effective solution. Although this was a principal and fully supported recommendation of the President's own task force, the Administration has not even officially acknowledged the recommendation, and has, through the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, opposed it in congressional testimony.

The bills introduced by Congressman Smith and Senator Johnson expired at the end of the 107th Congress. Under heavy pressure from his party's congressional leadership, Congressman Smith did not reintroduce his bill for mandatory funding in the 108th Congress,

but introduced a measure to create an independent panel to recommend funding levels. Instead, Congressman Evans, a principal supporter of this legislation, took up the cause and introduced H.R. 2318. Senator Johnson reintroduced his bill as S. 50. Senate Minority Leader Thomas Daschle (D-S. D.) also included provisions for mandatory funding in S. 19.

On July 9, 2003, the DAV along with other major veterans' organizations conducted a briefing for congressional staff on H.R. 2318. More than 40 congressional staff attended. We urged them to get their members to cosponsor H.R. 2318 and sign a pledge to actively support and work for passage of the bill. We continued throughout the remainder of the year to work with our fellow veterans' organizations in the Partnership to raise awareness about the problems of funding for medical care and our solution. We ran advertisements in the various political publications that are widely read in Washington.

In April 2004, we prepared and distributed to DAV departments and National Service Offices informational packets for conducting town hall meetings and publicizing our effort to get legislation for mandatory funding. Other members of the Partnership distributed these packets through their organizational channels.

On April 27, 2004, in response to an invitation, we presented testimony before the New York City Council on mandatory funding for veterans' medical care. The City Council had noted the informational material our Partnership distributed on mandatory funding and thought this was an important issue. After the hearing, the City Council adopted a resolution calling upon Congress to enact mandatory funding.

Because the House leadership exerted heavy pressure on the Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee not to introduce and move mandatory funding legislation through the Committee, we were not able to get a hearing on the issue. On June 3, 2004, Congressman Evans held a forum, conducted in the same manner as an official committee hearing, to receive the views of various parties. Several of Congressman Evans' Democratic colleagues from the Committee, Congressman Chet Edwards, and Senator Tim Johnson participated in the forum. National Commander Alan Bowers testified on behalf of the DAV and the Partnership.

On June 22, 2004, we testified on S. 50, in addition to a number of other bills, before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. On S. 50, we reminded the Committee of the annual ordeal of the appropriations process where VA never receives the full amount of funding necessary to maintain timely, quality medical care for veterans. We explained the detrimental effects of funding veterans' medical care through this flawed political process. We explained the practical advantages of converting to mandatory funding under a formula in permanent law.

On June 22, 2004, Senate Minority Leader Daschle introduced an amendment to the annual defense authorization bill to close the gap between the funding level and demand for veterans' medical care. To gain acceptance by his Democratic colleagues on the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Daschle crafted a hybrid funding mechanism that would have appropriators continue to provide discretionary appropriations at the FY 2004 level and would have that set discretionary amount supplemented by mandatory funding, the amount of which would be prescribed by a formula that calculates actual resource needs based on workloads in the medical care system. The amendment was defeated on a procedural vote on June 23, 2004.

Our many efforts have brought this issue to the forefront and persuaded a number of legislators of the merits of legislation. As of July 9, 2004, H.R. 2318 had 185 cosponsors, and S. 50 had 29 Senators signed on as cosponsors. We continue to face stiff resistance from appropriators and others in Congress who do not want to fence this money off from the discretionary appropriations, to guarantee adequate funding for veterans' medical care.

CARES

With great advances in medical care in the last century, inpatient treatment is no longer necessary for a much larger population of veterans. Consequently, delivery of medical care has moved away from the primarily hospital-based system to treating many more veterans as outpatients. However, much of VA's aging infrastructure was built to treat veterans as inpatients. Recognizing that it needed to reconfigure its facilities to accommodate the changed

environment of health care delivery, VA began a study in 1999 to determine its structural and geographical needs, to review the appropriateness of its current facilities in relation to those needs, and to develop a plan to realign its infrastructure in accordance with its findings. This major process was designated the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) project. As described in a May 2004 report by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, "CARES is a comprehensive, system-wide approach to, and ongoing process for, identifying the demand for VA care and projecting into the future the appropriate function, size, and location of VA facilities."

The first major product of this study would be a national plan developed within the Veterans Health Administration and presented with recommendations by VA's Undersecretary for Health. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs established a CARES Commission in December 2002 to consider the recommendations and data contained in this plan and report its own independent findings and recommendations. Based on assessments of veteran populations within major geographical market areas and analysis of the current and projected health care needs within these markets, current resources were compared with forecasted demand. From these findings VA devised a Draft National CARES Plan, issued on August 4, 2003. The draft plan proposed some consolidations, closures, expansion, and new construction of facilities. The CARES Commission then reviewed the draft plan and held its own public hearings to hear the views of various interested parties. Individuals from DAV departments and National Service Officers appeared before the Commission to present testimony on local conditions and needs. The Commission conducted some 38 public hearings and held 10 public meetings, in which it heard from veterans, veterans' organization representatives, members of Congress, Governors, and others. The CARES Commission compiled its analyses and recommendations for enhancing medical care services to veterans in its February 2004 Report to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

While our members provided the DAV's views on consolidation, transfer, and realignment of services and closure and expansion of facilities in the local hearings conducted by the Commission, we appeared before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee on March 2, 2004, to state our views on the more general, system-wide proposals for the VA's Veterans Health Administration. This included facility mission changes, community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs), mental health services, long-term care, disposition of excess VA property, contracting for care, infrastructure and safety, education and training, special disability programs, and sharing of facilities and services between the Department of Defense and VA.

In addition to addressing the Commission recommendations in each of these areas, we reiterated the importance of preserving the VA health care system, and particularly the specialized services such as those for spinal cord injury, mental health, prosthetics, and blind rehabilitation. We acknowledged that the Commission addressed many of the concerns we earlier raised during the Commission's deliberations.

The VA Secretary formally accepted the CARES Commission's recommendations in his May 2004 Report. The CARES recommendations adopted by Secretary Principi include:

- Construction of new medical centers in Orlando, Florida, and Las Vegas, Nevada;
- Replacement hospital in Denver, Colorado;
- New bed towers in Tampa, Florida, and San Juan, Puerto Rico;
- Priority for 156 new CBOCs;
- More than 100 major construction projects in 37 states for rehabilitation and modernization of medical facilities;
- Two new blind rehabilitation centers; and
- The potential creation of four new spinal cord injury centers and expansion of five existing centers.

The plan also calls for transferring care from antiquated health care facilities to more modern or better located VA facilities or, in some cases, contracting for care in local communities. VA facilities' average age exceeds 50 years, while those of successful private sector health care providers average less than 10 years. Consolidation planning is proposed for the following facilities:

- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—Highland Drive to University Drive and Heinz

- Brecksville, Ohio—to Wade Park
- Gulfport, Mississippi—to Biloxi

Partial Realignments are scheduled for:

- Knoxville, IA
- Dublin, GA
- Montrose, NY
- Saginaw, MI
- Kerrville, TX
- Canandaigua, NY
- Livermore, CA
- Butler, PA
- Ft. Wayne, IN

The CARES plan also includes further development of a veterans' rural access hospital policy and additional studies at nine VA health care facilities before making a determination about closure, consolidation or realignment. The plan calls for 42.5% reduction in vacant space by 2022. One major flaw in the study is the lack of a clear-cut long-term care policy and plan for long-term care nationwide. Likewise, we have concerns about how some of the planned changes will impact inpatient mental health services. Secretary Principi stated he did not want to delay the start of VA's modernization plans to wait for better data. However, VA promises to complete and validate utilization models for long-term care and long-term mental health care, and assures us that the results will be incorporated into the capital assets planning process.

Finally, Secretary Principi vowed that, "No veteran will lose health care as a result of CARES, nor will there be any gaps in health care services."

The DAV fully supports modernizing VA's aging infrastructure and improving access to veterans' health care. We believe the planned restructuring is a critical step in maintaining a viable health care system for veterans now and in the future. However, we insist that there must be a commitment to the continuity of care as changes are made and that adequate alternatives to care are in place before realignment or consolidation of facilities begins. Most important is that there is no reduction in health care services and that VA ensures veterans, veterans' service organizations, and other interested parties are kept abreast of the details concerning studies and construction or realignment projects during the planning and execution phases. Throughout this process, veterans must have timely access to top-quality health care services.

VA plans to invest nearly $1 billion annually for several years to kick start the renovation plans beginning in fiscal year 2005. However, it still remains the responsibility of Congress to appropriate this funding each year. Although VA admits implementation of CARES will not be instantaneous, construction is slated to begin as soon as 2006. VA states it will establish priorities for individual projects and develop detailed cost data on proposed projects to confirm their cost effectiveness.

With the national plan developed and approved, VA will now prepare and implement plans to make the recommended changes.

Because so many of these types of studies have been misdirected for inappropriate purposes and become a pretext for cutting benefits and services to veterans rather than genuine efforts to improve them, the veterans' community has been apprehensive and skeptical of the CARES initiative. It has not been without controversy. In the DAV, we have taken particular care to monitor the process and speak critically when necessary. We will continue to carefully monitor the implementation of this plan to ensure VA acts in the best interests of disabled veterans.

Other Medical Care Issues and Legislation

On July 29, 2003, we appeared before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to testify on eight separate bills pertaining to medical care. Among those of national interest or particular interest to us were S. 1144, S. 1156, S. 1283, and S. 1289. We testified in support of S. 1144 (companion House bill, H.R. 1908), which would rename the West Side VA Medical Center in Chicago, Illinois, as the Jesse Brown Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, honoring the late Secretary of Veterans Affairs and longtime member of the DAV's professional staff. We testified in support of provisions in S. 1156 that would extend through 2008 VA's authority to provide noninstitutional extended care services, extend through 2008 the requirement that VA

provide nursing home care to veterans in need of such care who have service-connected disabilities rated at 50% or more, and authorize VA to enter into agreements for furnishing nursing home and adult day health care in non-Department facilities. We informed the Committee that we did not oppose S. 1283, which would prohibit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from taking any action proposed under the CARES initiative until the Secretary had given prior notice to Congress of the intention to take such action and until the expiration of a 60-day period, or 30 days of continuous congressional session, following such notice, whichever is later. We noted our approval of S. 1289, which would designate the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, as the Paul Wellstone Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Provisions from other bills were merged into S. 1156 when the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee marked up several of its bills on September 30, 2003.

As marked up and reported by the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, S. 1156 contained a number of provisions to improve medical care for veterans. Its provisions would extend through 2008 VA's authority to provide enrolled veterans access to alternative outpatient-based long-term care services such as non-institutional extended care and nursing home care. It would allow VA to enter into agreements with non-Department facilities for the purpose of furnishing nursing home care, adult day health care, and other extended care services. VA would be able to conduct an additional 3-year assisted living pilot program, extend the housing assistance for homeless veterans for an additional 3 years, and extend the health status evaluation of spouses and children of Persian Gulf War veterans for an additional 4 years.

Under the bill, VA would be required to furnish medical and nursing home care to any Philippine Commonwealth Army veteran or new Philippine Scout residing in the United States who is a United States citizen or alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence.

This bill would change the definition of a "major medical facility construction project" by increasing the construction threshold from $4 million to $9 million. It would authorize funding for construction, demolition, and lease of medical facilities, as well as for specialized mental health services to veterans.

The bill included provisions to rename several VA medical care facilities, which included the renaming the Westside VA Medical Center in Chicago, Illinois, as the Jesse Brown Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and renaming the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, as the Paul Wellstone Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The bill retained the provisions requiring VA to provide Congress with advance notice of any action proposed under CARES. Other provisions would modify VA's authority on personnel appointments and other matters pertaining to VHA employees.

On September 30, 2003, we testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Health, to state our views on H.R. 2379, the Rural Veterans Access to Care Act of 2003, and H.R. 3094, the Veterans Timely Access to Health Care Act. To improve access to health care for highly rural or geographically remote veterans, H.R. 2379 would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that no less than 5% of the funds made available each fiscal year for the medical care appropriation of the Department of Veterans Affairs are used to improve access to medical services for highly rural or geographically remote veterans, including the use of such funds for: (1) acute or chronic symptom management; (2) nontherapeutic medical services; and (3) other appropriate medical services as determined by the director of the geographic service region involved. H.R. 3094 would impose a 30-day standard for access to care for a veteran seeking primary care from VA, require periodic review of the performance of VA facilities in meeting this standard, and authorize the Secretary to contract for medical care services when a facility is unable to meet the standard. The bill would require quarterly reports from the Secretary to the Veterans' Affairs committees on the Department's experience with respect to waiting times. While we applauded the goals of these bills, we expressed concerns about unintended detrimental effects. After the Subcommittee hearing, no further action was taken on either bill.

With floor amendments to incorporate provisions agreed to between the House and Senate, the Senate passed S. 1156 on November 19, 2003, and the House followed promptly with passage on November 21, 2003. It was signed by the President on December 6, 2003, and became Public Law 108–170, the Veterans Health Care, Capital Asset, and Business Improvement Act of 2003. As enacted, this legislation expanded specialized health care services

for veterans and authorized $369 million to repair, renovate, and build new VA medical care facilities. This comprehensive law contained provisions to:

- Eliminate the 90-day requirement for former POWs to qualify for dental care and eliminate prescription drug copayments for all former POWs
- Provide health care priority to veterans who participated in chemical and biological testing known as Project 112/SHAD
- Authorize health care services to Filipino World War II veterans living in the United States
- Allow VA to contract with smaller non-VA providers to provide nursing and extended care to aging veterans
- Authorize VA to employ chiropractors
- Increase funding for specialized mental health care services from $15,000,000 to $25,000,000
- Extend VA's authority to transfer certain properties to community-based homeless veterans' assistance providers
- Establish an Office of Research Oversight to strengthen protections and safety for human subjects and VA employees
- Authorize VA to carry out major construction projects proposed by the CARES initiative only after submitting a report to Congress listing each project in order of priority according to the legislation
- Require VA to notify Congress at least 60 days (or 30 days of continuous session) prior to undertaking any medical facility closures, consolidations, or staff realignments recommended by the CARES initiative
- Authorize $276.6 million for new major medical construction projects in Lebanon, Pennsylvania ($14.5 million); Beckley, West Virginia ($20 million); Chicago, Illinois ($98.5 million); San Diego, California ($48.6 million); West Haven, Connecticut ($50 million); Pensacola, Florida ($45 million)
- Authorize $5.879 million for new VA outpatient clinic leases in Charlotte, North Carolina ($3 million) and Boston, Massachusetts ($2.879 million)
- Authorize $86.5 million in advance planning funds for major medical projects in the following locations: Denver, Colorado ($26 million); Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania ($9 million); Las Vegas, Nevada ($25 million); Columbus, Ohio ($9 million); East Central Florida ($17.5 million)
- Require VA to develop specific plans for meeting the future hospital care needs of veterans who reside in southern New Jersey, southern Texas, north central Washington, and the panhandle area of Florida
- Require VA to conduct a feasibility study in coordination with the Medical University of South Carolina and DOD to consider establishing a joint health-care venture providing comprehensive health care services to veterans, active duty servicemembers, and other beneficiaries in the Charleston, South Carolina, area
- Authorize VA to name the following health care facilities: Bob Stump VAMC in Prescott, Arizona; Jesse Brown VAMC in Chicago, Illinois; Michael E. DeBakey VAMC in Houston, Texas; George E. Wahlen VAMC in Salt Lake City, Utah; John J. McGuirk VA Outpatient Clinic in New London, Connecticut; Victor J. Saracini VA Outpatient Clinic in Horsham, Pennsylvania

Public Law 108–170 consolidated the medical care legislation for the First Session of the 108th Congress.

On January 28, 2004, we appeared before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee to testify about VA policies on long-term care. We cited VA's reduction of nursing home beds, its exclusion of long-term medical care from the CARES study and plan, and its failure to request appropriations adequate to meet the level of long-term care mandated by law as evidence of VA neglect and failure to adequately address the growing need for long-term care within our aging veteran population. We referred the Committee to DAV Resolution No. 96 calling on Congress to enact legislation to establish a comprehensive program of extended care services for service-connected disabilities and for any veterans rated 50% or more service connected.

On March 11, 2004, we testified before the Subcommittee on Health of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee regarding VA medical care services for veterans suffering from

posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Our position was that VA has failed to maintain the capacity for treatment and care of veterans with severe mental illness and PTSD. We noted that VA's move away from hospital-based delivery of medical care to more care in an outpatient setting resulted in extensive closures of specialized inpatient mental health programs, with VA failing to replace those services with PTSD clinical teams and community-based outpatient programs. We also noted that VA has not dedicated sufficient attention and resources to providing appropriate facilities for treatment of women veterans suffering from PTSD due to sexual trauma. We objected to VA's efforts to get legislation barring compensation for the additional impairment that results when PTSD sufferers resort to the abuse of alcohol to relieve the distressing symptoms of PTSD.

We testified again before the Subcommittee on Health on March 30, 2004, regarding a proposal to provide veterans with a prescription-only health care benefit. We told the Subcommittee that, while we support enhancing the benefits and medical care services for disabled veterans, we do so with a view toward what is best for the system and all the veterans it serves. We acknowledged that authorizing VA to fill prescriptions from physicians outside the VA would be an added convenience for some veterans, but we noted that it could have detrimental effects on the integrity of the VA medical care system on the whole. We continually press for the legal authority and funding to enable VA to provide veterans the complete range of medical services they need. To take a step backwards and allow VA to become a pharmacy only for some veterans might set a dangerous precedent and incentive to lessen VA's obligation to provide full services for the ulterior motive of cost savings. We object to such fragmentation of entitlement and the delivery of medical care. We informed the Subcommittee we did not support any effort of this type.

On May 19, 2004, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee marked up H.R. 4231, a bill improving authority for recruiting and retaining nurses. The Committee reported this bill for action by the entire House.

In addition to S. 50 regarding mandatory funding, we provided testimony on 16 other bills, most of which concerned medical care issues, during our June 22, 2004, hearing before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. Within the broad range of measures, some had well-intentioned goals but possible detrimental effects on the system. Many provisions were related to operational issues more than matters directly affecting the delivery of medical care. None of the bills under consideration was particularly related to our resolutions or legislative goals. We provided the Committee with our concerns, cautionary observations, and support where appropriate.

On June 24, 2004, we provided testimony to the Subcommittee on Health of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee regarding a draft bill, titled the Veterans Affairs Real Property and Facilities Management Improvement Act of 2004. Primarily, the bill would authorize several leases for facilities, authorize appropriation of funds to cover the leases, and make technical changes to VA's lease authority. We testified in support of provisions to authorize and fund leasing additional facilities. We supported changes which would allow VA to reinvest in the system monies obtained from the lease or sale of excess properties, and we indicated we had no objection to other provisions pertaining to facilities operations and improvements.

Benefits

Concurrent Receipt of Military Retired Pay and Disability Compensation: Related Issues

After years of inaction and sidestepping the issue of concurrent receipt of military retired pay and disability compensation, Congress finally took some meaningful action on the issue in late 2003. The turning point came after Congressman Jim Marshall (D-Ga.) filed a motion to discharge the House Armed Services Committee from further consideration of the concurrent receipt bill. Once filed, a discharge motion becomes a petition for the signatures of other members who support it. A discharge petition is used to force the House leadership to bring before the House for a vote a bill that has been stalled in the committee to which it was assigned. A majority of the members of the House, 218 members, must sign the petition to force the bill to be called for a vote on the floor.

Although the required 218 members never signed the discharge petition, the number began to get close, and some in the majority party were considering breaking ranks and signing it. With veterans pointedly questioning the sincerity of their members who had cosponsored and claimed to support the concurrent receipt bill but who had not signed the petition, the pressure on the House leadership increased to do something to avoid highly unfavorable political fallout. Congressman Marshall and other supporters of concurrent receipt had forced their hand. Some 366 House members had signed on as cosponsors to the concurrent receipt bill, and with only a couple more than 200 having signed the discharge petition by the end of September 2003, there was obviously a question about the true position of many House members. Those cosponsors who had not signed the discharge petition could no longer credibly claim to support the bill. Before, the House leadership had always acted according to the wishes of the President, who was dead set against any legislation authorizing concurrent receipt and who had threatened to veto any bill providing for concurrent receipt. The House leadership had always been able to derail the legislation. With the heat on and the rumor that as many as 20 members of the majority party might join the 202 members already signed on to the discharge petition, the leadership began looking for a way out. In previous years, the leadership had avoided any real steps toward concurrent receipt by enacting purely symbolic measures and by enacting the extremely limited combat-related special compensation. Disabled veterans were no longer willing to accept such deceptive moves, however.

The leadership was not to come forward with meaningful legislation without first trying to attack from the rear and find a way to make veterans themselves pay for the costs of concurrent receipt by taking the money from them elsewhere. The leadership brazenly schemed to rip at the heart of veterans' benefits, the disability compensation program. Under current law, veterans are compensated for disabilities incurred or aggravated during military service unless due to misconduct, alcohol or drug abuse, or incurred during an unauthorized absence. Members of the Armed Forces serve under extraordinary physical and mental stress; serve in jungles, deserts, and other extremes of climate; serve in third-world countries where tropical diseases are endemic; and are exposed to all manner of dangers and hazardous substances. The military environment subjects servicemembers to stresses and trauma not common in civilian occupations. Therefore disabilities that arise or are aggravated during service are presumed due to factors of service and are therefore "in the line of duty" under the law.

The ill-advised plan of the House leadership was to change the law to authorize service connection only for disabilities proven to have been directly caused by performing the activities of a servicemember's particular military occupation. Injuries sustained during mealtimes and off-duty hours, for example, would not be service connected. Mental disorders and diseases would not be service connected unless the member could prove that performing his or her military job functions, and nothing else, caused the mental disorder or disease. Disabilities from the stress of the general military environment or military activities not strictly a part of a member's military occupation would not be service connected. Infectious diseases incurred during service could not be service connected unless the member could prove the infection was incurred while performing activities of his or her military occupation. For example, a member who contracted malaria while serving in a remote jungle location could not be awarded service connection unless the member could prove the mosquito bite occurred while performing job functions, as opposed to while resting, eating, or sleeping. VA projected that approximately two-thirds of the veterans who have service-connected disabilities under current law would not be eligible under these proposed more restrictive criteria.

The veterans' community, and the DAV in particular, reacted strongly to this unconscionable scheme. To say the House leadership stirred up a hornet's nest would be a gross understatement. Veterans were deeply angered at this willingness of some in Congress to abandon our Nation's most fundamental obligation, to care for those disabled in the service of their country, to let our sons and daughters serve in the Armed Forces at their own risk.

We issued an extremely critical news release, with the headline "Congress Declares War Against Disabled Veterans." We communicated our shock and displeasure to every member of the House, and mounted an urgent grassroots campaign. Congressman Lane Evans, Ranking Member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, followed with a news release condemning the move. Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) hurriedly convened a special Committee hearing to receive testimony on the ramifications of such a change in eligibility criteria for service connection. We testified before the Senate Veterans'

Affairs Committee on September 23, 2003. Witnesses and Committee members alike made strong statements against this House action. Ranking member, Senator Bob Graham (D-Fla.), raised emphatic objections to the procedural irregularities through which this change was being pursued and to the substantive provisions of the change itself. Senator Specter similarly voiced serious concerns. Immediately after the hearing, Senator Specter met with Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) and other key members of the of the Senate leadership, where he communicated the depth and unity of the opposition to this unacceptable scheme. We understand that the Senate leadership decided promptly not to support this move by the House. Press reports observed that this House plan "met with near universal disdain."

The proponents of this scheme quietly abandoned it, and the House Armed Services Committee began working on a compromise proposal that would not authorize full concurrent receipt for disabled military retirees, as passed by the Senate, but would begin a phase-out of the offset between retired pay and compensation for combat disabilities and veterans with the more severe levels of service-connected disabilities. As perhaps a stubborn refusal to accept total defeat and a remnant of the desire to eliminate compensation for many disabled veterans, the plan devised by the House Armed Services Committee leadership, included provisions for a new commission to investigate the justification for the disability benefits veterans receive.

On October 16, 2003, the House leadership publicly announced a plan through which the offset between retired pay and compensation would be phased out over 10 years to provide full retirement and disability benefits for military retirees rated 50% or more disabled by service-connected disabilities. Veterans rated less than 50% would receive special compensation for combat-related disabilities in addition to the disability compensation paid. The plan included provisions for a 13-member Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission to study the appropriateness of disability and death benefits for service-related conditions, including the "appropriate standard or standards for determining whether a disability or death should be compensated."

These compromise provisions of the House were adopted in conference and enacted as a part of the annual defense authorization bill, Public Law 108–136, on November 24, 2003. The separate House bill to authorize full concurrent receipt, H.R. 303, is technically still pending, as is the discharge petition. Cosponsorship of H.R. 303, still a symbolic gesture for many House members, has now grown to 382 members, and the discharge petition has 206 signatories. Concurrent receipt for all longevity retired disabled veterans continues to be one of our foremost legislative goals.

Other Benefit Improvements Enacted

The National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003, H.R. 1516, was enacted as Public Law 108–109 on November 11, 2003. The law directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, within four years after the enactment, to establish six new cemeteries to be located, based on VA's burial needs assessment, in Southeastern Pennsylvania (the city of Philadelphia and specified neighboring counties); Birmingham, Alabama; Jacksonville, Florida; Bakersfield, California; Greenville/Columbia, South Carolina; and Sarasota County, Florida. The law requires VA to solicit the advice and views of state and local veterans' organization representatives in determining specific cemetery sites; submit an initial report to Congress on the establishment of such cemeteries; and submit annual implementation reports until all six cemeteries are completed and have opened.

Public Law 108–121, the Military Family Relief Act of 2003, enacted on November 11, 2003, doubled the death gratuity for survivors of servicemembers killed in action, from $6,000 to $12,000, and made the whole sum tax exempt.

The annual COLA bill, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2003, was enacted as Public Law 108–147 on December 3, 2003. This legislation increased the rates of disability compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, and the clothing allowance by 2.1%.

Provisions from various bills to improve the benefit programs were merged into H.R. 2297, which was enacted on December 16, 2003, and became Public Law No: 108–183, the

Veterans Benefits Act of 2003. Public Law 108-183 made numerous changes to the benefit programs:

- Allows the surviving spouse or dependent children to receive the full amount of accrued benefits if the veteran dies while his or her claim is still pending
- Increased the specially adapted automobile grant from $9,000 to $11,000, and increased the specially adapted housing grants from $48,000 to $50,000 for the most severely disabled veterans and from $9,250 to $10,000 for less severely disabled veterans
- Extended VA's specially adapted housing grant to severely disabled servicemembers prior to separation from active duty service
- Restored dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), home loan, education, and burial benefit eligibility for surviving spouses remarried after age 57
- Increased monthly educational benefits for spouses and dependent children of disabled veterans from $695 to $788 for full-time study, from $522 to $592 for three-quarter time study, and from $347 to $394 for half-time study
- Expanded benefits eligibility to children with spina bifida who were born to certain Vietnam-era veterans who served in Korea near the demilitarized zone
- Eliminated the 30-day requirement for POWs to qualify for presumptions of service connection for certain disabilities: psychosis, any of the anxiety states, dysthymic disorder, organic residuals of frostbite, and posttraumatic osteoarthritis
- Provided full compensation to members of the new Philippine Scouts, or full DIC to survivors, who reside in the United States as citizens or permanent residents and extended eligibility for burial in a national cemetery to them
- Expanded the Montgomery GI Bill program to cover self-employment training programs and entrepreneurship courses at approved institutions
- Allowed Federal agencies to create "sole-source" contracts for disabled veteran-owned small businesses—up to $5 million for manufacturing contract awards and up to $3 million for non-manufacturing contract awards
- Allowed Federal agencies to restrict certain contracts to disabled veteran-owned small businesses if at least two such concerns are qualified to bid on the contract
- Mandated that the Department of Labor place staff in veterans' assistance offices at overseas military installations 90 days after date of enactment

Hearings on Benefit Bills and Oversight

On July 16, 2003, we testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Benefits, to offer our observations on the functioning of VA's Fiduciary and Field Examination (F&FE) Program. We reminded the Subcommittee that this program is, by its nature, one which is vulnerable to improprieties, thereby making close supervision and oversight necessary. We provided the Subcommittee with information our National Service Officers (NSOs) provided about the effectiveness and problem areas experienced in the program's operation across the country.

We related to the Subcommittee that, overall, our NSOs reported the program was operating well, with a few isolated problems and problem areas. We noted some problems with delays and inadequate supervision as a result of inadequate staffing and resources.

We suggested that VA could develop more helpful guidelines for fiduciaries on what items other than necessities an incompetent veteran should be allowed to purchase for comfort and recreation and what portion of the monthly benefits the fiduciary should allow to be expended. We recommended that VA review staffing levels in relation to workload for each of its regional offices to determine if the caseloads are evenly and appropriately distributed among its field examiners. We suggested that VA perform a quality review sampling of ratings on incompetency to ensure guidelines are being followed properly. We recommended review of serious complaints about the program in two VA field offices.

On September 25, 2003, we again testified before the Benefits Subcommittee—this time, on the administration of life insurance programs under VA jurisdiction. We noted that VA processes applications and claims for life insurance on a very timely basis, resulting in a satisfactory rating from 95% of the veterans surveyed. We presented the Subcommittee with

background information and justification for our proposals to increase coverage and lower premiums on SDVI; to increase the amount of maximum coverage available under the VMLI program; to exclude the cash value, dividends, and proceeds of veterans' life insurance from asset and income determinations for purposes of eligibility for other government benefits; and to open the SDVI program to enrollment for those who did not apply for the insurance within the 2 years provided by current law.

On April 29, 2004, we testified before the Benefits Subcommittee on several separate bills. We supported provisions in H.R. 348 that would add heart disease, stroke, liver disease, type II diabetes, and osteoporosis to the list of diseases that may be presumed service connected as a result of the prisoner-of-war experience. We supported H.R. 843, which would extend full entitlement to service-connected benefits to those veterans entitled to compensation on account of disability caused by VA medical treatment or as a result of participation in VA vocational rehabilitation. We noted that provisions in H.R. 1735 and H.R. 4065 to increase the maximum amount of the VA home loan guaranty and provide for automatic annual adjustments based on housing costs are consistent with recommendations of *The Independent Budget*, and we voiced our approval of these bills. We supported H.R. 2612, which would expand eligibility for the specially adapted housing grant to include veterans with loss or loss of use of both upper extremities at the level of the elbows or below. We gave our full endorsement to H.R. 3936, a bill to allow the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to be located in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area rather than strictly within the District of Columbia. We supported H.R. 4172, a bill to include additional disabilities under the provisions for presumption of service connection due to radiation exposure and make other technical changes to the laws on benefits for disabilities due to radiation exposure. Consistent with a recommendation in *The Independent Budget*, we supported a draft bill to expand eligibility for education benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill to veterans who entered military service on or before June 30, 1985.

On June 25, 2004, we provided the Benefits Subcommittee testimony on two additional bills. Although we have no resolution regarding the criteria for fiduciaries who manage the estates of incompetent veterans, we noted with approval some of the beneficial provisions of H.R. 4032, the Veterans' Fiduciary Act of 2004. This bill would add measures to protect VA beneficiaries from misuse of their funds by VA-appointed fiduciaries and would add safeguards to ensure only qualified and appropriate persons are appointed as fiduciaries. We similarly noted our approval of provisions in a separate draft bill that would aid veterans in achieving self-employment.

Benefits Legislation Awaiting Action by the Full Congress

On May 19, 2004, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee approved five bills, one of which has been passed by the House:

- H.R. 1716 would allow VA to make several improvements in veterans job-training programs and incorporates provisions we support from several other veterans' bills to (1) authorize specially adapted housing for loss or loss of use of both upper extremities at the level of the elbow or below, (2) expand provisions for presumption of service connection based on radiation exposure and correct inequitable offset provisions between those benefits for veterans and other similar programs, and (3) provide full service-connected benefits to veterans receiving compensation for disabilities due to VA medical treatment or vocational rehabilitation
- H.R. 3936 would allow the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to be located in the Washington, D.C., area rather than specifically in the District of Columbia
- H.R. 4175 would authorize an annual COLA for compensation
- H.R. 4248 would extend through 2008 a program of grants for assistance to homeless veterans

On June 23, 2004, the House passed H.R. 4345, which would increase the maximum amount of the VA home loan guaranty. The bill is now awaiting action by the Senate.

Our DAV Legislative Program—Perspective

Getting the United States Congress to enact legislation we want enacted is no small feat, especially if it has costs or puts additional burdens upon the Government. Keeping the Government from enacting legislation that reduces costs by reducing or eliminating veterans' benefits is equally challenging. The results we achieve year after year are really quite remarkable. These results demonstrate the DAV's organizational strength, the rightness of its cause, and the commitment of its leadership and members.

The battles we fought and the successes we achieved during the past year required the full commitment and support of DAV's leadership and the full commitment and participation of its membership. Let me therefore acknowledge the highly effective manner in which National Commander Alan W. Bowers and his line officers communicated our message to our elected officials and to the American public. Let me especially acknowledge the essential support we receive from DAV's professional management, National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson, Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman, Kentucky Headquarters Executive Director Richard E. Patterson, and the professional staffs of our Washington Service and Legislative Headquarters and Kentucky National Headquarters. Of course, my own staff of the Legislative Department labors day in and day out to keep abreast of developments and ensure we respond with appropriate action. Most of you know them, but just let me mention them by name: Deputy National Legislative Director Rick Surratt, Assistant National Legislative Director Joy Ilem, Assistant National Legislative Director Brian Lawrence, Assistant National Legislative Director Adrian Atizado, and Legislative Support Specialists Lisa Bogle and Caren Wooley. Certainly, we rely heavily on our National Service Officers and DAV Auxiliary officers and members to keep us informed and coordinate with our Benefits Protection Team Leaders in grassroots lobbying. We also rely on the efforts of the members of our grassroots programs, the DAV Commander's Action Network (DAV CAN) and those enrolled on our online Action E-list. We continue to receive invaluable advice from Past National Commander Oliver Meadows.

In addition to all this human capital, we relied on many organizational assets to achieve our goals. We continue to use the media to carry our message to legislators and citizens, and we continue to use the power of the Internet to communicate with public officials and our membership. In today's fast-paced, competitive world, we must take advantage of every tool at our disposal.

As usual, we no sooner meet and deal with current challenges than we are faced with new ones. As we look back on the past year, we can take a sigh and enjoy a sense of accomplishment, and then it is back to the task of our ongoing work and the new issues that confront us. Although we had successes in achieving some of our legislative goals, others remain, and yet others will arise. In the upcoming year, we will deal with the issues from a position of strength and devotion to purpose. We will continue to work on the legislative front to build better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families.

In closing I want to thank all of our members for their contributions during the past year and call upon them to again join with us in fulfilling our organizational mission.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Randy Reese, DAV's National Service Director, for awards presentation. (Applause)

MR. EDWARD R. REESE: Good morning, Commander Bowers, Adjutant Wilson, delegates, and guests. Thank you for joining us as we pay tribute to the men and women, who generously assist disabled veterans gain meaningful employment.

Today we're recognizing those who excel in ensuring disabled veterans are given jobs. These employee representatives and employers recognize that, without question, disabled veterans perform well and are the key contributors to any success in any organization. Tops among these individuals are the disabled veterans outreach program representatives, or the DVOPs.

The recipient of the 2004 National Commander's Outstanding

Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist is Phylicia Fuller of Martinez, Georgia.

A Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialist at the Augusta, Georgia VA Medical Center, Ms. Fuller was selected as the Nation's Outstanding Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist of the Year after she had assisted more than a thousand veterans in finding jobs.

She has personally placed 313 veterans in full-time positions, including 236 disabled veterans. A member of DAV Chapter 18 in Augusta, Georgia, Fuller also volunteered more than 690 hours at the VA medical center from July of 2002 to October of 2003.

We are delighted to present this award to Phylicia Fuller and her manager, Michael Armstrong. Please welcome them. (Applause)

MS. PHYLICIA FULLER: To National Commander Bowers, National Adjutant Wilson, National Service Director Reese, Deputy Director Augustine, it is truly an honor to receive this wonderful award.

I would like to thank God for blessing me with the opportunity to become a DVOP to serve our veterans. To my lovely daughter, Kayika; to my former Department of Georgia Commander, Richard Williams, and to our present Commander Tim Hammonds; to my former department, Moses McIntosh, the Georgia 1st Junior Vice-Commander and Northeast District Commander, for his special efforts and hard work; to Mr. Roy Hambee; to the 9th District Bobby Williams; to my Commander, Willie Davis, of Pinkerton-Williams, Chapter 18, of Augusta; to my supervisor, Michael Armstrong, Georgia Department of Labor Augusta Career Center; and to all the endorsees who wrote letters on my behalf, it is truly great to be a DVOP.

I enjoy my job, and I care about our veterans, and I care about the outcomes of all of the veterans that I assist. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. REESE: Chad Richmond of Pinson, Alabama, who works for the Trussville, Alabama, Employment Security Office, was selected as the 2004 Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative. He has assisted 166 veterans in finding jobs and placed 148 veterans in positions last year.

Richmond is responsible for placing 65 percent of the office's veterans in jobs. He is a member of DAV Chapter 4 in Birmingham, Alabama, and serves as the district commander. Ladies and gentlemen, the 2004 LVER of the Year, Mr. Chad Richmond. (Applause)

MR. CHAD RICHMOND: Commander Bowers, national staff, Adjutant Wilson, members and delegates, it is a very humbling experience for me to receive this award, but it is an honor to be recognized for doing something that I love doing.

I would like to thank all of the people that work with me at the Trussville Career Center. Without them, it would be a very hard job, but they all are behind me a hundred percent, and I appreciate that.

I appreciate the backing that I received from my area supervisor and from the director of employment in service for Alabama. But, mostly, I would like to thank the people that employ our veterans. Without the employers, my job would not exist.

I think each and every one of us in this room owe a great debt of gratitude to all of our employers, not just nationwide, but worldwide, who are willing to take our veterans, especially our disabled veterans, and put them to work and let them do those things that they know that they can do. And for that, I am very grateful.

Once again, I am very honored to receive this award from you, and I will pledge to continue to do my best to help each and every disabled veteran and every veteran find meaningful employment so they can get on with their lives and be productive. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. REESE: The DAV is grateful for their dedicated services and heartfelt services provided by these outstanding employment specialists. They go far beyond what is required to provide suitable, fulfilling jobs to veterans and have found that employing veterans ensures success.

Next we honor Northrop Grumman Range Operations in Fort Hood, Texas, as the Outstanding Employer of the Year. At the Range Operations subsidiary, 73 percent of employees are veterans and 21 percent are disabled veterans.

They make major contributions to our nation's security there, and we're proud to recognize that disabled veterans are doing their part. Accepting the award for Northrop Grumman Range Operations is Mr. Ted Scriber. (Applause)

MR. TED SCRIBER: Well, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of Northrop Grumman Technical Services, I want to thank you for this recognition. But I have to tell you it's a two-way street.

Without the veterans on my workforce, I could never support the live-fire mission at Fort Hood in the manner in which we do every day.

As you know, Fort Hood is a big place, lots of troops, lots of firing. We've got about sixty-eight different kinds of ranges, and we're out there. And veterans, quite frankly, whether they're disabled or not, make the best workers for me.

I'm retired Army, and the majority of my primary staff and key personnel, supervisors and such, are either retired military or ex-military, and so we have a real vested interest in employing the veterans, Once again, I want to thank you.

I might note that the late-breaking news, in conjunction with another part of my company, we just bid and won another contract at Fort Hood operating the railhead for rail deployments and such, and I'm providing the workers.

I hired another 110 folks with about the same spread as my current workforce, as far as veterans and disabled veterans, and they've been on board and working since the middle of June. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. REESE: In addition, the Northrop Grumman Doctrine and Training in Killeen, Texas, this year has been selected as the Outstanding Small Employer of the Year. The Killeen Doctrine and Training Center boasts 94 percent of its employees are veterans, and 51 percent are disabled veterans.

Unfortunately, they're unavailable to accept the award today, but we're very proud of their outstanding record of service to our nation's veterans. (Applause)

The DAV is very proud of the diligence of these employment specialists and the companies on behalf of veterans. They go beyond what is considered their job. The efforts are personal. They're based on deep gratitude they have for the contributions of disabled veterans.

All of this year's employment award winners are helping build better lives for our nation's disabled veterans and their families, and in turn they are reaching the greatest satisfaction for their dedication.

Please join me again in thanking each of these individuals for the work they do to help disabled veterans. (Applause) This concludes the presentation of awards, Commander.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, Randy. I now call Ken Musselmann, Chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws, for the first reading.

MR. KEN MUSSELMANN: Thank you, Commander. Delegates, good morning. I know what you're thinking: "Here he is again with 32 resolutions. I can get me about a forty-five minute nap and then I'll be okay." But I'm here to tell you it's not going to happen that way this year.

We had a very good meeting on the National Constitution and the Bylaws. It was called to order at the first business session on July 31, 2004, by committee advisors myself and Barry Jesinoski.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. Ken Musselmann was nominated for chairman; and there being no further nominations, he was elected.

The next order of business was the nomination and election of a secretary. Kristine Childers was nominated and elected 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.

As always, there will be no discussion on these resolutions today.

Resolution 172: Article 6, Section 6.4, Paragraph 5, add after "DAV Auxiliary" the words "and the National Order of Trench Rats." So the amended paragraph reads as follows:

> 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 council or district council shall revert to the national organization, there to be held in trust for eighteen months.
>
> In the event the state department, chapter, or county or district council's charter is not reissued within the eighteen-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 Auxiliary and the National Order of Trench Rats are controlled by the appropriate provisions in their constitution and bylaws.

Resolution 173, Article 6, amend Article 6, Section 6.4, Paragraph 6, add after "DAV Auxiliary" the words "and the National Order of Trench Rats" so that the amended paragraph reads as follows:

> 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 Auxiliary and the National Order of Trench Rats are controlled by the appropriate provisions in their constitution and bylaws.

Resolution 174, to amend Article 7, Section 7.11, add POW/MIA as an interim committee. The amended section will read as follows:

> The National Commander, within sixty days after his or her election, shall appoint the following interim committees: Constitution and Bylaws; Membership; Legislation; Employment; International Affairs; Hospital and Voluntary Services; Women Veterans; and POW/MIA. The members of such committees shall serve without compensation."

Resolution 175, to amend Article 8, Section 8.5, Paragraph 2 and omit the letter "s" from the word "Paragraphs"

and omit "and 6" from the last sentence, so the amended paragraph will read as follows:

Paragraph 2: Each state department shall include the following provisions in its bylaws, unless prohibited by the charitable trust laws of a 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 all its debts shall be distributed as provided in Article 6, Section 6.4, Paragraph 5 of the national bylaws.

Resolution 176, to amend Article 11, Section 11.3, Paragraph 1, add after "Bosnia" the words "Afghanistan, Iraq" so that the last wartime period listed in the amended paragraph will read as follows:

Persian Gulf, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq, or other crises: August 2, 1990 until terminated by Presidential Proclamation or Congressional resolution.

Resolution 176, to amend Article 14, Section 14.7, delete "COD" and substitute the words "check" so that the amended section will read as follows:

All purchases from the national organization shall be for cash, credit card, or check, except Forget-Me-Not supplies, which may be delivered to chapters and state departments in good standing on a credit account.

All such Forget-Me-Not supplies purchased on open account must be paid for in full within thirty days after the close of the drive.

Resolution 177, the last one, to amend Article 17 to read as follows:

Article 17, Incorporations, Affiliations, and Other Associations.

Section 17.1: Purpose. The purpose of this article is to ensure allegiance by subordinate units and their affiliated entities to the DAV national bylaws and all other rules and directives issues by the national organization.

This article is also intended to ensure that neither subordinate units nor their affiliated entities from associations with other organizations, unless the national organization has approved of the association. Such approval is necessary for the protection of the name and reputation of DAV.

Nothing in this article shall be construed to supercede or modify the provisions of Section 15.3 of the DAV National Bylaws.

For purposes of this article, "subordinate units" shall include, without limitation, departments, chapters, and auxiliaries.

"Affiliated entities" shall include, without limitation, organizations created and/or indirectly controlled or supervised by subordinate units or by persons who control subordinate units.

Entities whose names or activities also suggest an association with a subordinate unit are affiliated entities. The determination of whether a particular organization or entity is a subordinate unit or an affiliated entity shall be made by the National Judge Advocate, whose determination of such matters shall be

final.

A determination that an entity is an affiliated entity for purposes of this article is not intended to be a determination that such entity is affiliated with a subordinate unit for tax, accounting, or other purposes.

Section 17.2: Incorporation. Paragraph 1: Any subordinate unit or affiliated entity that undertakes to incorporate or assume some legal status similar to incorporation must submit the proposed articles of the corporation or similar legal document and any associated bylaws or amendments to the respective DAV Department Judge Advocate and National Judge Advocate for approval prior to filing and complying with state law.

Such articles and bylaws must each contain the following provisions or its substantial equivalent, unless the charitable trust laws of the particular state direct otherwise:

This [corporation or other legal entity] affirms its obligation to comply fully with the present and future constitution, bylaws, regulations and rules, directives, and mandates of Disabled American Veterans, a federally chartered organization with its headquarters in Cold Spring, Kentucky.

This [corporation or other legal entity] acknowledges its allegiance and subordination to said organization. This [corporation or other legal entity] further acknowledges that upon dissolution or disassociation with DAV, the assets of the [corporation or other legal entity] will be distributed as mandated in the DAV National Bylaws.

All subordinate units and affiliated entities, regardless of whether or when incorporated, shall be deemed to have adopted and ratified the foregoing statement as a condition of continued existence as a subordinate unit or affiliated entity and, where applicable, as a condition of continuing privilege of use of the DAV name.

Paragraph 2: Unless otherwise directed by applicable state law, all members, directors, and officers of any corporation or similar entity described in Paragraph 1 shall be members of good standing of DAV.

Section 17.3: Other Associations. Absent the written approval of the National Adjutant, no subordinate unit or affiliated entity may take or permit any action that suggests or indicates that the subordinate unit or affiliated entity endorses, is endorsed by, or is associated with any non-DAV organization.

Having said all that, we're going to have a test on this next time I read it. (Laughter) Comrade Commander, that completes the first reading of the proposed changes to the constitution and bylaws. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, Ken. We'll hear the final report of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee at Tuesday's business session.

For the Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services, I recognize George Steese, Chairman.

MR. GEORGE STEESE: Thank you and good morning. Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Service was called to order on July 31, 2004, by the committee advisors, Norman Resner, Joy Ilem, and Edward Hartman.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. George Steese was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed and George Steese was elected chairman.

The next order of business was the nomination and election of secretary. Dennis Krulder 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 to the national convention.

For the purpose of saving time, I will read only the number of purpose of the resolution:

Number 30, support legislation to make VA health care funding mandatory;

Number 31, ensure timely access to quality health care and services;

Number 32, increase the amount allowed for fee-based care;

Number 33, support equal medical services and benefits for women veterans;

Number 34, support legislation to include dental care as part of the Veterans Uniformed Benefits Package;

Number 36, VA demonstration project for Alzheimer's facilities;

Number 38, VA medical subvention. Allow VA to bill and receive payment from Medicare for care provided to nonservice-connected Medicare-eligible veterans;

Number 39, support Congressional funding for VA national rehabilitative special events;

Number 41, support legislation to allow members of Congress to receive health care from the VA;

Number 62, support disabled veterans 70 percent service-connected or greater to reside in state veteran nursing homes at VA expense;

Number 122, support enhancement of long-term health care service to veterans rated 50 percent or greater;

Number 124, oppose VA recovering third-party payment for the treatment of a veteran's service-connected disabilities;

Number 126, urge the VA to impose guidelines to preclude inappropriate use of non-physicians for disability examinations;

Number 143, support VA paying its fair share of the cost of care for veterans residing in state veterans' homes;

Number 191, support enhancement of medical services through the Capital Assets Realignment for Enhanced Services process;

Number 192, support repeal of copayments for medical care and prescriptions provided by Department of Veterans Affairs;

Number 193, support repeal of beneficiary travel deductible for service-connected disabled veterans and increase beneficiary travel reimbursement rate;

Number 194, support the provision of comprehensive Department of Veterans Affairs health care service to entitled veterans;

Number 195, support legislation to remove the requirement for state veterans' homes to return aid and attendance paid posthumously for the period in which the veteran was receiving care;

Number 196, oppose recommendation that military-retired veterans be prohibited from receiving health care from both Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs facilities;

Number 197, support the provision of emergency health care in non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities to veterans enrolled in VA's health care system;

Number 198, reduce catastrophic cap on CHAMPVA services;

Number 199, support competitive salary and pay levels for Department of Veterans Affairs physicians, pharmacists, dentists, and nurses;

Number 217, extend appreciation to Electric Mobility

Veterans Assistance Division for the success of the 83rd National Convention; and

Number 218, extend appreciation to the Reno VA Medical Center, Reno, Nevada, for the success of the 83rd National Convention.

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.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, George. In accordance with Rule 9, now is the time for any rejected resolutions to be read. Are there any rejected resolutions you wish read? Hearing none, I need a second on the motion.

MR. MARK M. AARON: Mark Aaron, Department Commander, Illinois, makes a motion --

COMMANDER BOWERS: Sir, I have a motion. George made the motion. Could I have a second?

MR. AARON: Second on the motion, yes.

COMMANDER BOWERS: All those in favor, say aye; any opposed. The motion is carried; so ordered.

(The above mentioned resolutions follows:)

HOSPITAL AND VOLUNTARY SERVICES COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION NO. 030—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO MAKE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE FUNDING MANDATORY

WHEREAS, the funding for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care under the Federal budget is a discretionary program, meaning that it is within the discretion of Congress to determine how much money it will allocate each year for veterans' medical care; and

WHEREAS, title 38, United States Code, section 1710(a), provides that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs "shall" furnish hospital care and medical services, but only to the extent Congress has provided money to cover the costs of the care; and

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) firmly believes that service-connected disabled veterans have earned the right to VA medical care through their extraordinary sacrifices and service to this Nation; and

WHEREAS, the DAV, along with the other *Independent Budget Organizations*, has fought for sufficient funding for VA health care and a budget that is reflective of the rising cost of health care and increasing need for medical services; and

WHEREAS, despite our continued efforts, the cumulative effects of insufficient health care funding have now resulted in the rationing of health care; and

WHEREAS, VA reports that it has now reached capacity at many of its health care facilities; and

WHEREAS, VA is unable to provide timely access to quality health care to many of our Nation's most severely disabled service-connected veterans; and

WHEREAS, it is disingenuous for our government to promise health care to veterans but then make it unattainable because of inadequate funding; and

WHEREAS, making veterans' health care funding mandatory would ensure the government meets its obligation to provide health care to service-connected disabled veterans and ensure all veterans eligible for care in the VA health care system have access to timely quality health care; and

WHEREAS, making veterans' health care funding mandatory would eliminate the year-to-year uncertainties about funding levels that have prevented VA from being able to adequately plan for and meet the constantly growing number of veterans seeking treatment; and

WHEREAS, by including all veterans currently eligible and enrolled for care in the mandatory health care funding proposal, we protect the overall viability of the system and the specialized programs VA has developed to improve the health and well-being of our nation's service-connected disabled veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to make VA health care funding mandatory thereby guaranteeing Congress provide sufficient resources to cover the expenses of the veterans' health care program.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 031—LEGISLATIVE

ENSURE TIMELY ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE AND MEDICAL SERVICES

WHEREAS, timely access is a prevalent problem within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system; and

WHEREAS, the VA must identify and immediately correct the underlying problems that contribute to excessively long clinic waiting times for primary and specialty care for veterans nationwide; and

WHEREAS, VA surveys show that the organization has fallen far short of the expected progression toward its "30-30-20" timeliness goals and has failed to provide equal access to primary and specialty care for its enrolled veteran population; and

WHEREAS, short-term solutions such as staff reassignments or redirection of patients to community-based outpatient clinics can provide some immediate relief, but are only temporary solutions; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, urges the VA to consider, as a top priority, the reduction of waiting times for access to patient care and medical services.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 032—LEGISLATIVE

INCREASE THE REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR FEE-BASED CARE

WHEREAS, when Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities are unable to provide specific treatment or cannot provide treatment economically due to geographic inaccessibility, certain veteran patients may be authorized to receive treatment from non-VA health care providers at VA expense; and

WHEREAS, the program of providing such treatment is commonly referred to as the fee basis program; and

WHEREAS, the amount payable by VA has not kept pace with medical inflation and has remained constant for many years in spite of medical inflation; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, calls for a regulatory change to increase and maintain a realistic fee basis reimbursement program to provide cost-effective health care delivery to the Nation's sick and disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 033—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT EQUAL MEDICAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS FOR WOMEN VETERANS

WHEREAS, in contrast to the overall declining veteran population, the female veteran population of the U.S. and Puerto Rico is projected to *increase* by 6% between 2000 and 2020, from 1.24 million to 1.32 million; and

WHEREAS, women have always provided meaningful contributions to our armed services over the course of our Nation's history, most recently exemplified in Afghanistan and further by the 59,742 women who served honorably in Southwest Asia performing combat and combat support functions; and

WHEREAS, a General Accounting Office report found that problems continue to confront women veterans when attempting to gain access to Department of Veterans Affairs (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 difficult to obtain 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, 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 trauma; 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. 034—LEGISLATIVE

AMEND TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, TO PROVIDE DENTAL CARE TO ALL ENROLLED VETERANS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans recognizes that oral health is integral to the general health and well being of a patient, and is part of comprehensive health care; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system is mandated under section 1712, title 38, United States Code, to provide outpatient dental services to veterans rated 100 percent service connected, to veterans held prisoner of war, or to those who have sustained dental trauma in performance of military service; and

WHEREAS, section 1710(B) authorizes VA to provide hospital care and medical services to any veteran who has a service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, a dental condition is a medical condition which can impact on all other medical conditions; and

WHEREAS, VA currently provides dental services throughout the VA health care system; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, section 1712, to provide outpatient dental care to all enrolled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 036—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT AN ALZHEIMER'S FACILITY FOR VETERANS UNDER A CONGRESSIONALLY AUTHORIZED DEMONSTRATION PROJECT THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, most state veterans homes in the United States average about 30% Alzheimer's patients or patients with some form of dementia, who are inappropriately placed in the traditional nursing home setting; and

WHEREAS, only a few Alzheimer's facilities even exist in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs construction budget includes funds for veterans nursing homes, but does not provide for any unique projects in long-term care; and

WHEREAS, the aging of our veterans population will only increase the need for nursing home beds which are being filled with dementia patients inappropriately placed in these facilities; and

WHEREAS, veterans with Alzheimer's disease need a facility designed to meet their specific needs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports an Alzheimer's facility for veterans, under a congressionally authorized demonstration project through the Department of Veterans Affairs; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this demonstration project be a uniquely designed facility for veterans with Alzheimer's disease, using other than the routine medical or psychiatric care models and should include Alzheimer's research as an integral part of the veteran's treatment program.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 038—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION FOR MEDICARE REIMBURSEMENT FOR TREATMENT OF NONSERVICE-CONNECTED CONDITIONS OF MEDICARE-ELIGIBLE PRIORTY GROUP SEVEN AND EIGHT VETERANS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Health Administration is the largest health care delivery system in the United States, providing care to more than four million veterans at more than thirteen hundred sites; and

WHEREAS, veterans are classified into eight priority groupings for purposes of receipt of VA medical care; and

WHEREAS, Priority Groups Seven and Eight are made up of veterans who have no service-connected disabilities or have noncompensable service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, there are over two million veterans in Priority Groups Seven and Eight, of which approximately half are Medicare eligible; and

WHEREAS, VA receives no appropriation for the cost of medical care for the many Priority Group Seven and Eight veterans who seek VA medical care; and

WHEREAS, VA has no authority to bill Medicare for treatment of nonservice-connected disabilities provided to Medicare-eligible Priority Group Seven and Eight veterans; and

WHEREAS, Medicare-eligible Priority Group Seven and Eight veterans have earned the right to use VA health care services; and

WHEREAS, citizens purchase Medicare coverage through payroll deductions and should have the right to use those benefits to receive care from the provider of their choice; and

WHEREAS, Medicare should reimburse VA, as it does other health care providers, for this medical care to Priority Group Seven and Eight veterans to cover the expenditure of resources for their care; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to authorize VA to collect from Medicare the cost of treatment of nonservice-connected disabilities of Medicare-eligible Priority Group Seven and Eight veterans without any corresponding reduction or offset against VA medical care appropriations.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 039—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT CONGRESSIONAL FUNDING FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REHABILITATIVE SPECIAL EVENTS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and several Congressionally chartered veterans service organizations cosponsor four national rehabilitative special event programs for veterans receiving health care from VA medical facilities; and

WHEREAS, these rehabilitative programs, which include the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, National Veterans Wheelchair Games, National Veterans Golden Age Games, and the National Creative Arts Festival, focus on rehabilitation and enhancement of the physical, social, and emotional well-being of many severely disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, while these programs showcase the preventive and therapeutic values of sports, fitness, and recreation, which are key factors in VA's extensive rehabilitation programs, they are also extremely beneficial to veterans, helping many to overcome or mitigate the physical and emotional impact of severe disabilities; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to provide a separate appropriation in the VA budget for the national rehabilitative special events so VA can continue to contribute its share of the funding.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 041—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ALLOW MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO RECEIVE HEALTH CARE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Health Administration is the largest health care delivery system

in the United States, the largest clinical training ground for the health professions, a leader in medical research, and provides care to more than four million veterans at more than 1,300 sites; and

WHEREAS, VA provides enrolled veterans a uniform benefits package that emphasizes preventive medicine and primary care, and provides a comprehensive health care benefit plan, including inpatient and outpatient treatment; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs provides the highest quality medical care to veterans; and

WHEREAS, similar to the members of the military, most members of Congress are required to spend a significant amount of time away from their homes, families, and friends while Congress is in session; and

WHEREAS, because of the patriotism, devotion, and sacrifices of our members of Congress, similar to that of military members, ours is the most free nation on earth where our citizens enjoy unequalled rights, privileges, and prosperity; and

WHEREAS, members of Congress should therefore be granted the privilege of using the VA health care system for their medical needs; and

WHEREAS, if a member of Congress is a veteran, he or she would be classified into the priority grouping for purposes of receipt of VA medical care; if a member of Congress is not a veteran, he or she would be classified as a nonservice-connected veteran in either Priority Group 7 or 8 depending on their income; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to require members of Congress to enroll for VA medical care services and receive health care solely from the VA health care system.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 062—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ALLOW SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS RATED 70 PERCENT OR GREATER TO RESIDE IN STATE VETERANS NURSING HOMES AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EXPENSE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will pay the full cost of nursing home care for any veteran 70% service connected or greater, if it is determined by the VA that the veteran requires skilled nursing care; and

WHEREAS, currently this benefit is only available if the 70% service-connected disabled veteran requires skilled nursing care and accepts admission to a VA or community Contracted nursing home; and

WHEREAS, this benefit is not extended to any one of the 117 State Veterans Homes in the United States, but only to community contracted nursing homes; and

WHEREAS, this will force veterans who would prefer to reside in a State Veterans Home to have to choose between a State Veterans Home where there is a significant charge payable by the veteran for the care provided and a contracted Community Nursing Home where there is no charge to the veteran; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to allow State Veterans Homes to admit/retain any eligible veteran who is 70% or greater

service-connected disabled, and requires skilled nursing care and to receive the full cost of care for the veteran from VA. The State Veterans Home would relinquish the federal State Home per diem and require no resident charge for those veterans who qualify for the higher benefit and amend Public Law 106-117, the Veterans Health Care and Benefit Act.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 122—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM HEALTH CARE TO VETERANS

WHEREAS, many veterans use the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for their health care needs in post-acute and long-term care services; and

WHEREAS, VA long-term care is restricted and unevenly funded across the VA system; and

WHEREAS, VA statistics show that over the next 10 years, the number of veterans aged 85 and older will triple; and

WHEREAS, VA will face ever increasing demand for long-term care as our nation's veteran population ages; and

WHEREAS, VA should invigorate and re-engineer the core of VA-operated services to meet new demand for long-term care; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention, assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a comprehensive program of extended care services for veterans in need of such care for a service-connected disability, and to any veteran who is in need of such care for any condition who has a service-connected disability rated at 50 percent or more.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 124—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE THIRD-PARTY PAYMENTS FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES

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

WHEREAS, VA is authorized to recover or collect the cost of care from a third-party health insurer when insured veterans receive health care from VA for nonservice-connected conditions; and

WHEREAS, the collection of payments from a third party 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, opposes any legislation that would require VA to recover third-party payments for the care and treatment of a veteran's service-connected disability(ies).

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 126—LEGISLATIVE

URGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO IMPOSE GUIDELINES TO PRECLUDE INAPPROPRIATE USE OF NON-PHYSICIANS FOR DISABILITY EXAMINATIONS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), through its compensation and pension examinations section, has historically recognized the importance of a complete medical examination in order to properly evaluate a veteran's disability; and

WHEREAS, examinations should include complete neurological and psychiatric examinations, and other special examinations indicated by the physical condition; and

WHEREAS, an incomplete examination, especially in the neurological and psychiatric fields, is a common cause of incorrect diagnosis, which frequently leaves the Veterans Benefits Administration in doubt as to the presence or absence of disabling conditions at the time of the examination; and

WHEREAS, an incomplete examination delays the adjudication of entitlement to monetary benefits as well as the treatment of complex medical conditions; and

WHEREAS, many questions of cause and effect of functional impairment are beyond the competency of non-physicians; and

WHEREAS, individuals with qualifications less than those held by a physician do not possess the training and/or level of proficiency to cope with the complexities of performing compensation and pension examinations; and

WHEREAS, where examinations such as cardiology, neurology, gynecology, pulmonary, podiatry, orthopedics, gastrointestinal, and psychiatry require specialized medical opinions; and

WHEREAS, the medical examiner maintains the responsibility of furnishing, in addition to the etiology, anatomical, pathological, laboratory and prognostic data required for ordinary classification, full descriptions of the effects of disability upon the veteran's ordinary activity; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, urges the VA to impose binding guidelines that would preclude the utilization of non-physicians in performing VA compensation or pension examinations that are solely within the competence of a physician.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 143—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PAYING ITS FAIR SHARE OF THE COST OF CARING FOR VETERANS RESIDING IN STATE VETERANS HOMES

WHEREAS, state veterans homes were founded for Civil War veterans in the late 1800s and have served veterans for over 100 years; and

WHEREAS, under the provisions of title 38, United States Code, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is authorized to make aid payments to states maintaining state veterans homes subject to the provisions of section 18.13 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations; and

WHEREAS, currently there are 117 State Veterans Homes operating in a total of 48 states and territories, providing hospital, skilled nursing, skilled rehabilitation, long-term care, Alzheimer's care, domiciliary care, respite care, and end of life care to veterans and their families in the United States; and

WHEREAS, VA promotes the care and treatment of veterans in state veterans homes as one means to attain the goal of developing and maintaining the highest possible quality of patient care for eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA has stated its commitment to increase VA's share of state home per diem to 50 percent of the national average cost of providing care in a state veterans home; and

WHEREAS, title 38, United States Code, authorizes the State Home Construction Grant Program, which is funded by VA at 65 percent of total costs for construction of new state veterans homes and renovation of existing facilities; and

WHEREAS, VA has not kept pace with states' grant applications for construction of new state veterans homes and renovation projects; and

WHEREAS, title 38, United States Code, authorizes VA to make per diem payments for veterans residing in state veterans homes, and the State Veterans Home Program is recognized as the lowest cost alternative among all nursing care alternatives used by VA; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the growing long-term health care needs of older veterans, the State Veterans Home Program will continue to be a vital health care provider and the lowest cost alternative for veterans needing long-term nursing care; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, fully supports the legislative objectives of the National Association of State Veterans Homes (NASVH) to receive from VA a per diem payment that equals 50 percent of the national average cost of providing care in a state veterans home; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans urges the Congress of the United States to fully fund state veterans home construction grants Priority One projects; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans supports the enactment of legislation to clarify the VA per diem payments shall not be used by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to offset Medicaid payments that otherwise would be made to State Veterans Homes; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans urges the President and Congress to pledge their full support to the State Veterans Home Program as it is the most cost-effective nursing care alternative used by VA.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 191—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT ENHANCEMENT OF MEDICAL SERVICES THROUGH THE CAPITAL ASSESTS REALIGNMENT FOR ENHANCED SERVICES PROCESS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Health Administration is the largest health care delivery system in the United States, with 162 medical centers, 677 community-based outpatient clinics, 137 nursing homes, and 43 domiciliary units; and

WHEREAS, VA's infrastructure was designed under a different concept of health care delivery and needs to be reevaluated to make the most cost-effective use of its resources to meet veterans' current and future health care needs while providing optimal efficiency and access to the system; and

WHEREAS, VA's delivery of health care has shifted from primarily inpatient care to a more comprehensive primary care model of community-based outpatient medical care; and

WHEREAS, the veterans' population is changing in terms of its age, location, and needs, and the Capital Assets Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) data indicate the need for veterans care will increase over the next twenty years; and

WHEREAS, the decision of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the CARES program is an ongoing initiative designed to align VA's capital assets to ensure that veterans' future needs for accessible, quality health care are met; and

WHEREAS, according to VA, the implementation of CARES will require $1 billion per year for several years for construction of new hospitals, 156 new community clinics, 4 new spinal cord injury centers, 2 blind rehabilitation centers, renovations, consolidations, seismic improvements, and expanded mental health outpatient services nationwide; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention, assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure the CARES process results in enhanced medical services for veterans and that no services will be discontinued without having alternative sites of care available and operational prior to any closure or consolidation of medical facilities; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge Congress to provide sufficient funding for implementation of CARES-related projects above and beyond the amount needed to provide high quality and timely medical care, and we urge VA to keep Congress, veterans and the national veteran service organizations informed throughout the implementation phase of CARES.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 192—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT REPEAL OF COPAYMENTS FOR MEDICAL CARE AND PRESCRIPTIONS PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, through service to their Nation in which they made extraordinary sacrifices and contributions, veterans have earned the right to certain benefits in return; and

WHEREAS, because of the patriotism, devotion, and sacrifices of our veterans, ours is the most free nation on earth where our citizens enjoy unequalled rights, privileges, and prosperity; and

WHEREAS, as the beneficiaries of veterans' service and sacrifice, the citizens of our grateful nation want our Government to fully honor our moral obligation to care for veterans and generously provide them benefits and health care entirely free of charge; and

WHEREAS, copayments are a feature of health care systems in which some costs are shared by the insured and the insurer in a commercial relationship between the patient and the for-profit company or of health care through other Government programs in which the beneficiary has not earned the right to have the costs of health care benefits fully borne by taxpayers, and

WHEREAS, asking veterans to pay for part of the benefits a grateful nation provides for them is fundamentally contrary to the spirit and principles underlying the provision of benefits to veterans; and

WHEREAS, copayments were only imposed upon veterans under urgent circumstances and as a temporary necessity to contribute to reduction of the Federal budget deficit; and

WHEREAS, Congress has forgotten or abandoned the traditional benevolent philosophy for providing free benefits to veterans as repayment for the unusual rigors, risks, and personal deprivation they underwent for the good of our country; and

WHEREAS, Congress has made copayments a permanent feature of some veterans' health care services, and

WHEREAS, based on practices in the private sector, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has recently moved to more than triple the amount of the copayment for prescription medications, as if Department of Veterans Affairs were operating a commercial enterprise; and

WHEREAS, no requirement that veterans be burdened with copayments is justified, especially in these times where deficits have been offset by record budget surpluses; and

WHEREAS, as a continuing cost of national defense and as our Nation's foremost moral obligation, veterans' benefits must remain a first priority of our Government; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention, assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, calls for legislation to repeal all copayments for veterans' medical services and prescriptions.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 193—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT REPEAL OF BENEFICIARY TRAVEL PAY DEDUCTIBLE FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS AND INCREASE BENEFICIARY TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT RATES

WHEREAS, the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is authorized under section 111 of title 38, United States Code, to pay a travel allowance to certain service-connected veterans for VA examination, medical treatment, or care; and

WHEREAS, the applicable law and regulations do subject service-connected disabled veterans to a $3 deductible from the amount otherwise payable for each one-way trip unless the Secretary determines in an individual case that such deductible would cause severe financial hardship; and

WHEREAS, currently, veterans receive only a meager amount of beneficiary travel pay; either 17 cents or 11 cents per mile; and

WHEREAS, service-connected disabled veterans eligible for beneficiary travel should not have to help defray the cost of travel, in the form of a deductible, to and from a VA medical facility for medical examination, treatment or health care services; and

WHEREAS, asking veterans to pay for part of the benefits a grateful nation provides for them is fundamentally contrary to the spirit and principles underlying the provision of benefits to veterans; and

WHEREAS, it is grossly unfair for the VA Secretary to impose the deductible upon service-connected disabled veterans seeking treatment for a service-connected condition and service-connected veterans rated 30 percent or more when traveling in connection with any disability; and

WHEREAS, travel reimbursement rates for all veterans are badly out of date, having not been increased since 1978; and

WHEREAS, adequate travel expense reimbursement is directly tied to access to care for many veterans, and not a luxury; and

WHEREAS, the General Services Administration (GSA) for Federal Employees has periodically approved increases in rates

for reimbursement for employee's use of privately owned vehicles to a current rate of 34.5 cents per mile; and

WHEREAS, in 1997 the VA conducted a review of its travel reimbursement rates following the last GSA approved increase for use of privately owned vehicles; and

WHEREAS, VA concluded that increasing veterans' beneficiary travel rate from 17 cents to a rate more comparable to the GSA approved rate would result in a reduction of funds available for direct medical care to our nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA should not have to choose between providing direct medical care services to sick and disabled veterans or providing adequate beneficiary travel so that veterans can get to their medical appointments for treatment; and

WHEREAS, reasonable reimbursement rates for travel are integral to many veterans' access to health care; and

WHEREAS, when rates do not cover the cost of travel, veterans without resources are likely to delay health care delivery until their need may be critical; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to repeal the Secretary's authority to impose a deductible for service-connected disabled veterans from the amount payable for beneficiary travel pay for medical examination, treatment, or care; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans urges VA to include a line item in its budget for the cost of increasing veterans' beneficiary travel reimbursement rates to a more reasonable amount so that it can make the needed adjustment without reduction in funds for direct medical care to sick and disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 194—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT 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, it is the DAV's belief that quality health care for veterans is achieved when health care providers are given the freedom and resources to practice the most effective and scientifically proven medicine available; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration plays a critical role in the delivery of health care services to our Nation's sick and disabled veterans, is the largest direct Federal provider of health care services, the largest clinical training ground for the health professions, and a leader in medical research; 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 restricted appropriation levels, veterans are being forced to wait and are sometimes denied access to health care implicitly promised in connection with their military service; and

WHEREAS, the VA health delivery system must, at a minimum, achieve the following:

- Promote and ensure health care quality and value, and protect veterans in the health care system;
- Guarantee access to a full continuum of care, from preventive through hospice;
- Receive adequate funding through appropriations and third-party reimbursements;
- Fairly and equitably distribute resources to treat the greatest number of veterans requiring health care;
- Provide all medications, supplies, prosthetic devices and other over-the-counter medication necessary for the proper treatment of service-connected disabled veterans;
- Preserve VA's mission and role as a provider of special services in areas such as blindness, amputation, spinal cord injury, mental illness, and long-term care;
- Maintain 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;
- Maintain a strong and veteran-focused research program; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation that embodies the concepts and principles enumerated above and establishes entitlement to clearly defined VA health care services for veterans.

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RESOLUTION NO. 195—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REMOVE THE REQUIREMENT FOR STATE VETERANS HOMES TO RETURN AID AND ATTENDANCE PAID POSTHUMOUSLY FOR THE PERIOD IN WHICH THE VETERAN WAS RECEIVING CARE

WHEREAS, current law requires a reimbursement to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) of aid and attendance payments for veterans who are deceased at the time of payment; and

WHEREAS, such reimbursement prevents the just compensation to the State Veterans Home for the care they provided; and

WHEREAS, denial of just payment to the State Veterans Home would require the affected state treasury to absorb the full cost of the veteran's care; and

WHEREAS, current VA law deems State Veterans Homes as "political subdivisions," which cannot claim reimbursement for accrued benefits; and

WHEREAS, this application of VA law contradicts the intention of this special pension in that it then fails to allow the Veterans Home to receive the pension monies; and

WHEREAS, the approval of claims for aid and attendance are often not granted for more than six months after the veteran was admitted to nursing care at a State Veterans Home and the claim was initially submitted; and

WHEREAS, this accumulated retroactive sum awarded by the VA can be many thousands of dollars and thus retroactive sum must be returned entirely back to the VA simply because the veterans is no longer living appears to be grossly unjust; and

WHEREAS, the need for the large retroactive payment was caused by the inordinate delay in the VA processing of the claim and was in no way the fault of the veteran or the State Veterans Home; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to remove the requirement for State Veterans Homes to return any aid and attendance paid posthumously for the period in which the veteran was receiving care.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 196—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE RECOMMENDATION THAT MILITARY RETIRED VETERANS BE PROHIBITED FROM RECEIVING HEALTH CARE FROM BOTH DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES

WHEREAS, military retired veterans were promised and earned lifetime health care through the Department of Defense for completion of the required period of military service; and

WHEREAS, as veterans, they are separately entitled to the same health care provided to eligible veterans generally through the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, each of the two health care systems may offer advantages that the other does not offer; and

WHEREAS, a veteran's use of this dual entitlement to receive the best services of both systems does not constitute unnecessary duplicate use of health care services or duplication of costs to the Government; and

WHEREAS, entitlement to care under one system is not itself justification to end separate entitlement to care through the other system; and

WHEREAS, prohibiting the military retired veteran who uses Department of Defense health care facilities from using Department of Veterans Affairs facilities treats that veteran less favorably than other similarly situated veterans who have complete access to Department of Veterans Affairs health care; and

WHEREAS, prohibiting the military retired veteran who uses Department of Veterans Affairs health care facilities from using Department of Defense facilities treats that veteran less favorably than other similarly situated veterans who have complete access to Department of Defense health care; NOW

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention, assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, opposes any action to decrease the health care eligibility owed military retired veterans through the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 197—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT THE PROVISION OF EMERGENCY HEALTH CARE IN NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES TO VETERANS ENROLLED IN VA'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, any health care plan is incomplete without provisions for emergency care; and

WHEREAS, current law limits the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) authority to pay for emergency services that veterans receive outside the VA health care system; and

WHEREAS, VA provides enrolled veterans a uniform benefits package that emphasizes preventive medicine and primary care, and provides a comprehensive health care benefit plan, including inpatient and outpatient treatment; and

WHEREAS, the VA enrollment system has declared itself to be a "Health Care Plan"; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention, assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize enrolled veterans to receive emergency medical care in private medical facilities at VA expense when VA facilities are not reasonably available.

RESOLUTION NO. 198—LEGISLATIVE

REDUCE CATASTROPHIC CAP ON CHAMPVA SERVICES

WHEREAS, the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), known as CHAMPVA, is a health benefits program in which the VA shares the cost of certain health services with eligible beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS, eligible beneficiaries include: the spouse or child of veteran who VA was rated 100 percent permanently and totally disabled for a service connected disability; the surviving spouse or child of a veteran who died from a VA-rated service-connected disability, or who, at the time of death, was rated 100 percent permanently and totally disabled; or the surviving spouse or child of a military member who died in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, VA medical centers are authorized to provide services to CHAMPVA beneficiaries under the CHAMPVA In House Treatment Initiative (CITI) program at no cost to the beneficiary; and

WHEREAS, services provided under this program, however, are provided at the discretion of the hospital director and available only on a space-available basis, after the needs of veterans are met; and

WHEREAS, the CHAMPVA beneficiary is responsible for an annual $50 deductible for medical services rendered and 25 percent of reasonable and customary charges for patient care and pharmaceuticals up to $3000 each year if the local VA medical facility does not participate in the CITI program and the beneficiary must seek care in the private sector; and

WHEREAS, beneficiaries who are chronically ill can incur out-of-pocket medical care costs up to $3000 per year; and

WHEREAS, such costs can cause undue financial burden on a severely disabled veteran or his or her family members; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to reduce the catastrophic cap on CHAMPVA services to a more reasonable amount to reduce the out-of-pocket costs for beneficiaries who do not live near a VA medical facility that participates in the CHAMPVA CITI health care program.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 199—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT COMPETITIVE SALARY AND PAY LEVELS FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PHYSICIANS, PHARMACISTS, DENTISTS, AND NURSES

WHEREAS, chronic underfunding of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical care program continues to hamper the VA's ability to provide timely, complete, and quality health care services to veterans; and

WHEREAS, physicians, pharmacists, dentists, and nurses form the basic framework and nucleus for the provision of health care services to veterans; and

WHEREAS, there continues to exist a genuine crisis in the VA's ability to recruit and retain an adequate number of qualified health care providers; and

WHEREAS, a significant factor in the ability to hire qualified health care providers is adequate pay that is competitive with the private sector; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, seeks the enactment of legislation providing for competitive salary and pay levels for VA physicians, pharmacists dentists, and nurses.

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RESOLUTION NO. 217—ADMINISTRATIVE

EXTEND APPRECIATION TO ELECTRIC MOBILITY VETERANS ASSISTANCE DIVISION FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 83RD NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, many veterans attending the Disabled American Veterans National Convention suffer from severe disabilities that significantly impair their mobility; and

WHEREAS, hotels that are used to meet the needs of large groups, such as the Disabled American Veterans National Convention, often have long distances between meeting rooms, guest rooms, and dining facilities; and

WHEREAS, many sick and disabled veterans would not be able to attend or fully participate in the Convention activities and many important business meetings associated with the Convention without the aid of specialized power chairs; and

WHEREAS, Electric Mobility has generously provided DAV members the use of over 130 motorized scooters during our 83rd National Convention; and

WHEREAS, Electric Mobility has assisted many DAV members in overcoming mobility limitations and therefore contributed greatly to the success of the 83rd National Convention; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, expresses its sincere gratitude and appreciation to Electric Mobility for the loaning of electric scooters to the delegates to this 83rd National Convention.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 218—ADMINISTRATIVE

EXTEND APPRECIATION TO THE RENO VA MEDICAL CENTER, RENO, NEVADA, FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 83RD NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the cooperation and professionalism extended to the delegates and guests of the 83rd National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans and Auxiliary was beyond reproach; and

WHEREAS, many of the delegates to our National Convention were in need of quality medical treatment and required the assistance of prosthetic equipment to attend the National Convention; and

WHEREAS, in response to these requests, the health care officials from Reno, Nevada, VA Medical Center, staffed and maintained a compassionate and high-quality outpatient clinic and prosthetic service within the Reno Hilton Hotel; and

WHEREAS, the medical care and prosthetic services rendered to the delegates to this 83rd National Convention have been extended in a highly compassionate and professional manner; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, expresses its sincere appreciation to the VA Medical Center, Reno, Nevada, for the professional and skillful medical care delivered to the delegates to this 83rd National Convention and for contributing to the success of this Convention.

* * *

COMMANDER BOWERS: For the report on the Committee of Finance, Chairman Al Church.

MR. ALBERT E. CHURCH, II: Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Finance was called to order for its first business session on July 31, 2004, by the committee advisors, Jerome Krejci and Richard E. Patterson.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. Al Church, District 4, was nominated and elected chairman.

The next order of business was the nomination and election of secretary. Ed Lastowski, District 3, was nominated and elected as secretary of the committee.

The committee recommended no resolutions for adoption. The committee next reviewed the 2005 budget with the committee advisors and with the assistance of Comptroller Anita F. Bloom.

The 2005 budget was referred to the National Convention Committee on Finance by the Board of Directors and the National Executive Committee with a recommendation for adoption.

Upon the completion of the committee's review, the committee voted unanimously to recommend to the national convention adoption of the 2005 budget. The committee then expressed its thanks to committee advisors Jerome Krejci, Richard E. Patterson and were aided by Comptroller Anita Bloom for their assistance in performing the work of this important committee.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Finance Committee, and I hereby move for the adoption of the report and ask that the committee be discharged with the thanks of the national convention.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Can I have a second on that motion?

MR. MICHAEL JOE O'NEILL: Michael O'Neill from Lakewood Chapter 19, California, seconds.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you. Again, in accordance with Rule 9, now is the time for any redirected resolutions to be read. Are there any rejected resolutions you wish read? Hearing none, all those in favor, say aye; any opposed. So ordered.

I now recognize the Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights, Richard Giese, Chairman.

MR. RICHARD E. GIESE: Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights was called to order on July 31, 2004, by the committee advisors, Joseph A. Violante and Mark Burgess.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman and secretary. Dick Giese was elected as chairman and William Novak of New York was elected as secretary.

The committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted, and I will now report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption by the National Convention. For the purpose of saving time, I will read only the number and purpose of the resolutions:

Resolution Number 2, ten year protection period for service-connected evaluations;

Resolution Number 4, expand POW presumptions;

Resolution Number 5, support open-ended presumptive period for undiagnosed illnesses for Gulf War veterans;

Resolution Number 6, opposing any proposal that would offset payments of Social Security disability insurance benefits or any other federal benefit by VA compensation;

Resolution Number 7, opposing lump-sum payments for service-connected disabilities;

Resolution 8, opposing the permanent rounding down of COLAs in veterans benefits;

Number 9, opposition to subjecting compensation to means testing;

Number 10, supporting legislation to repeal the prohibition against service connection for smoking-related illnesses;

Number 11, supporting a change in regulatory requirements for a temporary total rating under Section 4.30 of Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations;

Number 12, support legislation to allow all veterans to recover amounts withheld as tax on disability severance pay;

Number 15, support repeal of funding fee for VA home loans;

Number 16, to provide an open period to apply for service-disabled veterans insurance (RH);

Number 17, mortgage protection life insurance for 100 percent service-connected veterans;

Number 18, supporting adequate funding for all VA programs;

Number 19, oppose reduction, taxation, or elimination of VA benefits;

Number 21, extend space-available air travel aboard military aircraft to 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans;

Number 22, seeking the immediate release of any Americans who may still be held captive from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf War, and Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom;

Number 23, support former POW slave-labor claims against Japanese firms;

Number 48, amend Section 143, (1)(4) of Title 26, United States Code, to include veterans who served after January 1, 1977, within the definition of "qualified veteran" for purpose of eligibility for home loans funded by tax-exempt mortgage revenue bonds issued by certain states;

Number 58, support an increase in the Department of Veterans Affairs burial allowance for service-connected veterans and provide for automatic annual adjustments;

Number 63, support legislation to remove prohibition against concurrent receipt;

Number 65, supporting legislation to provide service connection to atomic veterans for all recognized radiogenic diseases;

Number 73, eliminate the requirement of estimated dose exposure for service-connected claims under the presumptive diseases regulations for radiation-exposed veterans;

Number 75, expansion of Chapter 35 educational benefits;

Number 80, disability compensation increase;

Number 81, provide for a compensable rating for certain hearing-impaired veterans;

Number 94, provide a temporary total rating for the period that an amputee has a new prosthetic device constructed;

Number 95, redefine service in Vietnam to include service in the waters offshore;

Number 101, oppose redefining service connection;

Number 103, to compensate Persian Gulf veterans suffering

from illnesses circumstantially linked to their service in the Persian Gulf War;

Number 107, in support of legislation to provide that special separation benefits, or SSB, not be withheld from VA disability compensation payments;

Number 109, authorize automobile adaptive equipment eligibility to any veteran who has a service-connected disability that inhibits the ability to safely operate a motor vehicle;

Number 110, increase the grant for autos or other conveyances available to certain disabled veterans and provide for automatic annual adjustments based on the increase in the cost of living;

Number 111, expand provisions to allow for clothing allowance where there is irreparable damage to clothing from prescription medication for service-connected condition;

Number 112, opposition to the imposition of time limits for filing compensation claims;

Number 113, provide an increase in the specially adapted housing grant;

Number 115, supporting legislation to provide for waiver of premiums for supplemental service-disabled veterans insurance;

Number 136, provide educational benefits for dependents of service-connected veterans rated 80 percent or more disabled;

Number 137, eliminate the delimiting date for eligible spouses and surviving spouses for benefits under Chapter 35, Title 38 of the United States Code;

Number 146, extend commissary and PX privileges to veterans with a service-connected disability and their dependents;

Number 179, restore protections against unwarranted awards of veterans' benefits to third parties in divorce actions;

Number 180, support change in law to provide for commencement of payment period for total ratings for compensation as of date of entitling event;

Number 181, oppose reduction of the appeal period for Department of Veterans Affairs decisions;

Number 182, oppose regional dispersion of the Board of Veterans Appeals;

Number 183, support legislation to require the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to decide cases by panels of at least three judges;

Number 184, support legislation to reduce premiums for service-disabled veterans insurance consistent with current life expectancy;

Number 185, increase the face value of service-disabled veterans insurance;

And here's the one we've been looking for, the last one, Number 186, seeking legislation to exclude the value of, and dividends and proceeds from, veterans' government life insurance policies from assets and income determinations for purposes of eligibility to other government benefits and services.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights, and I move the adoption of these resolutions and that the committee be discharged with the thanks of the convention.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, Dick. You've heard the motion. Could I have a second?

MR. ROBERT D. WAYSS: Robert Wayss, Chapter 4, New Hampshire, second the motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: You've heard the motion and you've heard the second. Now in accordance with Rule 9, now is the time for any rejected resolutions to be read. Are there any rejected resolutions you wish read?

Hearing none, all those in favor, say aye; any opposed. So ordered. (Applause)

(The above-mentioned resolutions follow:)

LEGISLATION AND VETERANS' RIGHTS COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION NO. 002—LEGISLATIVE

PROVIDE A 10-YEAR PROTECTION PERIOD FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY EVALUATIONS

WHEREAS, section 110 of title 38, United States Code, 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports amendment of section 110 of title 38, United States Code, to provide that disability evaluations continuously in effect at the same evaluation rate be protected after a period of 10 years.

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RESOLUTION NO. 004—LEGISLATIVE

EXPAND PRISONER-OF-WAR 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 physical and psychological maladies; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, 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; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans urges passage of legislation that would expand eligibility for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation to surviving spouses of certain former POWs, who died prior to September 30, 1999, and who were rated totally disabled at the time of death for a service-connected disability for a period of not less than one year.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 005—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT OPEN-ENDED PRESUMPTIVE PERIOD FOR UNDIAGNOSED ILLNESSES FOR GULF WAR VETERANS

WHEREAS, thousands of Gulf War veterans still suffer from chronic unexplained physical symptoms; and

WHEREAS, the numerous symptoms experienced by sick Gulf War veterans are not well understood and the causes of such symptoms remain elusive and answers could likely remain evasive for some time; and

WHEREAS, there currently is little significant research on long-term health effects of many of the agents Gulf War veterans were potentially exposed to during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, additional research into the long-term health effects of exposures is needed, a fact confirmed in a September 2000 report by the Institute of Medicine on the health effects of exposures during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, the current presumptive period for undiagnosed illnesses was recently only extended for a period of five years (through December 31, 2006); NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, urges that legislation be enacted to extend the presumptive period for service connection for ill-defined and undiagnosed illnesses indefinitely.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 006—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE ANY PROPOSAL THAT WOULD OFFSET PAYMENTS OF SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE BENEFITS OR ANY OTHER FEDERAL BENEFIT BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, consideration has been 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 (VA) 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, 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. 007—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE LUMP-SUM PAYMENTS FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES

WHEREAS, disability compensation is paid monthly to an eligible veteran on account of and at a rate commensurate with diminished earning capacity resulting from the effects of service-connected disease or injury; and

WHEREAS, such compensation, by design, continues to provide relief from the service-connected disability for as long as the veteran continues to suffer its effects at a compensable level; and

WHEREAS, by law, the rate of compensation is determined by the level of disability present, thereby requiring reevaluation of the disability upon a change in its degree; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission, created by Congress to study the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) claims processing system, has suggested lump-sum payments as a way for the Government to avoid the administrative costs of reevaluating service-connected disabilities and as a way to avoid future liabilities to service-connected disabled veterans when their disabilities worsen or cause secondary disabilities; and

WHEREAS, such lump-sum payments would not, on the whole, be in the best interests of disabled veterans but would be for Government savings and convenience; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, opposes any change in law to provide for lump-sum payments of VA disability compensation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 008—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE 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 veterans' cost-of-living adjustments unfairly targets veterans for convenient cost savings for the Government; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, opposes permanent rounding down of cost-of-living adjustments for veterans' benefits.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 009—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE 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 dependency and indemnity compensation, there are efforts to reduce or eliminate them 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 as 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, opposes any scheme to means test disability and death compensation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 010—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REPEAL THE PROHIBITION AGAINST SERVICE CONNECTION FOR SMOKING-RELATED ILLNESSES

WHEREAS, until recently, smoking of tobacco was an activity fully accepted by society and not only condoned but encouraged and subsidized by the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, because the Armed Forces and the military environment encouraged smoking among servicemembers, higher percentages of veterans smoke or have a history of smoking than the general population; and

WHEREAS, the Government rejects the tobacco companies' defense that responsibility for the health effects of smoking is with the individual who personally chose to smoke but relies on that same excuse to prohibit compensation for service-incurred smoking-related illnesses in veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Government has imposed a dual standard against veterans because it has not sought to hold other Federal beneficiaries personally responsible and prohibited benefits for smoking-related illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Congress conveniently seized upon the personal choice-personal responsibility excuse and enacted the prohibition against service connection for smoking-related illnesses solely to finance over-budget spending on politically popular transportation programs and not because of any genuine public policy considerations; and

WHEREAS, for all the foregoing reasons, the enactment of this prohibition was an extreme injustice against America's disabled veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to repeal the prohibition of service connection for smoking-related illnesses.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 011—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT A CHANGE IN REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR A TEMPORARY TOTAL RATING UNDER SECTION 4.30 OF TITLE 38, CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS

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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports a change in section 4.30 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, 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. 012—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT 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, the 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, 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. 015—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT REPEAL OF FUNDING FEES FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HOME LOANS

WHEREAS, in 1990, Congress imposed funding fees upon Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) guaranteed home loans under budget reconciliation provisions as a temporary deficit reduction measure; and

WHEREAS, such funding fees have now become a regular feature of all VA home loans, except for disabled veterans and un-remarried surviving spouses; and

WHEREAS, during the first session of the 108th Congress, funding fees were increased, and will continue so for the next seven years as a way to generate additional revenue to cover the costs of improvements and cost-of-living adjustments in other veterans' programs; and

WHEREAS, benefits provided to veterans by a grateful nation in return for their contributions and sacrifices through service in the armed forces should be provided by the government without a cost to the veteran; and

WHEREAS, increased funding fees have reduced the advantage of using the VA Home Loan Guaranty program; and

WHEREAS, funding fee increases are placing additional burdens upon veterans purchasing homes when the intent of the program is to reduce that burden by minimizing initial costs of buying a home; and

WHEREAS, such fees particularly impact on our young, active duty military families who may be purchasing their fist home; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, urges Congress to refrain from further increasing the VA Home Loan funding fees and to repeal these fees as soon as possible.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 016—LEGISLATIVE

PROVIDE AN OPEN PERIOD TO APPLY FOR SERVICE DISABLED VETERANS' INSURANCE

WHEREAS, service-connected disabled veterans are entitled to apply for Service Disabled Veterans' Insurance within two years from the date the Department of Veterans Affairs (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 2-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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, 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. 017—LEGISLATIVE

EXTEND ELIGIBILITY FOR VETERANS' MORTGAGE LIFE INSURANCE TO SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS RATED PERMANENTLY AND TOTALLY DISABLED

WHEREAS, Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance is presently available to veterans entitled to the special adapted housing award under section 2101(a) of title 38, United States Code; 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, seeks the enactment of legislation which would extend Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance to service-connected veterans who are rated as permanently and totally disabled.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 018—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR ALL DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, understaffing of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs in recent years has hampered 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 appropriations 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, seeks and strongly supports adequate funding for all VA programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 019—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE REDUCTION, TAXATION, OR ELIMINATION OF VETERANS' BENEFITS

WHEREAS, veterans' benefits are earned benefits paid to veterans and their families for their service to the Nation; and

WHEREAS, veterans' benefits are 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 recur with regularity and serious intent; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, vigorously supports the protection of veterans' benefits from taxation, cutbacks, and elimination.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 021—LEGISLATIVE

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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, 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. 022—LEGISLATIVE

SEEK THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF ANY AMERICANS WHO MAY STILL BE HELD CAPTIVE FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II, THE KOREAN WAR, THE VIETNAM WAR, THE PERSIAN GULF WAR, AND OPERATIONS ENDURING FREEDOM AND IRAQI FREEDOM 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, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, and the Iraq War; 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 brave families of these missing Americans continue to live in uncertainty and anguish regarding their missing sons and husbands; and

WHEREAS, there are still today more than 78,000 unaccounted for following World War II, some 8,000 from the Korean War, over 2,100 in Southeast Asia from the Vietnam War, one from the

Persian Gulf War, and the number from the Iraq War who have not been forgotten; and

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans was extremely disappointed with the timing of President Clinton's decision to normalize relations with the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, prior to the fullest possible accounting of our POW/MIAs from Southeast Asia; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, urges the U.S. Government to ensure this issue be considered as one of America's highest priorities, accelerating efforts to obtain the release of any American who may still 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 we urge the heads of Federal departments and agencies to fully disclose to the American public information concerning United States personnel classified as prisoners of war or missing in action from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, and Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 023—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT FORMER PRISONER-OF-WAR SLAVE LABOR CLAIMS AGAINST JAPANESE FIRMS

WHEREAS, during World War II, in the Pacific Theater, over 33,000 American military personnel were captured and interned by the Japanese as prisoners of war (POWs); and

WHEREAS, over 12,500 of those POWs died in captivity and this heavy loss of life gives a good indication of the horrid conditions that existed in the Japanese POW camps; and

WHEREAS, these POWs suffered from a lack of adequate food, clothing, shelter, and medical care, suffered interrogation and torture, endured unthinkable abuse and brutality under the hands of their captors; and

WHEREAS, many of these POWs were transported to mainland Japan, and were forced into slave labor where they were required to work for private Japanese companies under horrible conditions and suffered many types of cruel punishment and human rights abuses; and

WHEREAS, since the end of World War II, neither the Japanese government nor those private Japanese companies that enslaved our fighting men have offered to make restitution for the abuses and injuries suffered, nor have they offered an apology for their actions; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. government has never actively sought to have fair compensation and restitution paid to these former POWs who were deprived of all human dignity during their service to their country; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, the California Legislature unanimously passed a statute allowing claims for compensation for these former POWs to go forward in the courts, irrespective of the running of the statute of limitations; and

WHEREAS, since this law was passed, suits have been filed by American veterans captured by the Japanese during World War II and later enslaved by Japanese companies; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of State opposes the legal actions of the former American POWs to obtain compensation from Japanese companies and has filed papers in court proceedings

that would have the effect of stopping the court cases of these former POWs from ever going forward under any court; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Justice opinion, if adopted, would nullify the action of the California Legislature in seeking to open the courts for American POWs pursuing fair compensation for the harm suffered; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports fair and just compensation for the injuries suffered by all American POWs at the hands of their Japanese captors, and the slave labor they were forced to perform by private Japanese companies during World War II; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge the Administration to work with all parties involved in this issue to resolve the claims of these former POWs against the private Japanese companies in an expeditious manner.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 048—LEGISLATIVE

AMEND SECTION 143(l) (4) OF TITLE 26, UNITED STATES CODE, TO INCLUDE VETERANS WHO SERVED AFTER JANUARY 1, 1977, WITHIN THE DEFINITION OF "QUALIFIED VETERAN" FOR PURPOSES OF ELIGIBILITY FOR HOME LOANS FUNDED BY TAX-EXEMPT MORTGAGE REVENUE BONDS ISSUED BY CERTAIN STATES

WHEREAS, in addition to the benefits provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the individual states have long been leaders in recognizing and rewarding the tremendous sacrifice of our nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, home ownership is viewed by many as a cherished component of the American Dream; and

WHEREAS, enabling veterans to achieve home ownership at a lower cost is but a small reward for their faithful service while in the U.S. Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, in appreciation of this service on behalf of our nation, the states of Texas, California, Oregon, Alaska, and Wisconsin have offered below-market interest rates on home loan mortgages to eligible veterans for many decades; and

WHEREAS, this program has assisted over a million veterans in obtaining affordable housing and in making a better life for themselves and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, these states utilize tax-exempt bonds known as Qualified Veterans Mortgage Bonds to fund almost all of the home purchase and home improvement loans made to veterans; and

WHEREAS, current federal law governing the use of tax-exempt bonds used to fund these loans, as contained in Section 143(l)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code, unfairly limits these programs to only those veterans who served prior to January 1, 1977; and

WHEREAS this restriction unfairly prevents all veterans serving active duty post-1976 from using Qualified Veterans Mortgage Bonds, including over 500,000 men and women who served in Desert Shield and Desert Storm and the 180,000 Reservists and Guard members called up to serve our country since September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, these courageous men and women, many serving in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan deserve the same benefits offered to their earlier comrades in arms, yet they and their families are being denied the opportunity to use Qualified Veterans Mortgage Bonds; and

WHEREAS, Congress has failed to remedy this discriminatory federal provision on behalf of these deserving men and women, despite the fact that it will not increase federal discretionary spending one cent; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, urges Congress to support legislative action to immediately remove the aforementioned discriminatory portion of the Internal Revenue Code in order that today's veterans and their families might enjoy the same benefits as their earlier counterparts.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 058—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT AN INCREASE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BURIAL ALLOWANCE FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS AND PROVIDE FOR AUTOMATIC ANNUAL ADJUSTMENTS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides service-connected veterans a $2,000 burial allowance; and

WHEREAS, the amount of this burial allowance has been seriously eroded by inflation because it has not been regularly adjusted for increases in the cost of living; and

WHEREAS, the amount of this burial allowance should be increased because this substantial reduction in its value is unfair to today's veterans; and

WHEREAS, the burial allowance should automatically be adjusted for inflation annually to keep pace with the rise in the cost of living; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to increase the burial allowance payable in the case of death due to service-connected disability and to provide for automatic annual adjustments indexed to the rise in the cost of living.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 063—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REMOVE THE PROHIBITION AGAINST CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF MILITARY RETIRED PAY AND VETERANS DISABILITY COMPENSATION FOR ALL LONGEVITY RETIRED VETERANS

WHEREAS, the new current law provides that service-connected veterans rated less than 50 percent who are retired from the Armed Forces on length of service may not receive disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in addition to full military retired pay; and

WHEREAS, these disabled veterans must therefore surrender retired pay in an amount equal to the disability compensation they receive; and

WHEREAS, this offset is extremely unfair to veterans who have served faithfully in military careers inasmuch as these veterans have earned their retired pay by virtue of their long service to the nation and wholly apart from any compensation they may separately be entitled to for the effects of disabilities due to military service; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, support legislation to repeal the offset

between military longevity retired pay and VA disability compensation for those service connected less than 50 percent.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 065—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION AUTHORIZING PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTION FOR ALL 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 ensuring that all atomic veterans are compensated for their radiogenic diseases; and

WHEREAS, by the Department of Veterans Affairs' own admission, few claimants have obtained disability compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation pursuant to Public Law 98-542; and

WHEREAS, the Government has spent tens of millions of dollars to provide dose reconstruction estimates, the accuracy of which are in serious doubt; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to provide presumptive service connection to atomic veterans for all recognized radiogenic diseases.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 073—LEGISLATIVE

ELIMINATE THE REQUIREMENT OF ESTIMATED DOSE EXPOSURE FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED CLAIMS UNDER THE REGULATIONS FOR RADIATION EXPOSED VETERANS

WHEREAS, the current regulations, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, § 3.311, require estimated dosage of radiation exposure; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs is required to verify this information with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency; and

WHEREAS, there is recent evidence of miscalculation of estimated dosage exposure; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to eliminate the currently required dosage estimation and to allow presumptive service connection for all radiation-related diseases if the veteran was physically in the area at the time of said exposure or detonation of said atomic requirement.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 075—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT EXPANSION OF CHAPTER 35 EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

WHEREAS, education is the cornerstone of the future success of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs' current educational assistance is $695.00, a flat stipend per eligible dependent per month; and

WHEREAS, the current educational assistance provided does not keep up with the rising costs of an education, including tuition, books, and miscellaneous fees; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, petitions Congress to amend title 38, United States Code, Chapter 35 to include educational assistance for tuition in which payments would be made directly to the educational institution and the monthly stipend payments would be made directly to the dependent child, spouse, or surviving spouse.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 080—LEGISLATIVE

INCREASE DISABILITY COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans was founded on the principle 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 earning capacity resulting from such disabilities in civil occupations; and

WHEREAS, compensation increases should be based on the loss of earning 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports the enactment of legislation to provide a realistic increase in Department of Veterans Affairs 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. 081—LEGISLATIVE

PROVIDE FOR A COMPENSABLE RATING FOR HEARING IMPAIRED VETERANS WITH HEARING AIDS

WHEREAS, a significantly high number of veterans with hearing impairments have a zero percent or non-compensable rating for high frequency hearing loss; and

WHEREAS, most veterans who have such a rating with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) experience significant difficulties with such hearing loss in ordinary daily living; and

WHEREAS, the Rating Schedule provides a compensable rating of 10 percent for other minor disabilities such as a partial loss of one finger, mild skin conditions, tender scars and, in some cases, for the residuals of an episiotomy scar; and

WHEREAS, the VA should recognize those veterans who are impacted by high frequency hearing loss; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports granting veterans with high frequency hearing loss a compensable rating (10 percent) when it has been medically determined that the veteran requires and has been issued a hearing amplification device.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 094—LEGISLATIVE

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 an amputee back on the job without his or her artificial limb; and

WHEREAS, the veteran who does not have an artificial limb is incapacitated and unable to perform gainful employment; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) *Schedule for Rating Disabilities* 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to amend the 1945 VA *Schedule for Rating Disabilities* to provide a temporary total rating for the period involving the replacement of a prosthetic device.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 095—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO CLARIFY THAT SERVICE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM FOR PURPOSES OF BENEFITS BASED ON EXPOSURE TO HERBICIDES INCLUDES SERVICE IN THE WATERS OFFSHORE

WHEREAS, over the decade from 1961 to 1971, our military forces sprayed approximately 21 million gallons of herbicide agents in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, these herbicide agents, the most common of which was designated "Agent Orange," contained the contaminant dioxin, one of the most toxic substances known to humankind; and

WHEREAS, the dispersion and deposition of, and human exposure to, dioxin were not limited to areas directly sprayed, inasmuch as it is acknowledged that the chemical was carried away from the areas of application by canals, rivers, and streams, and that airborne particulates were carried by wind drift; and

WHEREAS, Congress has therefore provided that, for purposes of establishing or presuming service connection for a disability or death as related to herbicide exposure, a veteran who, during active military, *naval*, or air service, "served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, shall be presumed to have been exposed

during such service to [a] herbicide agent . . . unless there is affirmative evidence to establish that the veteran was not exposed to any such agent" during that service; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has arbitrarily interpreted "served in the Republic of Vietnam" to mean only service on land areas of Vietnam and not waters offshore within its national boundaries; and

WHEREAS, the exclusion of territorial seas or waters from the term "Republic of Vietnam" is contrary to the plain and unqualified language of the law and illogical insofar as its premise is that herbicides could be carried away from the area of application across any expanse of land but not equal or lesser expanses of water; and

WHEREAS, various illnesses have been linked to and are presumed due to exposure to these herbicide agents; and

WHEREAS, veterans who served on ships no more distant from the spraying of these herbicides than many who served on land are arbitrarily and unjustly denied benefits of the presumption of exposure and thereby the presumption of service connection for their herbicide-related disabilities; NOW

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to expressly provide that the phrase "served in the Republic of Vietnam" includes service in the waters offshore.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 101—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE 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, various proposals have been made 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, opposes changes in current law so as to redefine or restrict service connection.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 103—LEGISLATIVE

COMPENSATE PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS SUFFERING FROM ILLNESSES CIRCUMSTANTIALLY LINKED TO THEIR SERVICE IN THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans 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, chemical and biological elements, desert parasites, vaccines, chemoprophylactic agents, and vehicle paints; and

WHEREAS, primary investigations and multifarious studies have thus far failed to identify the source or sources of these ailments; and

WHEREAS, the scientific/medical community's inability to identify the source(s) and pathological nature of 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, vigorously supports the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) expeditious handling of Persian Gulf War veterans' claims and the payment of fair and just compensation for those diagnosed and undiagnosed conditions associated with their service in the Persian Gulf theater or related exposure to certain chemical, biological, and environmental toxins; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we strongly urge that these Persian Gulf War veterans continue to 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, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Health and Human Services 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. 107—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION PROVIDING THAT SPECIAL SEPARATION BENEFITS PAYMENTS NOT BE WITHHELD FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DISABILITY COMPENSATION PAYMENTS

WHEREAS, as a result of the downsizing of our military forces, many career military personnel are leaving service prior to becoming eligible for longevity retirement pay; and

WHEREAS, these individuals are entitled to separation pay; and

WHEREAS, many of these individuals are also eligible for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation; and

WHEREAS, VA General Counsel, in an opinion rendered on June 22, 1992, held that any monies received as a result of the Special Separation Benefit (SSB) must be recouped from any VA disability compensation payment; and

WHEREAS, SSB payments are in no way related to a disability; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to clarify that SSB payments are not disability payments and therefore should not be recouped from VA disability compensation payments.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 109—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, section 3902 of title 38, United States Code, and section 17.119(a) of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, restrict the eligibility for adaptive equipment to those veterans who qualify for the automobile grant as specified in section 3901 of title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, not all veterans whose service-connected disabilities prohibit the safe operation of a motor vehicle meet the requirements of section 3901 of title 38, United States Code; 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, 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. 110—LEGISLATIVE

INCREASE THE GRANT FOR AUTOMOBILES OR OTHER CONVEYANCES AVAILABLE TO CERTAIN DISABLED VETERANS AND PROVIDE FOR AUTOMATIC ANNUAL ADJUSTMENTS BASED ON THE INCREASE IN THE COST OF LIVING

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides a grant to assist eligible disabled veterans and servicemembers in purchasing specially equipped automobiles or other conveyances; and

WHEREAS, when originally established, the amount of the grant was set at an amount sufficient to cover the full cost of lower-priced automobiles; and

WHEREAS, later amendments established grants in amounts representing 80 percent of the average cost of automobiles; and

WHEREAS, the amount of the automobile allowance has not been adjusted regularly concurrent with increases in the costs of automobiles, resulting in substantial erosion of the value of the benefit due to inflation; and

WHEREAS, the current grant of $11,000 represents only about 42 percent of the total average cost of automobiles based on most current available pricing; and

WHEREAS, the automobile grant must be adjusted annually if it is to keep pace with the rise in the cost of living and remain a meaningful amount; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to increase the automobile grant to an amount representing 80 percent of the average cost of new automobiles; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this legislation should provide for automatic annual adjustments in this allowance based on the increase in the cost of living.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 111—LEGISLATIVE

EXPAND PROVISIONS TO ALLOW FOR CLOTHING ALLOWANCE WHERE THERE IS IRREPARABLE DAMAGE TO CLOTHING FROM PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED CONDITIONS

WHEREAS, clothing allowance is payable to veterans whose service-connected disability results in the use of an orthopedic device that damages clothing; and

WHEREAS, clothing allowance is also payable to a veteran who is service connected for a skin disorder, and the prescription medications for that disorder irreparably damage clothing; and

WHEREAS, veterans service connected for other non-skin disabilities who are prescribed ointments and other medications which irreparably damage clothing are not entitled to a clothing allowance; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports expanding applicable regulations to provide that a veteran who is service connected for any condition which requires prescription medications that irreparably damage clothing be entitled to clothing allowance.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 112—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE THE IMPOSITION OF TIME LIMITS FOR FILING COMPENSATION CLAIMS

WHEREAS, veterans suffer lifelong impairments from disabilities incurred in connection with military service; and

WHEREAS, compensation is a benefit available to service-connected veterans at any time they choose to claim it; and

WHEREAS, veterans who, for whatever reason, do not initially desire to claim and receive compensation should not forfeit the right to claim and receive it at some later time; and

WHEREAS, no reason other than defeating delayed claims exists for imposition of a statute of limitations on compensation claims; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission, created by Congress to study the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) claims processing system, suggested a time limit for filing compensation claims as a way to reduce VA's workload; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, opposes any change in law to limit the time for filing compensation claims.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 113—LEGISLATIVE

PROVIDE INCREASE IN THE SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING GRANT AUTHORIZED BY SECTION 2101(a) OF TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, AND AUTOMATIC ANNUAL ADJUSTMENTS BASED ON INCREASES IN THE COST OF LIVING

WHEREAS, section 2101(a) of title 38, United States Code, authorizes a one-time specially adapted housing grant to veterans who have incurred service-connected disabilities consisting of loss or loss of use of both lower extremities, total blindness together with loss or loss of use of one lower extremity, or loss or loss of use of one lower extremity together with either the loss or loss of use of an upper extremity or other organic disease that requires use of a wheelchair or the use of braces, crutches, or canes; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this grant is to enable such severely disabled veterans to construct, purchase, or remodel homes with structural features to accommodate special needs; and

WHEREAS, the current $50,000 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation which would provide a realistic increase in the grant authorized by section 2101(a) of title 38, United States Code, and would provide for automatic annual adjustments based on increases in the cost of living.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 115—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR WAIVER OF PREMIUMS FOR SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICE DISABLED VETERANS' INSURANCE

WHEREAS, section 1922A(a) of title 38, United States Code, 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, United States Code, 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" (section 1912(d), title 38, United States Code); 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, 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, United States Code, be maintained.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 136—LEGISLATIVE

PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS FOR DEPENDENTS OF SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS RATED 80 PERCENT OR MORE DISABLED

WHEREAS, chapter 35 of title 38, United States Code, 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, seeks the enactment of legislation which would extend educational assistance under chapter 35 of title 38, United States Code, to the dependents of veterans who have a service-connected disability rating of 80 percent or more.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 137—LEGISLATIVE

ELIMINATE THE DELIMITING DATE FOR ELIGIBLE SPOUSES AND SURVIVING SPOUSES FOR BENEFITS PROVIDED UNDER CHAPTER 35, TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE

WHEREAS, dependents and survivors eligible for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefits under Chapter 35, title 38, United States Code, 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, seeks the enactment of legislation which would eliminate the delimiting date for spouses and surviving spouses for purposes of benefits provided under Chapter 35, title 38, United States Code.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 146—LEGISLATIVE

EXTEND COMMISSARY AND EXCHANGE PRIVILEGES TO SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS

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, veterans injured while in service to their Nation have earned the privilege to use commissary and exchange stores; and

WHEREAS, the recent downsizing of the military jeopardizes the continued profitable operation of military and exchange stores; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to extend commissary and exchange privileges to service-connected disabled veterans and their dependents.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 179—LEGISLATIVE

RESTORE PROTECTIONS AGAINST UNWARRANTED AWARDS OF VETERANS' BENEFITS TO THIRD PARTIES IN DIVORCE ACTIONS

WHEREAS, disability compensation and other veterans' benefits were intended and should be provided solely to fill specific needs of veterans; and

WHEREAS, Congress intended to exempt veterans' benefits from the claims of third parties to ensure that such benefits were not voluntarily assigned or through legal processes diverted to purposes or persons other than for which they were intended; and

WHEREAS, for purposes of support payments in divorce actions, state courts and the Supreme Court of the United States have arbitrarily created exceptions to the protection for veterans' benefits Congress established in section 5301 of title 38, United States Code, thereby forcing veterans to surrender their benefits to third parties, contrary to the intent of Congress; and

WHEREAS, the courts show little understanding or appreciation for the principle that veterans' entitlements are awarded solely to veterans because of their personal sacrifices, contributions in the defense of our Nation, or consequent personal suffering associated with service-connected disabilities and for that reason should not inure or vest to the benefit of others who have no natural right or valid legal interest in such benefits; and

WHEREAS, courts have, for example, shown no hesitation to force disabled veterans to surrender their disability compensation and sole source of sustenance to able-bodied ex-spouses as alimony awards; and

WHEREAS, there is a lack of uniformity in how the various courts treat veterans' benefits in divorce actions because the courts act according to their own will rather than any consensus on the meaning and intent of the law; and

WHEREAS, this situation creates a need for Congress to intervene to override the effect of the law given by the courts; to restore meaning, equity, and uniformity to the law; and to reinstate safeguards against veterans' benefits being siphoned

into the pockets of persons who have no right to such benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to amend section 5301 of title 38, United States Code, to restore protections against unwarranted awards of veterans' benefits to third parties by prohibiting courts from directly ordering payment of such benefits to third parties, other than dependent children when justified by the circumstances, and by prohibiting courts from taking notice, or the inclusion of, amounts received as veterans' benefits in determining such awards.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 180—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT 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 38, 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 Department of Veterans Affairs *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 now provides that the payment period for such temporary total ratings 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 suffering 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 deprival 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation seeking an exemption of the temporary total ratings from this provision of section 5111 of title 38, United States Code.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 181—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE REDUCTION OF THE APPEAL PERIOD FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DECISIONS

WHEREAS, Congress has created a benevolent system for the administration of veterans' benefits and services; and

WHEREAS, under this benevolent system, veterans currently have one year to initiate appeals of adverse decisions; and

WHEREAS, unlike with other legal processes where fairness to opposing parties, practical considerations, and matters of administrative and judicial convenience justify shorter appeal

periods, no such reasons exist within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) system where service to veterans is paramount; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission, created by Congress to study the VA claims processing system, has recommended a reduction of the appeal period from one year to 60 days; and

WHEREAS, the length of the current appeal period is not responsible in any way for the claims backlog and related problems the Commission was created to study, the real cause being the ratio of workload to production capacity; and

WHEREAS, a reduction of the appeal period will therefore not increase VA's efficiency nor reduce the claims backlog; and

WHEREAS, a reduction in the appeal period would be an unnecessary reduction of veterans' rights under the pretense of improving the VA claims and appeal processes; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, opposes any change in law to reduce the period for appealing VA claims decisions.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 182—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE REGIONAL DISPERSION OF THE BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS

WHEREAS, veterans and other claimants for veterans' benefits may appeal erroneous decisions of the various and geographically dispersed benefit offices and medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, inaccuracy and lack of uniformity are pervasive among the claims decisions of the many VA field offices; and

WHEREAS, one board, the Board of Veterans' Appeals situated adjacent to VA's central office and policymaking center in Washington, D.C., hears all appeals; and

WHEREAS, appellants, Board members, and taxpayers derive numerous benefits from an appellate board housed in one centralized location, some of the more obvious of which are:

- availability of the collective expertise of the entire board
- professional interaction and association among Board members and staff
- shared and uniform training
- common and shared goals and responsibilities
- economies of scale from pooled resources and the most efficient workload distribution, with the flexibility and capacity to readjust the workload as necessary between members and support staff
- a positive environment and employee incentives for developing creative solutions and innovations to meet and overcome the challenges inherent in a system of mass adjudication of claims
- more efficient and effective centralized case management and storage

- more effective centralized board administration and hands-on employee oversight;

and

WHEREAS, Congress created the Board of Veterans' Appeals after repeated failed experiments with various configurations of regional appellate panels that were plagued by persistent inefficiencies and problems and were proven impractical and poorly suited to properly dispose of veterans' appeals; and

WHEREAS, indications are that consideration is being given within certain quarters of VA to dismember the board and scatter its decisionmakers among the VA field offices or among various regions of the Nation; and

WHEREAS, such regional reorganization of the Board would be extremely unwise, wholly unwarranted, and not in the best interests of veterans or taxpayers; NOW

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention, assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, categorically opposes any decentralization of the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 183—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE THE COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS TO DECIDE CASES BY PANELS OF AT LEAST THREE JUDGES

WHEREAS, Congress passed the Veterans' Judicial Review Act of 1988, and created the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (the Court) (formerly the United States Court of Veterans Appeals); and

WHEREAS, the Veterans' Judicial Review Act of 1988 granted the Court the authority to hear cases by judges sitting alone or in panels; and

WHEREAS, no other appellate court of the United States permits one judge to decide appeals; and

WHEREAS, the caseload of the Court does not prohibit each appeal being decided by a panel; and

WHEREAS, a citizen's status as a veteran should not reduce the quality of judicial review to which he or she is entitled; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, urges Congress to amend title 38, United States Code, section 7254(b) to grant citizens claiming benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs full judicial review by revising the first sentence of that section to provide that the Court shall only hear cases in panels of at least three judges.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 184—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REDUCE PREMIUMS FOR SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS' INSURANCE CONSISTENT WITH CURRENT LIFE EXPECTANCY

WHEREAS, the United States Government provides life insurance to servicemembers because the increased hazards of military service make them an unacceptable risk for the commercial insurance market; and

WHEREAS, coverage for servicemembers may be continued after service under policies issued or programs overseen by the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the extra-hazard costs of insuring veterans in poorer health by reason of service-connected disabilities should be borne by the Government; and

WHEREAS, Congress created the Service-Disabled Veterans' Insurance (SDVI) program in 1951 by Public Law 82-23 to provide life insurance to service-connected disabled veterans at standard rates; and

WHEREAS, under Public Law 82-23, SDVI premiums are based on rates a healthy individual would have been charged when the program was established in 1951, in accordance with 1941 mortality tables as prescribed by section 1922 of title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, because life expectancy has improved since the inception of the SDVI program, premiums based on the higher mortality rates of 1941 no longer fulfill congressional intent to provide life insurance to service-connected disabled veterans at standard rates; and

WHEREAS, because service-connected disabled veterans are paying premiums higher than today's standard rates, they are, in effect, subsidizing their own service-connected disabilities; NOW

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to amend section 1922 of title 38, United States Code, to provide that SDVI premiums will be based on current mortality tables.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 185—LEGISLATIVE

INCREASE THE FACE VALUE OF SERVICE DISABLED VETERANS' INSURANCE (RH)

WHEREAS, certain veterans are eligible for National Service Life Insurance under section 1922 of title 38, United States Code; 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, United States Code; 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports amendment of section 1922(a) of title 38, United States Code, to increase the maximum amount of insurance coverage available under Service Disabled Veterans' Insurance (RH).

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 186—LEGISLATIVE

SEEK LEGISLATION TO EXCLUDE THE VALUE OF, AND DIVIDENDS AND PROCEEDS FROM, VETERANS' GOVERNMENT LIFE INSURANCE POLICIES FROM ASSET AND INCOME DETERMINATIONS FOR PURPOSES OF ELIGIBILITY TO OTHER GOVERNMENT BENEFITS AND SERVICES

WHEREAS, the Government created life insurance programs for veterans to allow them to continue life insurance coverage from military service, to maintain their insurability despite disability, and to obtain life insurance through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) at more favorable rates than available in the commercial market; and

WHEREAS, veterans' entitlement to special benefits because of their extraordinary contributions and sacrifices in the service of their country should be in addition to other benefits provided citizens generally; and

WHEREAS, the cash value of a VA life insurance policy is considered a liquid asset in determining eligibility for other needs-based government benefits and services; and

WHEREAS, veterans must surrender their VA life insurance policies to qualify for nursing home care under Medicaid, for example; and

WHEREAS, veterans should be able to maintain their modest VA life insurance policies to cover the expenses of burial and for other purposes; and

WHEREAS, the dividends and proceeds from VA life insurance policies should not be counted as income for purposes of eligibility for other benefits and services provided by or through the Federal and state governments; NOW

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, seeks legislation to exempt the cash value of, and dividends and proceeds from, VA life insurance policies from asset or income determinations for purposes of eligibility for other government programs.

* * *

COMMANDER BOWERS: Committee on Employment, the report will be given by Chairman Terry Schow.

MR. TERRY D. SCHOW: National Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Employment was called to order on July 31 by the committee advisors, Norbert Wenthold and Garry Augustine and Brian E. Lawrence.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. Terry D. Schow was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed and Terry D. Schow was elected chairman.

The next order of business was the nomination and election of a secretary. Jenny E. DeRaffele 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 purposes of saving time, I will read only the number and the purpose of the resolutions:

Number 45, to support veterans' preference in federal, state and local employment;

Number 46, support licensure and certification of active duty service personnel;

Number 47, provide adequate staffing, funding, and permanency for veterans employment and/or training, including VETS, NVTI, SBA, DVOP, LVER, and homeless programs;

Number 49, employment services for disabled military personnel on "terminal leave";

Number 50, support outreach and employment of disabled women veterans;

Number 51, increase funding for the TAP and DTAP programs;

Number 127, provide vocational rehabilitation and counseling service staff with state-of-the-art electronic equipment;

Number 145, amend definition of disabled veteran for purposes of benefits administered under Chapter 42, Title 38 of the United States Code;

Number 153, allow disabled veterans medically retired from military service to count service time towards civil service retirement;

Number 154, affirmative action for employment of disabled veterans;

Number 156, restore Servicemen's Occupational Conversion and Training Act, SMOCTA, program;

Number 201, support Chapter 31 vocational rehabilitation and employment;

Number 202, support the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, or USERRA;

Number 203, support the seamless transition of service members from military to civilian life;

Number 204, support the five-track system for vocational rehabilitation and employment, VR&E, staff.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Employment, and I move for the adoption of these resolutions and that the committee be discharged with the thanks of the National Convention.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, Terry. Do I have a second on his motion?

MR. KEITH ROBINSON: Keith Robinson, Junior Vice-Commander, Department of New York, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you. In accordance with Rule 9, now is the time for any rejected resolutions to be read. Are there any rejected resolutions you wish read? Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by saying aye; any opposed. So ordered. Thank you, Terry. (Applause)

(The above-mentioned resolutions follow:)

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION NO. 045—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans strongly supports federal, state, and local veterans' preference laws; and

WHEREAS, attempts are being made to weaken, dilute, and circumvent existing veterans' preference; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports veterans' preference in federal, state, and local employment.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 046—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION OF ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE PERSONNEL

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) provides some of the best vocational training in the nation for its military personnel; and

WHEREAS, DOD establishes, measures, and evaluates performance standards for every occupation within the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, there are many occupational career fields in the Armed Forces that can easily translate to a civilian occupation; and

WHEREAS, there are many occupations in the civilian workforce that require a license or certification; and

WHEREAS, in the Armed Forces, these occupational standards meet or exceed the civilian license or certification criteria; and

WHEREAS, many former military personnel, certified as proficient in their military occupational career, are not licensed or certified to perform a comparable job in the civilian workforce; and

WHEREAS, this situation creates an artificial barrier to employment upon separation from military service; and

WHEREAS, a study by the Congressional Commission on Servicemembers' and Veterans' Transition Assistance identified several military professions in which civilian credentialing is required for employment in the private sector; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports efforts to eliminate employment barriers that impede the transfer of military job skills to the civilian labor market; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Defense take appropriate steps to ensure that servicemembers be trained, tested, evaluated, and issued any licensure or certification that may be required in the civilian workforce; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans make the Montgomery GI Bill eligibility available to pay for all necessary civilian license and certification examination requirements, including necessary preparatory courses; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans support efforts to increase the civilian labor market's acceptance of the occupational training provided by the military.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 047—LEGISLATIVE

PROVIDE ADEQUATE FUNDING AND PERMANENCY FOR VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND/OR TRAINING INCLUDING NATIONAL VETERANS' TRAINING INSTITUTE (NVTI), SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA), DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM (DVOP), LOCAL VETERAN EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVE (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, NVTI and SBA, DVOP, LVER, Homeless, and others; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July

31-August 3, 2004, seeks and supports adequate funding and permanency for all veterans' employment and training programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 049—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR DISABLED MILITARY PERSONNEL ON "TERMINAL LEAVE"

WHEREAS, many disabled military personnel are relieved from active duty prior to the end of their enlistment period by being placed on "terminal leave," and they do not receive their discharge papers (DD 214) until the official end of their enlistment period; and

WHEREAS, they are not considered veterans by State Employment Security Agencies (SESAs) because they have not received their final discharge papers; and

WHEREAS, the transition from military service to civilian life is difficult for many disabled veterans, who must overcome many obstacles to successful employment; and

WHEREAS, such disabled veterans require all available employment services; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, urges Congress to mandate that disabled military personnel placed on "terminal leave" prior to the end of their official enlistment period, be considered veterans by the SESAs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 050—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT OUTREACH AND EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED WOMEN VETERANS

WHEREAS, many women who have served in the military are not aware of services available to them through State Employment Security Agencies (SESAs); and

WHEREAS, there has been an increase in the number of disabled women veterans in need of employment and training services; and

WHEREAS, the number of unemployed disabled women veterans continues to increase; and

WHEREAS, workforce trends indicate only job ready and highly skilled women veterans are able to find career employment; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, urges Congress to establish special programs for disabled women veterans in need of employment assistance under the Workforce Investment Act.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 051—LEGISLATIVE

INCREASE FUNDING FOR THE TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND THE DISABLED TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the transition from military service to civilian life is difficult for many disabled veterans to gain obstacles to successful employment; and

WHEREAS, the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and Disabled Transition Assistance Programs (DTAP) help ease some of the problems associated with this transition; and

WHEREAS, an important part of transition is receiving employment services from the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) and the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist staff prior to discharge; and

WHEREAS, the goal of TAP and DTAP is to help veterans receive vocational guidance and meaningful careers; and

WHEREAS, the level of funding, and staffing needed to successfully operate TAP and DTAP at military separation centers throughout the world is inadequate to support the number separations from active duty per year; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, urges Congress to make available additional funding to effectively provide vocational guidance to all separating military personnel.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 127—LEGISLATIVE

PROVIDE VETERANS REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT STAFF WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART EQUIPMENT

WHEREAS, the current Director, Department of Veterans Affairs' Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service has no authority over the approximately 700 employees throughout the VA Regional Office structure; and

WHEREAS, these individuals are responsible to the VA Regional Office Director; and

WHEREAS, these individuals rely on the VA Regional Office Director to provide needed technological support necessary to facilitate the program; and

WHEREAS, it has been reported that some VR&E offices do not have essential equipment; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, seeks change that would ensure all VR&C staff at the Regional Office level be provided state-of-the-art equipment in order to efficiently provide vocational rehabilitation and employment services to disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 145—LEGISLATIVE

AMEND THE DEFINITION OF DISABLED VETERAN FOR PURPOSES OF BENEFITS ADMINISTERED UNDER CHAPTER 42, TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE

WHEREAS, chapter 42, title 38, United States Code, 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, United States Code; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July

31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to amend section 4211 of title 38, United States Code, 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 one whose discharge or release from active duty was for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 153—LEGISLATIVE

ALLOW DISABLED VETERANS RETIRED FROM THE MILITARY ON DISABILITY TO COUNT SERVICE TIME TOWARD CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENT

WHEREAS, military personnel who receive a disability retirement deserve the full benefits of their disability retirement; and

WHEREAS, men and women who are retired for disability from the military and seek employment with the federal government currently cannot count their few years of service towards civil service retirement unless they waive the receipt of disability retired pay; and

WHEREAS, retired reservists can count active military service time toward civil service retirement; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to change the law to allow disabled military retirees to be entitled to count their service time towards both civil service, Ready Reserve or National Guard retirements.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 154—LEGISLATIVE

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, current law requires companies with Federal contracts to have an affirmative action program for disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, many disabled veterans are employed by Federal contractors that either do not have, or do not enforce, an affirmative action program for advancement; and

WHEREAS, current laws do not provide for the enforcement of affirmative action programs for disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, without enforcement, the value of affirmative action programs is eroded; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports legislation to provide for enforcement provisions to ensure that government contractors follow the affirmative action program for disabled.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 156—LEGISLATIVE

CALL FOR RESTORATION OF THE SERVICEMEMBERS OCCUPATIONAL CONVERSION AND TRAINING ACT

WHEREAS, in 1992, Congress enacted the Servicemembers Occupational Conversion and Training Act (SMOCTA) to help

eligible veterans enter the civilian workforce through payments to employers who hired and trained veterans; and

WHEREAS, these payments helped employers defray the cots of training and helped servicemembers make a successful transition from the military to civilian workforce; and

WHEREAS, on July 26, 2001, SMOCTA was officially terminated; and

WHEREAS, the need for this program for veterans continues; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, goes on record urging Congress to reauthorize SMOCTA and provide proper funding for this program.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 201—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT CHAPTER 31 VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT

WHEREAS, disabled veterans completing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) training program under chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code, are too infrequently placed in jobs leading to meaningful careers in their chosen occupation; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 96-466 requires the State Employment Security Agencies (SESAs) to provide all services and assistance necessary to enable disabled veterans to become employable and to maintain suitable employment; and

WHEREAS, both Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) and Chapter 31 counselors are often unfamiliar with all the various avenues through which disabled veterans can receive employment referrals and placement; and

WHEREAS, there are many community, private, and public entities which are available and capable of providing employment-related services, but compete with each other for numerical success in making placements; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, urges and recommends that SESAs, VA Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service, who are partners under a formal memorandum of understanding, make a coordinated effort to network with these public and private entities; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that they form a professional team in every major community that will cooperate to provide maximum placement of Chapter 31 disabled veterans at the lowest possible cost; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that they accomplish this through readiness assessments for Chapter 31 disabled veterans and sharing of resources and information by all members of each community placement team.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 202—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT THE UNIFORM SERVICES EMPLOYMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT (USERRA)

WHEREAS, nearly 50% of servicemembers serving in the Global War on terrorism are either National Guard or Reserve members; and

WHEREAS, it is believed that the vast majority of these individuals had employment when they were activated, thereby leaving their employment and being eligible for protections under USERRA; and

WHEREAS, some of these individuals may become disabled to the point of not being able to perform the duties of their pre-service employment; and

WHEREAS, employers must provide the same or a comparable job at a level consistent with the normal rate of progression for advancement for such individuals; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004 supports total enforcement of USERRA protections for these disabled servicemembers as well as all returning servicemembers and further suggest and support VETS and VR&E work closely together to assure those with disabilities receive any needed training to assist them to return to their former or comparable job.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 203—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT THE SEAMLESS TRANSITION OF SERVICEMEMBERS FROM MILITARY TO CIVILIAN LIFE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Department of Defense (DoD), and the Department of Labor (DOL) all play a significant role in the transition of military servicemembers to civilian life; and

WHEREAS, veterans separating from active duty are eligible to receive these services one year prior to discharge and two years prior to retirement; and

WHEREAS, many of these individuals do not receive these services on a timely basis thereby having a negative impact on their seamless transition; and

WHEREAS, many disabled servicemembers may not receive any services beyond a briefing on VA benefits; and

WHEREAS, disabled servicemembers, will experience a negative compounding affect on a seamless transition unless the same services are provided them in a timely fashion; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports and requests the VA, DoD and DOL coordinate their services to assure separating disabled servicemembers receive any and all services provided to any non-disabled servicemember who is transitioning to civilian life to assure a seamless transition.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 204—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT THE NEW FIVE-TRACK SYSTEM FOR THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (VR&E)

WHEREAS, the Secretary convened the VR&E Task Force to review the VR&E program with a view towards improving the system of providing vocational rehabilitation services to eligible disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force released its report in March 2004; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force unanimously recommended a new Five-Track system of services to be available to disabled veterans consisting of: Return to Work (reemployment with their previous employer); Rapid Access to Employment; Self-Employment; Employment Through Long Term Services; and Independent Living; and

WHEREAS, for this new Five-Track system to fully be effective it will take the cooperation of VR&E and VETS; now,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004 supports and requests the VR&E and VETS coordinate their services to assure VR&E clients receive any and all services as appropriate to be able to take advantage of the Track best suited for the individual disabled veteran.

* * *

COMMANDER BOWERS: The Committee on General Resolutions, and I recognize Chairman Ron Tears.

MR. RONALD D. TEARS: Thank you, Commander. Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on General Resolutions was called to order on July 31, 2004, by the committee advisors, Rick Surratt and Andre D. Smith.

The first order of business was the election of the convention committee chairman. Ronald Tears was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed and Ronald Tears was elected chairman.

The next order of business was the nomination and election of a secretary. Sarah Royse was nominated and elected as the secretary of the committee.

The committee then proceeded to review resolutions submitted, and I will now report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption by this National Convention.

For the purposes of saving time, I will read only the number and purpose of the resolutions:

24, support a strong national defense;

25, oppose any authorization of the use of members of the armed forces for human experimentation without their knowledge and informed consent;

26, encourage all disabled veterans to become registered voters and vote;

119, condemn public desecration of the flag of the United States;

187, support the American veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act;

188, support construction of a memorial to commemorate the sacrifices of America's disabled veterans;

189, support the construction of a courthouse for the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims;

190, support programs in our schools to educate children on the special contributions and sacrifices of veterans;

214, appreciation to the National Commander, Alan W. Bowers;

215, appreciation to the Reno Hilton for the success of the 83rd National Convention;

216, appreciation to all responsible for the success of the 83rd National Convention.

According to tradition, I will read Resolution 214 in its entirety:

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION TO
NATIONAL COMMANDER ALAN W. BOWERS

WHEREAS, Disabled American Veterans National Commander Alan W. Bowers, a native son of Massachusetts, served our Nation in the United States Air Force for seventeen years; and

WHEREAS, Commander Bowers was severely injured while ejecting from a disabled aircraft over Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, through extraordinary determination and personal courage, he overcame such devastating injuries; and

WHEREAS, with the same steadfast will, he selflessly fought for the welfare and well-being of fellow disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, throughout the course of his many years of effort assisting disabled veterans and in his devout participation as a member of the Disabled American Veterans, he demonstrated natural and exceptional leadership qualities; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his insight, resolve, and wisdom as a leader, his comrades in the Disabled American Veterans called upon him to serve in numerous chapter, state, and national DAV offices; and

WHEREAS, during our 82nd National Convention, our members unanimously elected him to our organization's highest office, the office of National Commander; and

WHEREAS, he served in that notable position with distinction and honor and fulfilled his responsibilities with the utmost integrity; and

WHEREAS, the praiseworthy results of his guidance and counsel will endure well beyond the tenure of his office; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, expresses its members' sincere appreciation to Commander Bowers for his exceptional contributions to disabled veterans, their families, and the DAV; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we also salute and extend our special appreciation to Commander Bower's wife, Theresa, and their family, for their support and sacrifices during his year as DAV's National Commander.

MR. TEARS: Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee of General Resolutions, and I move for the adoption of these resolutions.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, Ron.

MR. CHESTER WISNESKY, JR: Chester Wisnesky, Department Commander for New York, seconds that fine report.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you. I have a motion and I have a second. In accordance with Rule 9, now is the time for rejected resolutions to be read. Are there any rejected resolutions you wish read?

Hearing none, all those in favor, say aye; any opposed. The motion is carried. Again, Ronald, thank you very much.

(The above-mentioned resolutions follow:)

GENERAL RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION NO. 024—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT A STRONG NATIONAL DEFENSE

WHEREAS, the United States military forces are responsible for the defense of this Nation and its interests 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 down our guard; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, goes on record urging Congress to provide adequate funds for the defense of our Nation both at home and abroad.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 025—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE 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 servicemembers 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; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, opposes any rule or provision that would authorize use of servicemembers for human experimentation without their knowledge and informed consent.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 026—LEGISLATIVE

ENCOURAGE ALL DISABLED VETERANS TO BECOME REGISTERED VOTERS AND VOTE

WHEREAS, members of 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 those rights is the right to vote; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress and the President's Administration have failed to fulfill their obligation to our Nation's disabled veterans, providing inadequate funding for veterans' benefits and health care; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Congress and the President's Administration have targeted veterans' programs for unwarranted spending cuts and reductions under the mistaken and misguided theory that veterans do not base their vote on veterans' issues; and

WHEREAS, the failure of disabled veterans to register and vote will result in the perpetuation of this theory; and

WHEREAS, because of their disabilities, disabled veterans have more difficulty than their nondisabled peers in complying

with some of the more strict requirements in voter registration laws; and

WHEREAS, there exists an urgent need for veterans, their families and all Americans concerned about veterans' issues to make their voice heard by becoming registered voters and exercising their vote in local, state, and federal elections; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, encourages 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; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all Disabled American Veterans Departments and Chapters initiate and operate voter registration drives targeted at increasing voter registration among veterans and their families; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all Disabled American Veterans Departments, Chapters, and members are encouraged to ensure that all veterans and their family members are able to get to polling locations to vote.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 119—LEGISLATIVE

CONDEMN 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 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, goes 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. 187—LEGISLATIVE

TO SUPPORT THE "AMERICAN VETERANS DISABLED FOR LIFE COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT"

WHEREAS, veterans who shared the unique experience of war and the wounds of battle joined together to form an organization devoted to building better lives for those suffering the effects of lifelong disabilities as a result of their service to their country, and thereby created the Disabled American Veterans; and

WHEREAS, as a part of its mission to represent the interests of this special group of patriots, the Disabled American Veterans works to maintain public recognition and consciousness of the extraordinary sacrifices they made on behalf of their fellow citizens and country; and

WHEREAS, we express our pride, patriotism, values, and national identity through memorials that signify and define who we are as a nation and honor those to whom we owe our existence; and

WHEREAS, recognizing a need for a memorial, prominently situated in our Nation's Capital, to honor and commemorate America's disabled veterans, the LIFE Foundation joined with the DAV in establishing the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation to erect in Washington, D.C., a monument to disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, Congress enacted legislation authorizing construction of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial on select lands near the United States Capitol; and

WHEREAS, bills have been introduced in the United States Senate and House of Representatives to mint special coins to commemorate living disabled American veterans and to contribute the surcharges thereon to the fund for construction of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial; and

WHEREAS, these companion bills are both designated the "American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act"; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, support, and solicit the support of all members of Congress for enactment of, the "American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act."

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 188—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT CONSTRUCTION OF A MEMORIAL TO COMMEMORATE THE SACRIFICES OF AMERICA'S DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, it has been three decades since Americans were involved in a large-scale ground war that resulted in large numbers of significant, combat-related casualties; and

WHEREAS, though the public's reaction to veterans in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War was exceptionally warm, even the high feeling associated with Operation Desert Storm dissipated long ago; and

WHEREAS, the memory of smaller military actions at the Khobar Towers Barracks in Saudi Arabia, and in Grenada, Beirut, Panama, and Somalia faded with shocking rapidity, dying away even as combat-disabled veterans were still undergoing initial treatment of their wounds; and

WHEREAS, even as Americans now daily face the threat of hostile action in Afghanistan, Iraq, and in the war against terrorism around the world, some of them coming home wounded, awareness of their sacrifices among the American people is not fully known and appreciated; and

WHEREAS, the extent of lack of awareness and appreciation can only increase as the number of veterans in the population as a whole inevitably declines as a result of the passing of those who served during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, other than the ultimate sacrifice of life itself on the field of battle, no one has given more for the freedom of

our Nation and her people than the veterans disabled in all of America's wars and armed conflicts; and

WHEREAS, these circumstances demonstrate a pressing need for permanent, high-profile action to bring the immense sacrifices of disabled veterans to a deeper level of public consciousness; and

WHEREAS, commemorative structures have been placed in distinguished locations throughout Washington, D.C., to commemorate causes and persons of great merit, and the sacrifices of disabled veterans deserve at least as much attention as any of these; and

WHEREAS, a statue or commemorative structure in a prominent location in our Nation's Capital would be extremely useful in permanently reminding the American people of the sacrifices made by disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans collaborated with philanthropist Lois Pope to form the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation to bring about the construction of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial; and

WHEREAS, Congress enacted Public Law 106-348 to authorize the Foundation to undertake fundraising and construct a memorial on Federal Lands near the United States Capitol; and

WHEREAS, success of this most worthy project will require the dedicated effort and support of many persons, as well as the continued support of the DAV; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, supports construction of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial to honor the sacrifices of those veterans disabled while in military service of their country.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 214—ADMINISTRATIVE

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION TO NATIONAL COMMANDER ALAN W. BOWERS

WHEREAS, Disabled American Veterans National Commander Alan W. Bowers, a native son of Massachusetts, served our Nation in the United States Air Force for seventeen years; and

WHEREAS, Commander Bowers was severely injured while ejecting from a disabled aircraft over Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, through extraordinary determination and personal courage, he overcame such devastating injuries; and

WHEREAS, with the same steadfast will, he selflessly fought for the welfare and well-being of fellow disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, throughout the course of his many years of effort assisting disabled veterans and in his devout participation as a member of the Disabled American Veterans, he demonstrated natural and exceptional leadership qualities; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his insight, resolve, and wisdom as a leader, his comrades in the Disabled American Veterans called upon him to serve in numerous chapter, state, and national DAV offices; and

WHEREAS, during our 82nd National Convention, our members unanimously elected him to our organization's highest office, the office of National Commander; and

WHEREAS, he served in that notable position with distinction and honor and fulfilled his responsibilities with the utmost integrity; and

WHEREAS, the praiseworthy results of his guidance and counsel will endure well beyond the tenure of his office; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, expresses its members' sincere appreciation to Commander Bowers for his exceptional contributions to disabled veterans, their families, and the DAV; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we also salute and extend our special appreciation to Commander Bower's wife, Theresa, and their family, for their support and sacrifices during his year as DAV's National Commander.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 215—ADMINISTRATIVE

APPRECIATION TO THE RENO HILTON HOTEL FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 83RD NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the excellent service and ambience of the Reno Hilton Hotel contributed greatly to the success of the 83rd DAV National Convention, convened in Reno, Nevada; and

WHEREAS, the courteous team members of the hotel staff ensured the comfort and contentment of the DAV officers, delegates and guests; and

WHEREAS, the nearness of the majestic Sierra Nevada Mountains and the spirit of the American West grace the Reno Hilton; and

WHEREAS, the resort setting and numerous amenities helped make the 83rd National Convention a truly memorable experience; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, expresses its deepest appreciation for the Reno Hilton Hotel and to its entire staff for their friendly, personalized attention which helped make the convention a resounding success.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 216—ADMINISTRATIVE

APPRECIATION TO ALL WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 83RD NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the success of the 83rd DAV National Convention convened in Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, 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 David Wyble; 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 Reno, Nevada, July 31-August 3, 2004, 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 Reno, Nevada, 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, David Wyble, and his entire Committee for providing personalized assistance to our friends and delegates during our Convention stay.

* * *

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thanks to each of you for attending the session this morning. I appreciate it. Ladies and gentlemen, please rise and we will ask the chaplain for a closing prayer.

MR. REGAN: Let us pray. We thank you, O, Lord, for your presence during these proceedings and for each report that has been made.

Our leadership has worked hard and long. As a result, the DAV enjoys unprecedented success, and we have been faithful in our mission to make sure we leave no disabled comrade behind.

Remember our MIAs and POWs and their families. Bring them home soon where they might enjoy with us the blessings of our free nation and we ask this in Your holy name. Amen.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, John. The convention stands in recess until 9:00 o'clock Tuesday morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting was recessed at 10:30 o'clock a.m., August 1, 2004.)

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION

TUESDAY MORNING SESSION

The Third Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans convened in the Hilton Pavilion of the Reno Hilton, Reno, Nevada, Tuesday morning, August 3, 2004, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by Commander Alan W. Bowers.

COMMANDER BOWERS: The convention will please come to order. Please rise and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag.

(Pledge of Allegiance)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Please remain standing. John Regan for the prayer.

MR. REGAN: Let us pray. O, Lord, we have slept and we are refreshed and ready to begin a new day of deliberations. We dedicate this day of the convention, this last day, to You and ask Your help for all disabled veterans and their families.

Be with our men and women who even as we pray are in harm's way defending us and our country. Please keep them safe. In all of this we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Please be seated. Thank you again, John. I remind you that in order for a delegate to be heard at this convention, you must be recognized by the chair. Only those delegates at a microphone will be recognized.

Upon being so recognized, the delegate must state name, chapter, and state that they represent. I now call upon Ken Musselmann, Chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, for the final report.

We need to do the credentials first. We can't have reports until we have everybody qualified. John Regan for Credentials. Thank you.

MR. REGAN: Back by popular request. Thank you, Commander. This is a partial report of the National Convention Committee.

Comrade Commander and delegates, this is a partial report of the Credentials Committee and reflects the total registration as of 4:00 p.m. on August 2, 2004.

There are 1,355 delegates and 42 alternates registered, which includes 52 departments and 522 chapters. There are 20 National Executive Committee men and 13n Past National Commanders registered, for a total of 33 national officers. The total vote is 10,866. This completes the partial report of the Credentials Committee, Comrade Commander.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, John. Now I call on Ken Musselmann for the final report on Constitution and Bylaws.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Thank you, Commander. Good morning, all. Are you ready again? I will now proceed with the second reading of the proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws which are recommended for adoption.

You all have a copy of the recommended resolutions so you can follow along as I read them. The first resolution recommended for adoption is Resolution Number 172, to amend Article 6, Section 6.4, Paragraph 5, by adding "DAV Auxiliary" the words "and the National Order of Trench Rats"; so that the amended paragraph reads as follows:

> 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 eighteen months.
>
> In the event the state department, chapter, or county or district council's charter is not reissued within the eighteen-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 Auxiliary and the National Order of Trench Rats are controlled by the appropriate provisions of their constitution and bylaws."

Commander, I move for adoption of Resolution Number 172.

COMMANDER BOWERS: I need a second on that motion.

MR. WALLACE E. TYSON: Wally Tyson, Cumberland County Chapter 46, North Carolina, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Motion made and seconded for the approval of Resolution 172. Discussion? All those in favor, say aye; any opposed. Carried and so ordered.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Resolution Number 173, to amend Article 6, Section 6.4, Paragraph 6, by adding after "DAV Auxiliary" the words "and the National Order of Trench Rats" so that the amended paragraph will read as follows:

> 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 Auxiliary and the National Order of Trench Rats are controlled by the appropriate provisions of their constitution and bylaws.

Commander, I move for the adoption of Resolution Number 173.

MR. THOMAS J. DALEY: Tom Daley, Arlington Chapter 49, second the motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: I have a motion and I have a second. Discussion? All those in favor, say aye; any opposed. The motion is carried. So ordered.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Resolution Number 174, to amend Article 7, Section 7.11, by adding POW/MIA as an interim committee. The amended section will read as follows:

> The National Commander, within sixty days after his or her election, shall appoint the following interim committees: Constitution and Bylaws; Membership; Legislation; Employment; International Affairs; Hospital and Voluntary Services; Women Veterans; and POW/MIA. The members of such committees shall serve without compensation.

Commander, I move for the adoption of Resolution Number 174.

MR. FRANKLIN MAUGHAN: Frank Maughan, Department of Utah, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: I have a motion and I have a second. Discussion? All those in favor, say aye; any opposed. The resolution is accepted.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Resolution Number 175, to amend Article 8, Section 8.5, Paragraph 2 by omitting the letter "s" from the word "Paragraphs" and omit "and 6" from the last sentence so that the amended paragraph will read as follows:

> Paragraph 2: Each state department shall include the following provisions 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, Paragraph 5 of the national bylaws.

Commander, I move for the adoption of Resolution 175.

MR. TYSON: Commander, Wally Tyson, Cumberland County Chapter 46, North Carolina, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: I have a motion and I have a second. Any discussion? All those in favor, say aye; any opposed. Accepted. So ordered.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Resolution Number 176, to amend Article 11, Section 11.3, Paragraph 1, add after "Bosnia" the words "Afghanistan, Iraq" so that the last wartime period listed in the amended paragraph will read as follows:

> Persian Gulf, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq, and other crises: August 2, 1990, until terminated by Presidential Proclamation or Congressional resolution.

Commander, I move for the adoption of Resolution Number 176.

MR. BICK: Sidney Bick, Past Department Commander, Illinois, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: I have a motion and I have a second. Discussion on the motion? All those in favor, say aye; any opposed. The motion is carried. So ordered.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Resolution Number 177, to amend Article 14, Section 14.7, by deleting "COD" and substitute the words "check" so that the amended section will read as follows:

> All purchases from the national organization shall be for cash, credit card, or check, except Forget-Me-Not supplies, which may be delivered to chapters and state departments in good standing on a credit account.
>
> All such Forget-Me-Not supplies purchased on open account must be paid for in full within thirty days after

the close of the drive.

Commander, I move for the adoption of Resolution Number 177.

MS. MAGGIE L. CHRISTENSEN: Maggie Christensen, Chapter 6, California, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: We have a motion and we have a second. Any discussion? All those in favor, say aye; any opposed. The motion is carried. So ordered.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Resolution Number 178, to amend Article 17 in its entirety so it reads as follows:

> Article 17 - Incorporations, Affiliations, and Other Associations. Section 17.1: Purpose. The purpose of this article is to ensure allegiance by subordinate units and their affiliated entities to the DAV national bylaws and all other rules and directives issues by the national organization.
>
> This article is also intended to ensure that neither subordinate units nor their affiliated entities form associations with other organizations, unless the national organization has approved of the association.
>
> Such approval is necessary for the protection of the name and reputation of DAV. Nothing in this article shall be construed to supercede or modify the provisions of Section 15.3 of the DAV National Bylaws.
>
> For purposes of this article, "subordinate units" shall include, without limitation, departments, chapters, and auxiliaries. "Affiliated entities" shall include, without limitation, organizations created and/or directly controlled or supervised by subordinate units or by persons who control subordinate units.
>
> Entities whose names or activities also suggest an association with a subordinate unit are affiliated entities. The determination of whether a particular organization or entity is a subordinate unit or an affiliated entity shall be made by the National Judge Advocate, whose determination of such matters shall be final.
>
> A determination that an entity is an affiliated entity for purposes of this article is not intended to be a determination that such entity is affiliated with a subordinate unit for tax, accounting, or any other purposes.
>
> Section 17.2: Incorporation. Paragraph 1: Any subordinate unit or affiliated entity that undertakes to incorporate or assume some legal status similar to incorporation must submit the proposed Articles of Incorporation or similar legal document and any associated bylaws or amendments to the respective DAV Department Judge Advocate and National Judge Advocate for approval prior to filing and complying with state law.
>
> Such articles and bylaws must each contain the following provision or its substantial equivalent, unless the charitable trust laws of the particular state direct otherwise:
>
> "This [corporation or other legal entity] affirms its obligation to comply fully with the present and future constitution, bylaws, regulations and rules, directives, and mandates of Disabled American Veterans, a federally chartered organization with its headquarters in Cold Spring, Kentucky.
>
> This [corporation or other legal entity] acknowledges its allegiance and subordination to said organization. This [corporation or other legal entity] further

acknowledges that upon dissolution or disassociation with DAV, the assets of the [corporation or other legal entity] will be distributed as mandated in the DAV National Bylaws."

All subordinate units and affiliated entities, regardless of whether or when incorporated, shall be deemed to have adopted and ratified the foregoing statement as a condition of continued existence as a subordinate unit or affiliated entity and, where applicable, as a condition of continuing privilege to use the DAV name.

Paragraph 2: Unless otherwise directed by the applicable state law, all members, directors, and officers of any corporation or similar entity described in Paragraph 1 shall be members of good standing of DAV.

Section 17.3: Other Associations. Absent the written approval of the National Adjutant, no subordinate unit or affiliated entity may take or permit any action that suggests or indicates that the subordinate unit or affiliated entity endorses, is endorsed by, or is associated with any non-DAV organization.

Commander, I move for the adoption of Resolution 178.

MS. GALE ARCIA: Gale Arcia, Senior Vice-Commander of Lindale Chapter, Arizona. I second that motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: We have a motion and we have a second. Any discussion on the motion?

MS. KANDIS A. MYERS: Kandis Myers, Chapter 17, Universal City, Texas. For consistency, Paragraph 1, Line 4, I would recommend that "national organization" be capitalized for consistency in typing.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Okay, that won't change the text and we'll take that recommendation under consideration. We have a motion and we have a second. All those in favor, say aye; any opposed. Accepted. So ordered.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Commander, that completes the report of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and at this time I move that the committee be discharged with the thanks of the National Convention.

COMMANDER BOWERS: With the thanks of the National Convention. Do I have a second?

MR. TYSON: Wally Tyson, Cumberland County Chapter 46, North Carolina, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, sir. All those in favor, say aye enthusiastically; any opposed. The motion is carried. Thank you, Ken, and thank the committee members. (Applause)

Will you please join me in welcoming Imperial Golden Rodent Gerald Horton, Imperial Red-Eyed Gnawer Paul Bailey, and the Imperial Council of the National Order of Trench Rats.

MR. GERALD HORTON: I want to thank the DAV and National Commander Alan Bowers and Adjutant Art Wilson for inviting us to come before you this morning. At this time, I would like to ask the Imperial Red-Eyed Gnawer, Paul C. Bailey, to call the role of office.

MR. PAUL C. BAILEY: I want to introduce our slate of officers: Joe W. Horton; Silver Rodent Michael Stokes; Blue Rodent Joel Devenish; Turquoise Rodent Albert M. Sorrentino; Imperial Bubonic Plague Pete Buell; Imperial Black Plague Terrence Flick; Imperial Iron Claw Robert Auchu; Imperial Pure Rat Vernon W. Christian; Imperial Holy Rat Jerry Ogle; myself, Red-Eyed Gnawer, Paul Bailey; Bench Rat Vincent P. Reed, Jr; Historic Rat Owen Emery; Rendezvous Rodent, Edward Johnson.

Imperial Executive Rats: James Bixby, Clifford Darfler, Ernie Hartman, Wilbur Trahan, Morris Penermon, Raymond Drake, Delbert Foster, Timothy Hedgecock.

I will now introduce the Imperial Rodents: Bernard L. Walkowiak; Frank L. Cummings; William D. Brzezinski; Larry Polzin; Jimmy Foster; myself again, Paul Bailey; George J. Zoscsak; Oswald Patterson; Vincent P. Reed, Jr.; and our grandfather here is Charles P. Merrifield.

MR. HORTON: At this time I would like to ask the Imperial Red-Eyed Gnawer to read a resolution and a presentation.

MR. BAILEY: National Order of Trench Rats, at our business session rendezvous, adopted a resolution:

WHEREAS, God has seen in His infinite wisdom to call to the great beyond Irving P. Unger; and

WHEREAS, he did, by his acts and diligence as Imperial Officer, help lead the National Order of Trench Rats to the prominent position it holds today in the service to disabled American veterans; NOW

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the National Order of Trench Rats, assembled at this 80th Rendezvous in Reno, Nevada, that we recognize his outstanding service by contributing the sum of $100.00 as a memorial to him 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, towards the maintenance of nation-wide rehabilitation activities of the Disabled American Veterans and their dependants; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED his name be inscribed on the memorial honor roll so all may see and appreciate his sacrifice and devotion to the cause of the Disabled American Veterans as exemplified by Irving P. Unger, 2004.

MR. HORTON: I would like to ask at this time for Commander Bowers and Adjutant Art Wilson to come forward. Commander Bowers, I would like to hand you the check for the National Service Foundation and another check for $1,000 from the National Order of Trench Rats to the National Service Foundation.

COMMANDER BOWERS: That's perfect, but it says $1,500. Thank you.

MR. HORTON: Yes, I know. I can't read very well. (Applause) At this time, I would like to introduce the newly elected Golden Rodent for the year 2004-2005, Michael Stokes from Missouri.

MR. MICHAEL STOKES: Good morning. What a pleasure it is to be here for me and especially with this fine group of brothers behind me. It's even more a pleasure here in the state of Reno.

The reason I make that statement is because as some of you remember back in 1992, I had the pleasure of being your National 4th Junior Vice-Commander and was elected right here in Reno. I had one word of how I felt and the appropriate place was here. That word was "jackpot" because I definitely hit the jackpot twice now.

I would like to take this moment to tell you my line officers for the coming year will be Imperial Silver Rodent Joel Devenish; Imperial Blue Rodent Albert Sorrentino.

Imperial Turquoise Rodent will be Floyd Buell. Imperial Bubonic Plague will be Terrence Flick. Imperial Black Plaque will be Robert Auchu. Imperial Iron Claw will be Vernon Christian. Imperial Nightingale Rodent will be Jerry Ogle. Imperial Cure Rat, Wilbur Trahan; Imperial Holy Rodent Delbert Foster; Imperial Red-Eyed Gnawer Paul Bailey; Imperial Bench Rat, Vincent P. Reed, Jr.; Imperial Historic Rat Owen Emery. Imperial Rendezvous Rat will be William Browman.

My Imperial Executive Rodents: District 1, James E. Bixby; District 2, Cliff Darfler, Jr.; District 3, Robert D. Wade;

District 6, James B. Strawder; District 7, Eric "Ernie" L. Hartman; District 10, Gerald Cool; District 12, Chad W. Vale; District 13, Raymond E. Drake; District 14, Elwood M. Krejci; District 15 will be Steven R. Hollsworth; District 16, Michael Owen; District 18, Arthur D. Jones; and District 21, Timothy D. Hedgecock. Thank you very much.

MR. HORTON: That concludes the introduction of officers for 2004 and 2005, and I want to thank everyone here again for inviting us up here. Thank you.

COMMANDER BOWERS: The contributions by the National Order of Trench Rats for the Service Foundation tells us where their priorities are. Thank you. (Applause)

DAV National Service Officer is a rare individual, but within this group of outstanding individuals, there are many who rise to the top. One of those individuals is Gary Burns. A combat-disabled Vietnam veteran who served in the 101st Airborne, Gary has given much of his life to assisting veterans.

After being wounded, he was befriended by the late DAV NSO John McPherson, who gave him the opportunity to serve the disabled veterans as a national service officer beginning in January of 1970. His career as an NSO spanned thirty years before his retirement in 2000.

Gary served as Department Commander of Maine and is currently DAV Department of Maine treasurer. He has been a member of the National Service Foundation Board since 1996 and was elected its president in 2001.

Through his guidance and foresight, he has helped build better lives for disabled veterans and their families for decades.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is an honor for me to present Mr. Gary Burns. (Applause)

MR. GARY P. BURNS: National Commander Bowers, National Adjutant Art Wilson, national officers, delegates, and guests, thank you.

Good morning, everyone, and as President of the National Service Foundation, I mean this most sincerely that it's truly an honor and a privilege to me to present this annual report.

I just said to Nancy O'Brien a few minutes ago that Gary Burns from Augusta, Maine, never ever thought he would be President of the National Service Foundation, and I am honored to be in that position, and I mean that most sincerely.

As I reflect on the Foundation's operations and successes for the year ending December 31, 2003, I'm convinced that the Foundation is in an excellent position to sustain DAV's mission of service to our nation's disabled veterans.

Before I provide further details, I want to recognize and extend my appreciation to my fellow board members, including National Commander Alan Bowers from the great state of Massachusetts; the Vice President of the Foundation, National Adjutant Arthur Wilson; Secretary-Treasurer Dennis Joyner -- and unfortunately not with us this year. He's in Florida on business -- Directors Ken Musselmann, Sal Tornatore, Wally Tyson, and Ed Heath, the Chairman of DAV's Board of Directors, and also now the adjutant for the Department of the State of Maine.

I would also be remiss if I didn't mention and recognize and thank Nancy O'Brien, the Administrator of the National Service Foundation. Without her assistance, I wouldn't do as well as I do, or at least I think I do. Thank you, Nancy.

I want to thank also the outstanding Corps of National Service Officers for all they do in their daily representation of veterans and for their dedicated support of the Foundation.

As you know, your National Service Program, under the

expert direction of National Service Director Randy Reese, remains the backbone of the DAV. It is, without doubt, the finest, the most professional veterans' advocacy program in the entire nation.

Our NSOs are a driving force behind the success of the Foundation, and that makes me particularly proud, having been an NSO for thirty years and still involved just a little bit now and then up in Togus, Maine.

Last year, as a result of their steadfast commitment to excellence in service, they were responsible for donations of more than $1.8 million. That's $1.8 million. (Applause)

Through the Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetting Performance Awards Program, we recognize their untiring efforts in generating support for the Foundation.

Five divisions among the national service officers have been created. Each year the office leading that division is awarded a specially designed trophy. National Service Director Randy Reese will assist me in recognizing the 2003 winners.

Division 1, for the fourteenth consecutive year, Togus, Maine, and accepting that award -- the supervisor at Togus, Maine, John Rogers, is unfortunately not with us here, and accepting that award is the other half of the National Service Program at Togus, Maine, NSO Peter Collins. (Applause)

MR. PETER COLLINS: Thank you, Mr. Burns. We at the Togus DAV National Service Office are very proud of the fact that this is the fourteenth year in a row that we have won this award.

Winning this award requires a team effort and I would like to thank our office support staff, Kathy Hodnett and Wendy Glidden, for their assistance. Without their efforts, this would not have been possible.

I would also like to give special thanks to Gary Burns for his continuing support in upholding the excellent reputation of the Disabled American Veterans in the state of Maine and help in obtaining contributions to the Foundation.

Further recognition should go to our wonderfully supportive department staff: Ed Heath, Department Adjutant; Dominick Flaco, Department Commander; Ron Broder, Past Department Adjutant; as well as to my colleague and supervisor, John Rogers. Their work with veterans' issues can be described as nothing less than above and beyond the call of duty.

In closing, I would just like to say once again thank you for this special honor. We look forward to the challenge of earning this award again in the near future. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Division II, New Orleans, Louisiana, a first-time recipient and the supervisor, Kerry Baker. (Applause)

MR. KERRY BAKER: Randy, Gary, thank you. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It's an honor for me to accept this prestigious award on behalf of the NSO office in New Orleans, Louisiana.

I want to thank Commander Bowers, Adjutant Wilson, and their respective staffs for allowing me to do so. I would like to ask anybody from the Department of Louisiana and the NSO office to please stand and be recognized. (Applause)

Congratulations, gentlemen. This award belongs to you.

Commander Thaxton, Past Department Commander Wenthe, Adjutant Cummings, your department has provided undying support to our office and that support has greatly contributed to the reception of this award.

The NSO office staff, Assistant Supervisor Paul Herman, soon to be supervisor, Paul has been my right hand and has supported all my decisions, good or bad, and without his support this definitely would not be possible.

Recently appointed to the office are Associate National

Service Officers Steve Krasinski and Bob Elliott. Gentlemen, keep up the good work. I charge you with supporting Paul and ensuring New Orleans is up here for number two next year.

I can't go without mentioning Gail King. She's my left hand. She's the lead secretary in the office and has been there twenty-eight plus years and probably the only force that keeps us out of daily insanity.

There's one other person I want to mention and personally dedicate this award to. His name is Joseph Moity. Joe is my very good friend. He was my commander in Chapter 36 in Louisiana. He was a United States Marine in World War II and survived countless battles, and that includes one of the bloodiest, the Battle of Tarawa.

He's been an active member of this organization for more than the past half century and a staunch supporter of the NSO office, for without whose personal contributions this may not have been possible.

Joe passed away a few months ago, but I know he's looking down. I know he's smiling. So, Joe, here's to you, we did it, buddy. So thank you and thank all of you for a successful convention. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Division III in St. Louis, Missouri, an eight-year winner and the supervisor in the St. Louis office, Len Harris.

MR. LEN HARRIS: Good morning, everyone. Once again, I would like to thank the Department of Missouri for their continued support. This is our third year in a row of winning this award.

At the NSO office, specifically this year I would like to honor NSO Jack Bickerton. He recruited a lot of the Service Foundation for our award this year. Our department has been a strong support, along with Kansas City Chapter 2. We look forward for another good year this year. We appreciate the support and this award and the recognition that we get. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Division IV -- and these are some of the faces that I still recognize from days gone by -- Boston, Massachusetts, an eight-year record; Dan Stack, the supervisor, accepting.

MR. DAN STACK: On behalf of Team Massachusetts, we would like to thank everybody who contributed to the National Service Foundation on behalf of the Boston national service officers and those being: Laroy Canady, Rick Viccari, Matthew Carpenter; and the gentleman who brought in the most money in the nation of all national service officers, Bob Sinclair.

But the NSOs did not do it alone. If it wasn't for the fine assistance that we get from our department, and that being under the direction this year of our Department Commander, Leo Moony, and our Department Adjutant, Tom Daley. On behalf of all of them, thank you very much for this award. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Division V, another old-timer, St. Petersburg, Florida, is a six-year winner and Andy Marshall is the supervisor of that office.

MR. ANDY MARSHALL: Thank you, old-timer. On behalf of the Florida National Service Office, the Department of Florida, home of your next National Commander, I accept this award for the work that the staff at the St. Petersburg/Orlando/West Palm Beach has done. A special thanks to Ray Raulerson, the largest recruiter of Service Foundation in Florida.

Ray, I appreciate your assistance. And my staff, the best in the country, and the best department in the country, the Department of Florida, thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Please join me in thanking those officers and

our entire NSO Corps for their outstanding performance and support. (Applause)

As 2003 came to a close, the importance of the DAV and its mission became increasingly clear to our nation. For the first time, many became painfully aware that the cost of war far outlasts the war itself.

The men and women disabled in service today will need our care and support for many years to come, just as those who have defended our freedoms in past wars will need our services and compassion.

Today DAV is rendering more support and assistance to disabled veterans than ever before. That's why I'm personally grateful for your unfaltering support of the Foundation.

You see, through the DAV National Service Foundation, we are strengthening current DAV programs to help those who have sacrificed so much of themselves to preserve and protect our freedom.

On December 31, 2003, the Foundation's net assets totaled nearly $29.8 million. The net assets included $17.7 million in the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund; $7.5 million in the General Fund, and $2.1 million in the Colorado Trust; and $199,000 in the National Order of Trench Rats Special Legislative Fund.

I am proud to present to Commander Bowers a check for $4,663, which represents the amount earned on the National Order of the Trench Rats Restricted Fund last year. (Applause) At the request of the Trench Rats, this gift is designated to support the DAV's National Legislative Program.

Last year two key areas of the Foundation's ongoing support included office furniture, equipment, and resource manuals for our national service officers and financial support of medical studies to help establish expert medical testimony in support of veterans' claims.

In addition, the Foundation was a major supporter of the television documentary, *The World War II Memorial: A Testament to Freedom*, which all of you certainly have seen in the last few days. That was broadcast on May 30 on PBS stations nationwide.

Another tremendous story of the Foundation and the DAV is the Colorado Trust. The Colorado Trust is maintained as a separate fund within the National Service Foundation, and its use is limited to programs or services to disabled veterans and their families.

As 2003 came to a close, our nation's economy started rebuilding. It climbed a long way, but during the rebuilding process funds have remained tight.

Donations to the Colorado Trust were not equivalent to previous years. Despite the decline, the Trust continues its legacy of assistance to departments and chapters that had created worthwhile projects to help disabled veterans, but lacked the funds to initiate those projects.

The total support and revenue to the Trust in 2003 was $1.2 million. My deepest thanks goes to the chapters, the departments, and members whose generosity enables the Trust to fulfill its mission.

I also thank the national organization, which has matched every dollar, one for one, that our chapters, departments, and members donate to the Colorado Trust. During 2003, more that $2.5 million was awarded to chapters and departments, all designated toward enhancing DAV services.

I am pleased to point another inspiring fact. From 1996 -- incidentally, that's when I came on the board -- when the Trust was formed, through 2003, $10.3 million has been awarded as grants. That's $10.3 million. (Applause)

The grants have been used to support the National

Transportation Network and hospital service coordinator programs and other worthy service initiatives at the local and state levels.

As I conclude my report, please allow me to tell you again how extremely honored I am to serve as the Foundation's president.

Everyday the planes are bringing wounded and sick servicemen and women home from the fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. Sadly, many Americans too quickly forget those GIs face daily danger in Korea, Haiti, and other hot spots, Liberia. They go where they are sent and do a magnificent job and far too often are called on to sacrifice for the cause of liberty.

Yet, the DAV chapters and departments do not forget because you refuse to allow their sacrifice and your own personal sacrifice to be lost as the evening news moves on to other stories. Even as you faithfully serve the veterans of the past, you're measuring yourselves for the new challenges. You will never let a fellow veteran down, and you don't.

You have demonstrated that dedication. It is required every day in every department and in every chapter with programs of service, as well as the commitment and compassion you inspire among our fellow members.

You have proven it again as you demand justice for disabled veterans and their families in contact with our elected leaders, both state and national, and certainly that has been referred to very well over the last few days, and justifiably so.

You have shown your commitment through your support of the National Service Foundation, which in the final analysis expresses a true and deep concern of our organization for all the disabled veterans whose lives we touch.

As we watch young disabled veterans return, we are all aware and understand the importance of strengthening current DAV programs, even as we continue to build the legacy of America's most effective service organization.

That's the Foundation's role and I thank you for your essential role you play in our long-term drive to bring security into the lives of all disabled veterans, both today and fifty years from now.

Mr. Commander, as is our tradition, the Foundation now stands ready to accept donations from the convention floor. Donations received today and throughout the national convention will be placed into the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund, the Trench Rats Fund, or the Colorado Trust Fund, as specified.

Before the Commander and I start receiving those gifts and donations, a couple that I've already received I would like to make note of, please.

We received yesterday, at the Foundation meeting, $1,000 from the Department of Pennsylvania, as well as $300 from West Ellis Chapter Number 9 in the State of Wisconsin, and just a few minutes ago I was handed this note and this check.

It's addressed to me, Mr. Gary Burns, President of the DAV National Service Foundation.

> "Dear Gary, for more than fifty-three years, I have been vitally interested in and intimately associated with the DAV National Service Foundation, with pride in its accomplishments over those years and confidence that it will help assure the continuance of our service programs for as long as they are needed, I give this check for $5,000 to the Foundation in memory of my great friend, Mr. Bonnie Maile, Sincerely, Fred Bristol." (Applause)

Thank you, Fred. Mr. Maile and Mr. Bristol were a couple of the individuals who back in the 1950's helped form the National Service Foundation, and that's accurate historically,

isn't it? Art wasn't there and neither was I. Yes, 1957.

MR. JOSEPH B. LINK: Joe Link, Commander; and my assistant, Buttons. On behalf of the Blind Veterans National Chapter, we present $100 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MS. METCALF-FOSTER: I'm Delphine Metcalf-Foster, the Commander for our wonderful state of California, and I would like to donate a check from us for $25,000. (Applause)

MR. RICHARD ADAMS, III: Richard Adams, III, Commander, Chapter 6, Sacramento, California, proudly present the check for $5,000 for the Foundation. (Applause)

MR. WALLACE J. BROWN: I'm Commander Wallace Brown from Chapter 21 of Valejo, California, and we proudly present a check for $250. (Applause)

MR. JIM D. ROOS: Jim D. Roos. I'm the Assistant Supervisor in Houston, Texas, and also the Commander of Pasadena Memorial Chapter 194, presents the Service Foundation with a check for $300. Also, if any of you NSO's have got a spare $20, this is your challenge. (Applause)

MS. MARY BENCIVENGA: Good morning. Mary Bencivenga, Department of New Jersey, Commander, proudly presenting $2,000 to the National Service Foundation. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. SALVATORE LOSAURO: I'm past department commander for New Jersey and on behalf of my chapter, Chapter 15, we are honored to present a $1,000 check. (Applause)

MR. SUEY M. LEE: Suey Lee, Commander of Dick Cosgrift Chapter 2, San Diego, California. On behalf of the chapter, I would like to present two checks, to the National Service Foundation of $1,000 and to the Colorado Trust $2,000. (Applause)

MR. CHARLIE L. STEPHENS: Charlie Stephens, Department Commander of Kansas. We proudly present this check for $250 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. CLIFFORD W. DILLARD: Cliff Dillard, Chapter 4, Wichita, Kansas, presents $500. (Applause)

MR. DOMINICK FLACO: Good morning, everyone. My name is Dominick Flaco, State Commander for the Department of Maine. I would like to make a donation to the Foundation for $500 in memory of Gary Burns' daughter, Christine. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. WISNESKY: Good morning. My name is Chester Wisnesky, Department Commander for New York. From the great state of New York, the Empire State, proudly to present, and it gives me honor to present, two checks, one for the National Service Foundation for $1,000; and then in addition to that, $25,000 to the Colorado Trust Fund. (Applause)

MR. WALTER CARNEGIE, JR: Good morning. Walter Carnegie, Marino Valley, California, Chapter 58. We would like to donate $500. (Applause)

MR. CHARLES W. CHAPIN: Charlie Chapin, Department of Idaho Commander, $200 to the Foundation. (Applause)

MR. HERMAN HARRISON: I'll present you with a check for $100 in memory of my wife. (Applause)

MR. FRANK J. TENTLER: Frank Tentler, Commander, Department of Nebraska. On behalf of our Lincoln Chapter, DAV Chapter Number 7, I would like to present to the Service Foundation a check for $750, and a check to the Colorado Trust for $750, and from the Department of Nebraska, $120. (Applause)

MR. DONALD J. GALLAGHER: Don Gallagher, Chapter 47 of Nebraska. I would like to make a donation of $100 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. DENNIS C. HURLEY: Dennis Hurley, Chapter 56, Wyoming/ McDowell County, West Virginia. I would like to make a donation of $400 in honor of Don Blackenship. (Applause)

MR. LESTER D. FOLWELL: Lester Folwell, Commander of the new, official, Prezell Frazier Memorial Chapter 20, Des Moines, Iowa, is pleased to present to the Colorado Trust and the National Service Foundation in honor of Prezell Frazier and the Iowa National Service Office, $1,000 each. (Applause)

MR. STEPHEN C. DOLL: Stephen Doll, Adjutant, Department of West Virginia, a $1,000 check to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. JACOB N. STAFFORD: Jacob Stafford, NEC, District 6, West Virginia, District 6, made up of Virginia, Maryland, D.C., Puerto Rico, and West Virginia, a check for $1,500 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. THOMAS W. RYMER: Thomas Rymer, Past Department Commander from Wisconsin, home of our Past National Commander Richard Marbes and the famous Green Bay Packers, and the Department of Wisconsin would like to donate a check for $1,500 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. JAMES E. BILLIG: James Billig, Commander, Chapter 7, Carson City, Nevada; to the National Service Fund, $100. (Applause)

MR. DENNIS WEBBER: Good morning. I'm Dennis Webber, Past Department Commander, California. On behalf of Chapter 70, Escondido, California, I have a check for $500 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. LOU GYSIN: Good morning. My name is Lou Gysin, and I'm the Senior Vice-Commander for the Department of California, and I'm proud to present a check for $100 from Birmingham Hospital, Chapter 73. (Applause)

MS. MARIAN J. TRUSCELLO: I'm Marian Truscello, the Senior Vice-Commander from the Department of South Carolina, presenting a check from my home chapter, 51, in Batesberg-Leadsville, in honor and memory of all of our veterans for $400. (Applause)

MR. GEORGE E. BALCH: George Balch, Senior Vice-Commander, Department of North Carolina, presents a check for $1,000 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. JOHN B. INGE: I'm John Inge with Chapter 3, Roanoke, Virginia. We would like to give the National Service Foundation $1,000 in the honor of our Past Commander, Luther McPherson. (Applause)

MR. MARSHALL R. HARLESS: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Marshall Harless. I'm the Commander of the Department of Virginia, and I would like to present to the National Service Foundation a check for $1,000; also to the DAV LIFE Memorial, $1,000. (Applause)

MR. JEFFREY B. MARTIN: I'm Jeff Martin, Adjutant, the Department of Virginia, and on behalf of Archer T. Gammon, Chapter 19, Danville, Virginia, in recognition of William B. Wiggins, Jr., a check for $1,000 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. GORDON THOMPSON: Chapter 177, Petaluma, California, $200. Gordon Thompson. (Applause)

MS. LUZ A. BERRIOS: Luz Berrios, Commander, from Puerto Rico, $200. (Applause)

MR. ELIUD RODRIGUEZ: Good morning. I'm Eliud Rodriguez, Department Commander, of Sunny Puerto Rico. From the Department of Puerto Rico, $500.

I'm also the Commander of Chapter 16 where it rains everyday, $300. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. TIM E. HAMMONS: Good morning. My name is Tim Hammons, Commander, Department of Georgia, and we present a check of $1,000, $500 for the Service Fund and $500 for the Colorado Trust. (Applause)

MR. HERMAN M. WISCHMANN: My name is Mark Wischmann and I'm

the Department of Delaware Commander. I would like to present this check to the National Service Foundation in memory of past Department Commander, Jim McGraw, for $200. (Applause)

MR. ALFRED C. REYNOLD: Al Reynolds, Commander of 17, Macon County of Illinois. I have a check for $5,000 for the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. GILBERT G. BROWN: Gil Brown, Adjutant of Greater Daytona, Florida, Chapter 84, a check for $1,600 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. WINSTON DOWLAND: Winston Dowland, Commander, Department of Vermont. As you leave the Bay State and come to our Gay State, our 3,500 members would like to give $1,000 to the Foundation. (Applause)

MR. JOHN TRIMBLE: I'm John Trimble from Fort Smith, Arkansas, Chapter 1. We're donating $100 to the Colorado Trust. (Applause)

MR. ANDREW J. QUINTANA: I'm Andy Quintana from Colorado, you know, home to Action Jackson. I would like to present a check for $5,000 to the Colorado Trust. (Applause)

MR. JOHN O. OGNIE: I'm John Ognie and I'm the Commander of Salem Chapter Number 7 in Colorado, the home also of your new Senior Vice-Commander. I have a check here for $5,000 here for the Colorado Trust. (Applause)

MR. JOSESPH A. VIOLANTE: Joe Violante, Omaha Beach, Chapter 7, Bowie, Maryland. On behalf of the chapter, I have $1,000 for the Colorado Trust and $2,000 for the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. GARY A. CROSSLAND: Gary Crossland, Past State Commander of California. I would like to donate $100 out-of-pocket to my good friend and a lot of yours, Past National Commander Ray Neal. (Applause)

MR. RAYMOND L. COLLINS: Ray Collins, Chapter 1, Minneapolis, Minnesota. I'm commander this year and we have a check for the Trust Fund for $500. (Applause)

MR. JAMES T. HATTAWAY: Jim Hattaway, Commander, Chapter 2, Kansas City, Missouri, proudly presents this check in honor of our St. Louis DSOs, a check for $10,000. (Applause)

MR. ROLAND PAQUETTE: Roland Paquette, Adjutant, Chapter 20, the great state of Texas, gives you a check for $100 in memory of our past comrades this year, and I personally give you $20 for the Disabled for LIFE Memorial Fund. (Applause)

MR. HERBERT WILSON: Herbert Wilson, Commander, Chapter 1, Paul L. Thompson Memorial, State of Maryland. We're donating $250 to the National Foundation and $150 to the Trust Fund. (Applause)

MR. HARVEY D. SLOTMAN: Good morning. I'm Harvey Slotman, Past Department Commander from Michigan. I would like to donate $100 to the National Service Foundation in memory of our Past Department Commander from Michigan, Vivian Eisele. (Applause)

MR. LEO R. MOONEY: My name is Leo Mooney, Commander, Department of Massachusetts, proudly presenting a check from the department for $1,000 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. VERNON CARDOSI: Good morning, Gary. My name is Vernon Cardosi and I'm a Past National Commander from Massachusetts. would like to introduce my Chapter Commander, Rob Barrett, who has been our chapter commander for twenty-six years. Also, he's eighty-six years old and still going strong.

I expect him to outlive me, believe me. We're from Newburyport, Massachusetts, and you know where Massachusetts is and you know what Massachusetts stands for. They just happen to be the World Series -- World Series, God, help me. The Red Sox, a World Series team? I've got them on my mind. We're going to

beat the Yankees -- the New England Patriots World Champions -- and we've got a check for $1,000 for the Foundation and $5,000 for the Colorado Trust. (Applause)

MR. WILLIAM A. BOWMAN: William Bowman from Black Mountain Chapter 12, Henderson, Nevada. We proudly present $200 to the Foundation. (Applause)

MR. BENNIE HARRIS, JR.: Good morning. My names is Bennie Harris, Jr., from the D.C. Department of the DAV, home of the Washington Redskins. We would like to present a check for $1,000. (Applause)

MR. DANIEL P. KOZLOWSKI: I am Dan Kozlowski, Dugout 462. On behalf of the National Order of Trench Rats, I would like to present a check to the Colorado Trust for $100. (Applause)

MR. RICHARD C. AMOS: Dick Amos, Department of South Dakota, $500 for the National Service Foundation for the outstanding work done by our national service officers, Fred Wagner and Larry Bouska. (Applause)

MR. LIONEL H.L. WATKINS: Larry Watkins, Treasurer of San Jose Chapter Number 11 of the great state of California and Silicon Valley Chapter San Jose. On behalf I would like to make this donation of $1,000 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. LEW SNOWBECK: Lew Snowbeck, Minneapolis, Minnesota, a check for $200 for the Foundation and another $200 for the Charitable Trust. (Applause)

MR. DAVID C. UTTERLING: I'm Dave Utterling, State Commander of Ohio. I would like to present this check in honor of our Past Department Commander, Frank Williams, for $100 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. BILLY E. TAYLOR: Billy Taylor, Dallas 31. I've got a check for the National Service Foundation for $500, and I can barely read it myself. So if they can't read it, they can send it back. (Laughter and Applause)

MS. CONCETTA V. GILBERT: My name is Concetta Gilbert. Everybody knows me as Connie Gilbert. I'm giving $300 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. ARTHUR E. FORCIER: My name is Art Forcier, Commander, Department of Hawaii, and we have $500 here for the Foundation. (Applause)

MR. JAMES D. STEWART: My name is James Stewart, Commander of the Department of Mississippi, and I proudly donate $1,000 to the Foundation in honor of Gerald Humphries and Chris Cheney, our two service officers. (Applause)

MR. FRANK FERNINAND: Frank Ferdinand, Commander, Department of Rhode Island, cash for the National Service Foundation of $100. (Applause)

MR. THOMAS J. RICHMOND: My name is Thomas J. Richmond and I'm Commander of the State of New Hampshire. I proudly present a check for you for the Foundation in $500; and Colorado Trust, $500; and also Joe Ford just passed away, and he was going to be commander before me, and bless his soul. Thank you. (Applause)

MS. TAMMY LITTLE: I am Tammy Little, the Commander for the Department of Oregon. It's my pleasure to present a check for $250 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. GERALD HUMPHRIES: My name is Gerald Humphries, DAV Chapter 11, the great state of Mississippi, presents $1,000 in the name of the Jackson NSO office. (Applause)

MS. STEPHANIE RESINO: I'm Stephanie Resino, Treasurer of Chapter 9, the newest, and going to be the best chapter of DAV. On behalf of the Women's Veterans, $100 to the Foundation. (Applause)

MR. ROBERT PETUCCI: Good morning. Bob Petucci, Past Commander, Department of New York. On behalf of myself and my

wife, Rosemary, I would like to present to the Foundation $100. (Applause)

MS. MICHELLE COLPAERT: My name is Michelle Colpaert, National Service Officer in Seattle, and on behalf of the six national service officers, and accepting a challenge from Jim Bruce, here is $120, and also an additional $60 for our support staff. (Applause)

MR. MARK M. AARON: Good morning. Mark Aaron, Department Commander, Department of Illinois. I would like to present $140 to the National Service Foundation from the Department of Illinois, home of the Chicago Bears; and our next 3rd Junior Vice, Raymond Dempsey. (Applause)

MR. RAYMOND BLACK: Ray Black, Commander, Chapter 21, Denver, Colorado. I would like to donate $100 to the Colorado Foundation in memory of Caroline D. Mason. (Applause)

MR. TYSON: Morning, President Burns. It's an absolute honor to be a member of the Board of Directors of the National Service Foundation, and therefore I feel the responsibility to lead.

In honor of the NSOs Shretta Kidd, Wess Spencer, Charles Ryder; Assistant Supervisor Paulino Acosta, and the Supervisor of the Winston-Salem National Service Office, Ron Hope, please accept my personal donation of $500. My name is Wally Tyson. (Applause)

MR. JOHN E. OGOZALY: My name is John Ogozaly, PDC, the State of Pennsylvania. On behalf of all national service officers in the state of Pennsylvania, I would like to donate $200. (Applause)

MR. ROBERT E. LOUGEE: I'm Rob Lougee, National Area Supervisor and Supervisor at Denver, Colorado. Not to be outdone by Michele Colpaert in Seattle, the Denver office donates $200 on behalf of NSOs and the support staff to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. DON PAUL IZZO: On behalf of the Providence, Rhode Island, NSO office, I donate $100. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: I believe that's it. Again, thank you all very, very, very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, Gary. May I have a motion to accept the report of President Burns for the National Service Foundation?

MS. CHRISTENSEN: Maggie Christensen, Chapter 6, Sacramento, California, so moves.

MR. AARON: Mark Aaron, Department of Illinois, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: I have a motion and I have a second. All those in favor, say aye; any opposed. The motion is carried. So ordered. (Applause)

Disabled American Veterans National Service Foundation

Financial Statements for the Years Ended December 31, 2003 and 2002 and Independent Auditors' Report

Deloitte.

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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, 2003 and 2002 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 auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. 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, 2003 and 2002, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

February 13, 2004

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 2003 AND 2002

	2003	2002
ASSETS		
CASH, (including $156,266 and $1,253,475 relating to The Colorado Trust in 2003 and 2002, respectively)	$ 274,976	$ 1,431,153
INTEREST AND DIVIDENDS RECEIVABLE	123,805	136,167
PREPAID EXPENSES	48,928	83,405
INVESTMENTS—Marketable securities (including $1,973,599 and $2,322,461 relating to The Colorado Trust in 2003 and 2002, respectively)	29,544,622	24,371,796
TOTAL	$29,992,331	$26,022,521
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
LIABILITIES:		
Due to DAV	$ 97,456	$ 65,137
Due to DAV legislative program	4,663	5,451
Other liabilities	137,520	234,537
Total liabilities	239,639	305,125
NET ASSETS:		
Unrestricted net assets:		
General	7,515,549	8,154,829
The Colorado Trust	2,098,187	2,825,000
Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund	17,657,475	15,667,154
Accumulated net unrealized (depreciation) appreciation of investments	2,282,187	(1,707,003)
Total unrestricted net assets	29,553,398	24,939,980
Temporarily restricted net assets—The Colorado Trust		580,622
Permanently restricted net assets—National Order of Trench Rats DAV Legislative Fund	199,294	196,794
Total net assets	29,752,692	25,717,396
TOTAL	$29,992,331	$26,022,521

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003 AND 2002

	2003				2002			
	General, The Colorado Trust, Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund (Unrestricted)	The Colorado Trust (Temporarily Restricted)	National Order of Trench Rats (Permanently Restricted)	Total	General, The Colorado Trust Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund (Unrestricted)	The Colorado Trust (Temporarily Restricted)	National Order of Trench Rats (Permanently Restricted)	Total
PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUES:								
Public support—contributions and bequests	$ 1,990,321	$ 719,540	$ 2,500	$ 2,712,361	$ 1,873,741	$ 1,070,655	$	$ 2,944,396
Net assets released from restrictions	1,316,433	(1,316,433)			849,470	(849,470)		
Revenues:								
Interest and dividend income—net	531,665	16,271		547,936	615,136	31,982		647,118
Gain (loss) on sale of investment securities	78,548			78,548	(1,449,155)			(1,449,155)
Total revenues	610,213	16,271		626,484	(834,019)	31,982		(802,037)
Total public support and revenues	3,916,967	(580,622)	2,500	3,338,845	1,889,192	253,167		2,142,359
EXPENSES:								
Program:								
Grants and expenses in accordance with The Colorado Trust	2,616,714			2,616,714	912,605			912,605
Transfers to DAV National Headquarters and other organizations	536,303			536,303	205,451			205,451
Total program expenses	3,153,017			3,153,017	1,118,056			1,118,056
Supporting services	139,722			139,722	118,628			118,628
Total expenses	3,292,739			3,292,739	1,236,684			1,236,684
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS BEFORE NET UNREALIZED APPRECIATION (DEPRECIATION) OF INVESTMENTS	624,228	(580,622)	2,500	46,106	652,508	253,167		905,675
CHANGE IN NET UNREALIZED APPRECIATION (DEPRECIATION) OF INVESTMENTS	3,989,190			3,989,190	(2,873,668)			(2,873,668)
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS AFTER NET UNREALIZED APPRECIATION (DEPRECIATION) OF INVESTMENTS	4,613,418	(580,622)	2,500	4,035,296	(2,221,160)	253,167		(1,967,993)
NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	24,939,980	580,622	196,794	25,717,396	27,161,140	327,455	$196,794	27,685,389
NET ASSETS—End of year	$29,553,398	$	$199,294	$29,752,692	$24,939,980	$ 580,622	$196,794	$25,717,396

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003 AND 2002

	2003			2002		
	Program	Supporting Services	Total	Program	Supporting Services	Total
EXPENSES:						
Allocations to charitable programs	$3,078,880		$3,078,880	$1,046,169		$1,046,169
Grant proposal processing	73,466		73,466	63,135		63,135
Administrative charges		$ 73,466	73,466		$ 63,135	63,135
Travel		10,639	10,639		13,636	13,636
Printing, stationery and supplies	671	20,489	21,160	7,012	19,521	26,533
Professional fees		6,825	6,825	1,740	6,400	8,140
Insurance		4,183	4,183		4,183	4,183
Registration fees		4,969	4,969		65	65
Awards		18,081	18,081		11,222	11,222
Miscellaneous		1,070	1,070		466	466
TOTAL EXPENSES	$3,153,017	$139,722	$3,292,739	$1,118,056	$118,628	$1,236,684

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003 AND 2002

	2003	2002
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Change in unrestricted and temporarily restricted net assets	$ 4,032,796	$(1,967,993)
Adjustments to reconcile change in unrestricted and temporarily restricted net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Change in unrealized appreciation (depreciation) on investments	(3,989,190)	2,873,668
Loss (gain) on sale of investment securities	(78,548)	1,449,155
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Interest and dividends receivable	12,362	25,658
Prepaid expenses	34,477	8,471
Due to DAV	32,319	8,042
Due to DAV legislative program	(788)	(1,437)
Other	(97,017)	139,045
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	(53,589)	2,534,609
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Purchases of investments	(26,498,960)	(15,925,786)
Proceeds from sale of investments	25,393,872	14,157,942
Net cash used by investing activities	(1,105,088)	(1,767,844)
CASH FLOW FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES—		
Contributions of permanently restricted assets	2,500	
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH	(1,156,177)	766,765
CASH—Beginning of year	1,431,153	664,388
CASH—End of year	$ 274,976	$ 1,431,153

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003 AND 2002

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, or any chapter or department thereof."

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

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

Contributions—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.

Unrestricted 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 DAV. Donated assets are recorded at their fair market value at the time of the donation. $2,098,187 and $2,825,000 of total unrestricted net assets were designated by the Board for The Colorado Trust at December 31, 2003 and 2002, respectively.

Temporarily Restricted Net Assets—In 1996, The Colorado Trust was established to provide funds for service programs of needy DAV state departments and local chapters. Funds contributed to The Colorado Trust are matched 100% by DAV, up to a maximum of $3,000,000 per year. In 2003 and 2002, respectively, The Colorado Trust received $52,270 and $70,655 in contributions which were matched by DAV. In 2002, DAV made an additional contribution of $429,345 to The Colorado Trust.

Permanently Restricted Net Assets—Contributions by the National Order of Trench Rats for the DAV Legislative Program are permanently restricted. Investment income of $4,663 and $5,451, in 2003 and 2002, respectively, from the National Order of Trench Rats DAV Legislative Fund is transferred to DAV and is temporarily restricted for use by DAV's Legislative Program.

Investments in Securities—Investments, which consist of equity securities, corporate bonds and U.S. Treasury Notes, are recorded at fair or market value. The fair value of the Foundation's investments is determined based on the quoted market price of the related securities. 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 appreciation (depreciation) at December 31 are summarized below:

2003	Cost	Market	Unrealized Appreciation (Depreciation)
Cash Equivalents	$ 3,092,348	$ 3,092,348	
Corporate Bonds	7,578,814	7,820,556	$ 241,742
U.S. Treasury Notes	2,723,259	2,739,776	16,517
Common Stocks	12,285,126	14,378,937	2,093,811
Common Stock Funds	1,582,888	1,513,005	(69,883)
Total	$27,262,435	$29,544,622	$ 2,282,187
2002			
Cash Equivalents	$ 2,905,029	$ 2,905,029	
Corporate Bonds	6,965,977	7,486,633	$ 520,656
U.S. Treasury Notes	850,509	925,139	74,630
Common Stocks	13,769,834	11,900,137	(1,869,697)
Common Stock Funds	1,587,450	1,154,858	(432,592)
Total	$26,078,799	$24,371,796	$(1,707,003)

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.

Statement of Functional Expenses—The Statement of Functional Expenses includes functional expenses of both programs and supporting services. Certain grant processing fees have been allocated to The Colorado Trust.

Use of Estimates—The preparation of the financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America 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 results could differ from those estimates.

Reclassifications—Certain 2002 amounts have been reclassified to conform with the current year presentation.

3. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The DAV provides the Foundation with the use of DAV personnel, facilities and equipment. DAV charged the Foundation $144,333 and $126,270 in 2003 and 2002, respectively, for personnel services. At December 31, 2003 and 2002, the Foundation owed $97,456 and $65,137, respectively, for personnel services and administrative charges. Facilities and equipment are provided by the DAV at no charge.

In 2003 and 2002, respectively, the DAV Charitable Service Trust made a $615,000 and $500,000 contribution to The Colorado Trust for the DAV National Transportation Network Van Grants administered through The Colorado Trust.

As discussed in Note 2, DAV contributed $52,270 and $500,000 to The Colorado Trust in 2003 and 2002, respectively.

In performing the duties of their positions, the DAV's National Commander and National Adjutant serve on the Board of the Foundation. The Chairman of DAV's Board of Directors serves as an ex officio member of the Foundation's Board.

4. NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS

The following are grants and expenses of the Colorado Trust:

	December 31,	
	2003	2002
Grants to DAV chapters and departments in accordance with The Colorado Trust:		
Hospital Service Coordinator Program	$ 300,000	$259,900
National Transportation Network Van Program	2,184,177	529,818
Other Grants to Service Programs	58,400	51,000
Miscellaneous expenses	670	8,752
Total	$2,543,247	$849,470

In 2002, the Colorado Trust's grants and expenses totaled $849,470. Temporarily restricted net assets were used for all grants and expenses. This amount, $849,470, is shown as "Net assets released from restrictions" in the accompanying Statement of Activities.

In 2003, the Colorado Trust's grants and expenses totaled $2,543,247. Both temporarily restricted net assets of $1,316,433 and designated, unrestricted net assets of $1,266,814 were used. The temporarily restricted net assets used, of $1,316,433, is shown as "Net assets released from restrictions" in the accompanying Statement of Activities.

Net assets are released from restrictions by incurring expenses to satisfy the restricted purposes or by occurrence of other events specified by donors.

* * * * * *

COMMANDER BOWERS: Our next guest is someone who really needs no introduction, and that's Dick Marbes. Dick lost a leg during military service, and he's also served as our National Commander in 1993 and 1994.

As a resident of Green Bay, Wisconsin, Dick has been actively involved in the DAV for more than thirty years. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm DAV welcome to Dick Marbes, Chairman of the DAV Charitable Service Trust. (Applause)

MR. RICHARD E. MARBES: Good morning. National Commander Bowers, National Adjutant Wilson, national officers, delegates, and guests, it is my honor to present the annual report of the DAV Charitable Service Trust for the year ending December 31, 2003.

In 1986, when the leaders of DAV began the process to create the Trust, they wanted to form an organization that would advance worthy and necessary initiatives not traditionally supported by the VA, state veterans' programs, or the Veterans Service Organization.

While the Trust cannot assume the complete financial responsibilities of our elected representatives and the administration, as they have shifted their priorities away from veterans' programs, we have recognized our responsibilities to the greatest extent possible.

When funding cuts threaten serious harm to rehabilitation and therapy programs that are essential to disabled veterans, the Charitable Service Trust is in place to help fill in the funding gaps.

In both of these areas, the Trust work during 2003 was decisive in making sure America meets its obligations to our nation's disabled veterans.

The Trust receives support primarily through workplace-giving campaigns, like the combined federal campaign, United Way, charitable gift annuities, and matching gift programs.

In 2003 net pledges and contributions totaled $1.9 million. Total support and revenue is more than $2 million in comparison to $1.7 million in 2002. I am pleased to report to you a 16 percent increase. (Applause)

But, my fellow veterans, please do not measure the effectiveness of the Trust by what we collect. The measure of success is rather in the quality of service provided to disabled veterans by the programs that we support.

Program service expenditures represented 93 percent of our total disbursements, and I'm proud to report that nearly $1.1 million was awarded to support programs providing much-needed assistance for disabled veterans.

The Trust changed the lives of disabled veterans in remarkable ways in 2003. Yet, it was a year marked by major challenges.

As we welcome home a new generation of disabled men and women who served our nation in Iraq and Afghanistan, the number of casualties stretched already scarce government resources to the point that significant shortages were created in veterans' health care.

Our loyal and generous supporters again ensured that no disabled veteran was lost in the turmoil of our troubled times, whether that veteran just came home from Iraq or served more than a half a century ago on the beaches of Normandy. Clearly, the Trust becomes more essential everyday. It is equally clear that the Trust is responding to the contemporary challenges that we face.

Last year we continued to enhance our efforts in the crucial areas of therapy and rehabilitation. One of the best examples of the Trust fulfilling its mission surfaced when the

National Prosthetics Gait Lab found itself unable to replace antiquated motion-analysis equipment due to reductions in VA funding.

This equipment is essential to enhancing the mobility of veterans who have endured amputations and spinal-cord injuries. Many of these injuries are, of course, the direct result of combat. Without the upgrade of the motion, capture and analysis equipment that the Trust made possible, the lab's ability to improve the lives of severely disabled veterans would have greatly suffered.

The impact would have been felt by thousands of veterans across our nation, including the hundreds of new amputees returning from the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Under these conditions, the Trust director felt they could not allow the funding for this project to wither, even though they believed the responsibility clearly belonged to the federal government.

Other initiatives supported by the Trust use athletics in the rehabilitation of disabled veterans. For example, the National Amputee Golf Association's "First Swing" Program has introduced amputees to an activity that restores personal confidence as well as provides physical exercise.

Another project backed by the Trust brings a range of marine sports to wheelchair veterans. So whether it's golf or marine sports, these programs give disabled veterans renewed assurance in their abilities to move out more confidently into the main stream of life. Just imagine the impact of these programs on a veteran who lost a limb or became paralyzed. The Trust has continued to make significant improvements in veterans health care.

Trust funding is enriching the lives of veterans residing in state veterans' homes throughout the country. A Trust grant to the Washington, D.C. VA Medical Center is today providing a video educational system for patients in its new Renal Center that was overlooked when it was planned.

Our donors also helped us to continue to substitute hope for despair among homeless veterans. The issue of homelessness continues to be among our highest priorities.

We sought opportunities to enhance initiatives allowing successful veterans to reach out to fellow veterans facing homelessness, and this veteran-to-veteran approach has been richly successful in several states throughout our country.

We are also helping to advance programs to ensure that all Americans forever remember the sacrifices made by our veterans in the cause of freedom.

The Trust supported "The Wall That Heals" in conjunction with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. At some locations where the exhibit was displayed in 2003, a DAV mobile service office was there to offer DAV's professional assistance to veterans and their families.

Charitable Service Trust grants also allowed the DAV's National Transportation Network Program to provide vans to transport sick and disabled veterans to and from VA medical centers for treatment, and this year 144 new vans were put into operation throughout America. (Applause)

During 2003 the Trust partnered with the Veterans' History Project to create a powerfully moving public radio international series entitled "Experiencing War", which highlighted the extraordinary personal stories of veterans from five different wars. Released on national holidays, the first program was broadcast on Veterans Day and made radio listeners more aware of and sensitive to veterans' sacrifices.

I hope that these examples personify what we do. The Trust and its directors remember that disabled veterans are

individuals. They might be homeless. They might face the combined effects of disability. They may be a person who needs access to services and benefits only available through the federal government or a state or local agency. They are the ones with needs and we will support them.

Just think of the spouse whose life is stressed or wasting, but was liberated by one of the programs supported by the Trust. That's who we care for and that's why the Trust exists.

Along with other members of the DAV Charitable Service Trust Board of Directors, National Commander Alan Bowers; Vice Chairman National Adjutant Art Wilson; Secretary/Treasurer Lew Snowbeck from Minnesota; Bruce Nitsche from Florida; Dennis Nixon from Texas; and David Tannenbaum from Florida, I'm proud of this record of achievement,

I want to thank our outstanding Corps of National Service Officers and Transition Service Officers for all they do in their daily representation of veterans and their dedicated support for the Trust, and our HSCs for their help in promoting our work.

The Trust relies on your support as well, and I want to encourage all of you to promote the work of the Trust in workplace campaigns whenever possible.

I want to thank you in advance because I know that you will carry our message and communicate the work of the Trust and keep our mission in your hearts as you return to your chapters, to the VA facilities where you work, and to your hometowns.

As we confront the uncertainties of the future, we must not relax in the face of conflicting demands. Our endurance must be forged by the strength of our compassion for disabled veterans and tempered by dedicated service to them.

The one area where we must endure without yielding is our duties to those who have been asked to carry the burden of our nation's defense of freedom. This is particularly true with respect to those who sacrificed for the American ideals of freedom and democracy.

With your help, I am confident in the Trust's ability to meet the changing, growing needs that face America's generations of disabled veterans.

I would like to conclude my remarks by acknowledging the superior efforts of Nancy O'Brien, our Trust administrator, and her staff back at the National Headquarters, because it is their efforts that make this project do what it does. Thank you all for your kind attention and God bless each and every one of you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, Dick. The Chair will entertain a motion to accept that wonderful report.

MR. DROGO: Frank Drogo, Past State Commander for the State of Massachusetts -- and don't forget the great Joe Harold who is deceased, our adjutant for forty-four years -- makes a motion to accept Past National Commander Dick Marbes's report.

MR. MAUGHAN: Frank Maughan, Department of Utah, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: All those in favor, say aye; those opposed. The motion is carried. Thank you very much. (Applause)

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Charitable Service Trust

Financial Statements for the Years Ended December 31, 2003 and 2002 and Independent Auditors' Report

Deloitte.

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INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

Board of Directors,
Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
Charitable Service Trust:

We have audited the accompanying statements of financial position of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Charitable Service Trust (Trust) as of December 31, 2003 and 2002 and the related statements of activities, functional expenses and cash flows for the years then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Trust's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. 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 Trust at December 31, 2003 and 2002 and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Our audits were conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the basic financial statements taken as a whole. The supplemental schedule on pages 9 and 10 is presented for the purpose of additional analysis and is not a required part of the basic financial statements. This schedule is the responsibility of the Trust's management. Such schedule has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in our audits of the basic financial statements and, in our opinion, is fairly stated in all material respects when considered in relation to the basic financial statements taken as a whole.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

February 13, 2004

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 2003 AND 2002

ASSETS	2003	2002
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	$1,096,792	$1,024,178
ACCRUED INTEREST AND DIVIDENDS RECEIVABLE	26,606	23,904
CAMPAIGNS' PLEDGES RECEIVABLE, Net of allowance for assessment fees and uncollectible pledges of $300,125 in 2003 and $295,959 in 2002	259,230	241,451
PREPAID EXPENSES AND OTHER	14,300	17,974
INVESTMENTS	5,366,103	4,103,231
TOTAL ASSETS	$6,763,031	$5,410,738
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE—DAV	$ 52,848	$ 44,649
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	5,843	-
ANNUITY PAYMENT LIABILITY	2,906,145	2,600,591
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	3,798,195	2,765,498
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	$6,763,031	$5,410,738

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003 AND 2002

	2003	2002
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:		
Contributions, net of assessment fees and provision for uncollectible pledges of $268,764 in 2003 and $293,192 in 2002	$1,292,462	$1,126,342
Contributions of charitable gift annuities	647,787	592,250
Investment income—net	65,971	11,014
Total support and revenue	2,006,220	1,729,606
EXPENSES:		
Program services	1,139,497	1,066,894
Management and general	70,655	61,250
Fundraising	16,636	7,541
Total expenses	1,226,788	1,135,685
CHANGE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS BEFORE UNREALIZED APPRECIATION (DEPRECIATION) OF INVESTMENTS	779,432	593,921
CHANGE IN UNREALIZED APPRECIATION (DEPRECIATION) OF INVESTMENTS	253,265	(118,061)
INCREASE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	1,032,697	475,860
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	2,765,498	2,289,638
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS—End of year	$3,798,195	$2,765,498

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV)
CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003 AND 2002

	2003				2002			
	Program	Management and General	Fundraising	Total	Program	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
EXPENSES:								
Allocations to charitable programs	$1,097,599			$1,097,599	$1,030,013			$1,030,013
Grant proposal processing	30,449			30,449	25,254			25,254
Administrative charges		$20,299		20,299		$16,836		16,836
Travel		13,560		13,560		11,658		11,658
Advertising		25,307		25,307		21,059		21,059
Printing, stationery and supplies	5,178	5,179	$16,636	26,993	5,139	5,139	$7,541	17,819
Professional fees	4,795	4,794		9,589	4,945	4,945		9,890
Insurance	1,476	1,476		2,952	1,543	1,543		3,086
Registration fees		40		40		70		70
TOTAL EXPENSES	$1,139,497	$70,655	$16,636	$1,226,788	$1,066,894	$61,250	$7,541	$1,135,685

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003 AND 2002

	2003	2002
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Change in net assets	$ 1,032,697	$ 475,860
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Change in unrealized appreciation (depreciation) of investments	(253,265)	118,061
Loss on sale of investments	34,321	84,941
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Interest and dividends receivable	(2,702)	(4,795)
Campaigns' pledges receivable	(17,779)	(16,681)
Prepaid expenses and other	3,674	10,192
Accounts payable	14,042	4,170
Net cash provided by operating activities	810,988	671,748
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Purchase of investments	(5,850,863)	(2,861,659)
Proceeds from the sale of investments	4,806,935	1,202,681
Net cash used in investing activities	(1,043,928)	(1,658,978)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:		
Proceeds from contributions restricted for investment subject to annuity agreement	720,799	1,267,262
Payments to annuitants	(415,245)	(275,365)
Net cash provided by financing activities	305,554	991,897
NET INCREASE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	72,614	4,667
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS—Beginning of year	1,024,178	1,019,511
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS—End of year	$ 1,096,792	$ 1,024,178

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003 AND 2002

1. ORGANIZATION

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Charitable Service Trust (Trust) is a not-for-profit service organization, formed under the laws of the District of Columbia for the purpose of receiving and disbursing funds for the betterment and improvement of the nation's disabled veterans and their families.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

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

Income Recognition—The Trust is a member of Independent Charities of America (ICA) and Military, Veterans and Patriotic Service Organizations of America (MVPSOA). ICA and MVPSOA are charitable agency federations, certified by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to participate in the annual Combined Federal Campaigns (CFC), as well as state and corporate workplace giving campaigns. The Trust recognizes contribution revenue as an increase in unrestricted net assets when notification of the campaign designations are received and also recognizes an allowance for uncollectible pledges. Pledge receivables that are outstanding for more than one year are written off in their entirety. Amounts received from accounts previously written off are recognized as contribution revenue when received.

As a member of MVPSOA during 2003 and 2002, the Trust was assessed a portion of MVPSOA's annual operating budget based on the relative amount of total pledges made to the Trust compared with the sum of all member agency pledges. Pledges designated to MVPSOA (versus a member agency) and other revenue, such as interest income, are shared amongst all member agencies in this same proportion. Therefore, as a result, if MVPSOA's revenue exceeds expenses, the member agencies share the excess income. This excess income is distributed in the following year. The Trust recognizes such distribution as an increase in unrestricted net assets when received. The Trust received $103,426 and $88,610 in 2003 and 2002, respectively, for excess income recognized by MVPSOA in 2002 and 2001.

Contributions—Contributions received are recorded as unrestricted, temporarily restricted or permanently restricted support depending on the existence and nature of any donor restrictions. The Trust recognizes contributions with donor imposed restrictions that are met in the same period as unrestricted contributions.

Income Taxes —As a not-for-profit service organization, the Trust has been approved as exempt from federal income tax as a 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions made to the Trust are tax deductible by the contributor.

Use of Estimates—The preparation of the financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America 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 results could differ from those estimates.

Cash and Cash Equivalents—The Trust considers all highly liquid debt instruments purchased with a maturity date of three months or less to be cash equivalents.

Investments in Securities—Investments are recorded at fair market value and result from investment of contributions through charitable gift annuity agreements (see Note 4). The fair value of the Trust's investments is determined based on the quoted market price of related securities. 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 and the unrealized appreciation (depreciation) at December 31 are summarized below:

2003	Cost	Market	Unrealized Appreciation (Depreciation)
Cash equivalents	$ 29,105	$ 29,105	
Money market investments	893,189	893,189	
U.S. treasury notes and corporate bonds	2,424,316	2,445,586	$ 21,270
Common stock and equity funds	1,863,119	1,998,223	135,104
Total	$5,209,729	$5,366,103	$ 156,374

2002	Cost	Market	Unrealized Appreciation (Depreciation)
Cash equivalents	$ 66,925	$ 66,925	
Money market investments	1,238,991	1,238,991	
U.S. treasury notes and corporate bonds	1,727,066	1,801,097	$ 74,031
Common stock and equity funds	1,167,140	996,218	(170,922)
Total	$4,200,122	$4,103,231	$ (96,891)

Investment income is composed of interest and dividend income of $121,895 and $111,021, realized losses on the sale of securities of $(34,321) and $(84,941), net of fees paid to trustees of $21,603 and $15,066, in 2003 and 2002, respectively.

Reclassifications—Certain 2002 amounts have been reclassified to conform with the current year presentation.

3. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The DAV provides the Trust with the use of DAV personnel, facilities and equipment for the purpose of administering grant proposals of applicant nonprofit charitable organizations. For personnel services, the DAV charged the Trust $49,916 and $42,090 in 2003 and 2002, respectively. Facilities and equipment are provided by the DAV at no charge. The DAV also provides fundraising support to the Trust at no charge.

In 2003 and 2002, respectively, the DAV Charitable Service Trust made a $615,000 and $500,000 grant to the DAV National Service Foundation, Colorado Trust fund for the DAV National Transportation Network Van Grant Program administrated through The Colorado Trust.

In performing the duties of their positions, the DAV's National Commander and National Adjutant serve on the Board of the Trust.

4. ANNUITY PAYMENT LIABILITY

In 2003 and 2002, the Trust entered into charitable gift annuity agreements with donors. The Trust recognized an annuity payment liability as the present value of the future cash flows expected to be paid to the donors and their beneficiaries using a discount rate of 6%.

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DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

SCHEDULE OF ALLOCATIONS TO CHARITABLE PROGRAMS FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003 AND 2002

	2003	2002
ALLOCATIONS TO CHARITABLE PROGRAMS:		
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care, Domiciliary Care & Transitional Housing Programs for Homeless Veterans	$ 10,000	$ 54,000
Brown County Chapter of The Armitage—Transitional Housing and Training Program for Homeless Veterans	25,000	30,000
Chesapeake Health Education Program—Transitional Housing Program for Homeless Veterans		30,000
Hoosier Veterans Assistance Foundation—Drop-in Center for Homeless/Needy Veterans	30,000	30,000
Indiana University—Vision Screening Program for Homeless Veterans		15,000
Joseph House—Counseling and Rehabilitation Treatment Program for Homeless Veterans	25,000	25,000
Swords to Plowshares—Emergency Interim Housing for Homeless Veterans	10,000	
United Veterans of America—Emergency and Transitional Shelter for Homeless Veterans	36,000	
Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless—Employment and Housing Assistance for Homeless and At-Risk Veterans	20,000	
Central Arizona Shelter Services—Transportation Services for Homeless Veterans to VA Medical Facilities for Treatment	3,000	
Randlin Adult Family Care Homes—Transitional Housing and Case Management for Mentally and Chemically Dependent Veterans	5,500	7,500
Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program of Western Pennsylvania—Emergency Funds and Housing for Homeless/Needy Veterans		5,000
Volunteers of America of Florida—Acute Intervention and Case Management for Homeless Veterans in Rural Areas		5,000
Vetspace—Outpatient Residence and Training Program for Homeless Veterans		20,000
Disabled American Veterans National Transportation Network Van Grant Program	615,000	500,000
Creative Alternatives of New York—Therapeutic Workshops for Veterans Suffering From Mental Illness, Spinal Cord Injuries & Substance Abuse	8,000	11,000
National Theatre Workshop of the Handicapped—Employment Training Workshops for Disabled Veterans		18,000
National Amputee Golf Association—Therapeutic/Rehabilitative Programs for Disabled Veterans	7,500	5,500
Vermont State Veterans Home—Therapeutic Arts Program for Veteran Residents Suffering From Dementia		12,000
National Education for Assistance Dog Services—Training Assistance Dog for Hearing Impaired Disabled Veteran		3,000
National Prosthetics Gait Laboratory, Rehabilitative Medicine and Spinal Cord Injury Service—Provides Equipment and Devices to Enhance the Mobility of Veterans With Amputations and Spinal Cord Injuries	96,790	

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

SCHEDULE OF ALLOCATIONS TO CHARITABLE PROGRAMS FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2003 AND 2002

	2003	2002
ALLOCATIONS TO CHARITABLE PROGRAMS (continued):		
Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project—Therapeutic Writing Program for Hospitalized Veterans	$ 7,700	$ -
New Directions—Adaptive, Coping and Training Programs for Homeless Veterans	25,000	
Monterey Bay Veterans—Rehabilitative Marine Sports Program for Disabled Veterans	10,000	
Outward Bound—Rehabilitative Programs for Veterans Suffering From Post Traumatic Stress Disorder		8,000
Colorado State Veterans Home, Walsenburg—Dental Care Program for Veteran Residents		30,000
Missouri State Veterans Home, Mexico—Medical Equipment to Assist in Caring for Veteran Residents		37,021
Ohio State Veterans Home, Sandusky—Protective Equipment & Supplies for Veteran Residents to Aid in Reducing Falls & Minimize Risk of Injury		15,000
Oregon Veterans Home, Salem—Health Care Equipment to Aid in the Physical Rehabilitation & Cardiac Monitoring of Veteran Residents		4,100
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center, Marion, IL—Health Care Equipment to Assist Veteran Residents Who Suffer Dementia, Stroke or Falls		5,850
Missouri Veterans Home, Mt. Vernon—Health Care Equipment to Address Mobility & Safety Issues of Veteran Residents		4,632
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center, Birmingham—Palliative Care Program for Veterans at End of Life		25,000
New Mexico State Veterans' Home—Protective Medical Equipment and Supplies for Veteran Residents to Aid in Reducing Falls & Minimize the Risk of Injury	20,950	
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center, Washington, DC—Video Educational System for Veteran Dialysis Patients in the Center's Renal Center	26,906	
Missouri State Veterans Home—Cape Girardeau—Medical and Healthcare Equipment to Aid in the Care of Veteran Residents	21,705	
Missouri Veterans Home—St. James—Medical Equipment and Supplies to Address the Specialized Treatment and Mobility Needs of Veteran Residents	20,000	
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund—Informational Programs Designed to Educate the Public About the Sacrifices of Veterans	50,000	100,000
Miscellaneous	23,548	40,988
Total	1,097,599	1,041,591
Funds returned from prior grant		(11,578)
TOTAL	$1,097,599	$1,030,013

COMMANDER BOWERS: Will you please welcome Kristine Childers of Nebraska, the newly elected President of the Commanders and Adjutants Association for 2004 and 2005. (Applause)

MS. KRISTINE S. CHILDERS: Good morning. Thank you, Commander Bowers. Please allow me, along with my fellow members of the State Commander and Adjutants Association, to thank you for the tremendous leadership and for the outstanding year of service you and your wife, Theresa, have given to our great organization. (Applause)

National Adjutant Wilson, we thank you for your support of the State Commander and Adjutants Association and for the wisdom, vision, and steady guiding hand which makes the DAV the premier veterans' service organization. (Applause)

Executive Directors Rick Patterson and Dave Gorman, we extend our sincere appreciation to you and the entire national staff and the employees who work tirelessly to help build better lives for America's veterans. Additionally, we have no words to express our thanks for the support given to conduct the annual orientation at National Headquarters. (Applause)

It is my pleasure to introduce to you the line officers and members of the Executive Committee. Please hold your applause until all members have been recognized:

Vice President, John Gilpin from Massachusetts; Secretary/Treasurer, Dave Tannenbaum from Florida; Judge Advocate, Tom Daley from Massachusetts; Immediate Past President and Chaplain, George LePorte.

Executive Committee Members: Lee Ewing from Kentucky; Bill Newby from Tennessee; Shirley Scofield from Idaho; Joseph Connolly from Michigan; Richard Giese from Florida; Gerald Cowan from Texas. (Applause)

I would also like to read off some of my appointments:

Sergeant-At-Arms, John Skyler from New York;

Resolutions Committee: David Brader from Kansas, Dick McLaughlin from Montana; Jim Bogan from California.

On the Audit Committee: Rita Aberegg from Virginia; Jim Fox from New Jersey; Dennis Peret from Oklahoma; Robert Petucci from New York.

Constitution and Bylaws: James Stewart from South Carolina; Roger Hamel from Massachusetts; Mark Aaron from Illinois; Bill Novak from New York; Russell Tanguay from New Hampshire.

On Special Projects: Jeff Martin from Virginia; Troy Livingston from Florida; Stephen Doll from West Virginia; Dave Stewart from California; and Dave Spurgin from Arkansas. (Applause)

Fellow DAV members, the State Commander and Adjutants Association is here to serve. If you are not currently a department officer, I urge you to get involved and work to get others involved. There is no greater satisfaction to know that we have made a life better for a disabled veteran, their family, or survivors.

Thank you for the honor and trust you have shown in me and my fellow officers. We will not let you down. (Applause)

Commander Bowers, Adjutant Wilson, it is with great pride that I present this check for $1,500 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Kristine, thank you very much. I now introduce Bill Taylor, Chairman, and Frank Tracy of the POW/MIA Standing Committee for a presentation.

MR. BILL TAYLOR: Ladies and gentlemen and distinguished guests, it gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the POW and MIA Committee, to present a flag to an individual that is well deserved.

Could we have the next upcoming National Commander, Mr. Jim

Sursely, please come forward? Jim, on behalf of the committee, we would like to present this flag to you and ask that you fly it proudly.

MR. JAMES E. SURSELY: Thank you. (Applause)

MR. TAYLOR: Our next flag that we would like to present is to an individual that all of you know, except he calls a lot of balls and strikes, and mainly a lot of errors. Could we ask Mr. Larry Barnett to come forward, please, if he's in the audience?

Larry, on behalf of the POW and MIA Committee, we would like to present you with the National POW/MIA flag and ask that you fly it proudly at your home. (Applause)

MR. LARRY BARNETT: I would just like to personally say thank you to Commander Bowers, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Gorman, and Mr. Patterson for allowing me to have fun with our nation's veterans. Thank you and I truly love the DAV. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Jim, I had to add a halyard to my pole so I could put mine up, so please do fly it proudly.

Ladies and gentlemen, please rise and I'll ask the chaplain to lead us in prayer.

MR. REGAN: Let us pray. We conclude this last morning's session, O, Lord, and we'll stop now to refresh ourselves and prepare for the election of officers.

Continue to be with us and we thank You for all the help You've given us during these past few days. Know that everything we do is for the greater honor and glory of Your holy name. Amen.

COMMANDER BOWERS: The convention stands in recess until 1:00 o'clock this afternoon.

(Whereupon, the meeting was recessed at 10:50 o'clock a.m., August 3, 2004.)

FINAL BUSINESS SESSION

August 3, 2004

The Final Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans convened in the Hilton Pavilion of the Reno Hilton, Reno, Nevada, Tuesday afternoon, August 3, 2004, and was called to order at 1:00 o'clock p.m. by Commander Alan W. Bowers.

COMMANDER BOWERS: The convention will come to order. In opening this afternoon's business session, it is fitting and proper that we render proper respect to the flag. Please rise. We're just going to salute and not the Pledge.

Comrade Regan, for the prayer, please.

MR. REGAN: Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we return once again for this, our final business session. This afternoon marks the culmination of three and a half days of intensive work, meetings, discussions, and thought.

Soon we shall make momentous decisions and cast our votes for those individuals whom we feel have been found worthy of our confidence and into whose hands we will place the reins of leadership of our great organization.

Stay with us for the next few hours and guide us well on this, the most important day of our convention, and we ask this sincerely in Your holy name. Amen.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Please be seated. As a reminder, in order for a delegate to be heard at this convention, you must be recognized by the chair. Only those delegates at a microphone will be recognized. Upon being so recognized, the delegate must state name, chapter, and state they represent.

I now call upon John Regan, Chairman of the Credentials Committee, for the final report.

MR. REGAN: The final report for the National Convention Committee on Credentials. Comrade Commander and delegates, this is the final report of the Credentials Committee and reflects the total registration as of 4:00 p.m. on August 2, 2004.

There are 1,355 delegates and 42 alternates registered, which includes 52 departments and 522 chapters. There are 20 National Executive Committeemen and 13 Past National Commanders registered, for a total of 33 national officers. The total vote is 10,866.

Comrade Commander, that completes the final report of the Credentials Committee. At this time, I would like to extend my personal thanks to the committee members and advisors.

I move now for the adoption of this report and ask that Committee Secretary Mary Bencivenga rise, together with all the members of this committee, and be dismissed with a round of applause from the audience of the convention assembled. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: I have a motion to accept the Credentials Committee final report. We are not discharging the committee at this time. I need a second for that motion.

MR. MAUGHAN: Frank Maughan, Department of Utah, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: All in favor, say aye; any opposed. So ordered. Thank you again, John.

I now call on Gene Murphy for the report on the Committee of Nomination of National Officers.

MR. EUGENE A. MURPHY: Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Nomination of National Officers was called to order for its first business session on July 31, 2004, by the committee advisors, Richard E. Marbes and Gene A. Murphy.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. Gene A. Murphy was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed and Gene A. Murphy was elected chairman.

The next order of business was the nomination and election of a secretary. Mike A. Whelihan was nominated and elected as secretary of the committee.

The Nominating Committee held four meetings and interviewed eight candidates for national office. The following individuals have been nominated for DAV national office by the Nominating Committee:

National Commander: James E. Sursely from Florida. (Applause)

National Senior Vice-Commander: Paul W. Jackson from Colorado. (Applause)

National 1st Junior Vice-Commander: Brad S. Barton from Oregon. (Applause)

National 2nd Junior Vice-Commander: Robert T. Reynolds from Virginia. (Applause)

National 3rd Junior Vice-Commander: Raymond E. Dempsey from Illinois. (Applause)

National 4th Junior Vice-Commander: Bobby Barrera from Texas. (Applause)

National Judge Advocate: Michael E. Dobmeier from North Dakota. (Applause)

National Chaplain: Gerald V. Stump from North Carolina. (Applause)

Comrade Commander, this completes this report of the Committee for Nomination of National Officers, and I move the adoption of this report and that the committee be discharged with the thanks of the National Convention.

MR. LINDEN: Al Linden, delegate, Gator 90, Florida,

seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: You've heard the motion. Any discussion? All those in favor, say aye; any opposed. So ordered.

Having been nominated: National Commander Jim Sursely; Senior Vice-Commander Paul Jackson; 1st Junior Vice-Commander, Brad Barton; 2nd, Rob Reynolds; 3rd, Ray Dempsey; 4th, Bobby Barrera; National Judge Advocate, Mike Dobmeier; and National Chaplain, Gerald Stump.

You've heard the report on the Committee of Nomination of Officers. They have nominated James E. Sursely for National Commander. Here to second the nomination is the Past Commander from the Department of Florida, Ed Barnshaw. (Applause)

MR. EDWARD BARNSHAW: Thank you, Commander. Commander Bowers, National Line Officers, and fellow delegates, my name is Ed Barnshaw, delegate from Manatee County Chapter 18 in Bradenton, Florida.

I am certain you all know by now Florida is not only the sunshine state, it is also the state of champions. Commander, Bowers, I'm sure you will be quick to point out that in 2004 the Super Bowl Champions were the New England Patriots.

That being said, let me remind the delegates that in the last eighteen months, Florida has been home to Super Bowl Champions the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, the World Series Champions Florida Marlins, and the National Hockey League Stanley Cup Champions Tampa Bay Lightening. (Applause)

It is also well documented that the University of Florida's Gators, Florida State's Seminoles, and Miami Hurricanes have long been recognized as having some of the best football programs in the country.

Fellow delegates, Florida is also home to other champions, the 80,000-plus members of the Disabled American Veterans, who along with those gathered here in Reno today and the entire 1.2 million member DAV family, continuously champion our cause and our mission statement to provide a better life for our national disabled veterans and their families, a promise made over eighty years ago.

Without argument, the National Commander of the Disabled American Veterans, by virtue of the confidence placed in them and the respect showed towards them, does indeed qualify them as true champions.

The Department of Florida has three past national commanders, whose leadership roles continue to exemplify the commitment and dedication of all past national commanders. May we recognize our champions, Al Linden, Dennis Joyner, and Harry McDonald. (Applause)

For the past three or four days, we have discussed many successes of our core programs. Advances in our volunteer, membership, and legislative efforts continue to be the benchmark against which all veterans' organizations are measured.

We are also keenly aware of the extraordinary challenges ahead, some we are aware of and many that have not yet surfaced. Extraordinary challenges require extraordinary leadership, ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

I am pleased to tell you we have such an extraordinary person in our midst today. He is our National Senior Vice-Commander James E. Sursely. (Applause)

Now let me tell you a little bit about Jim and then you can really show how much confidence we have in him. Jim was born, raised, and went to school in Rochester, Minnesota. After graduation in 1965, as a young man of eighteen, Jim enlisted in the United States Army.

In 1968 Jim volunteered for duty in Vietnam and the Army obliged. While assigned to the Americal Division, 17th Armored

Calvary, during a combat mission in January of 1969, he stepped on an enemy land mine and lost both legs above the knee and his left arm above the elbow.

Following extensive recuperation at Fitzsimmons Army Medical Center in Colorado, Jim was medically discharged and returned home to Minnesota. He decided to trade the Minnesota snow for Florida sunshine and currently resides in Apopka, Florida. Ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

Jim Sursely continued his education and earned an Associate of Science degree and currently, along with his wife Jeannie, are very successful in the real estate business in Apopka, Florida.

Mr. Sursely has been a life member of the Disabled American Veterans for thirty-three years. As a member of Chapter 16 in Orlando, Florida, he has served on a variety of chapter committees, as well as chapter Junior and Senior Vice-Commander and Chapter Commander.

At the department level, he has served as 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Junior Vice-Commander. At the national level, Jim has served as a member and chairman of the General Resolutions Committee in 1997 and 1998. He also served as a member of the National Interim Legislation Committee.

Jim was named DAV Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year for 1993 and received the DAV Freedom Award at the 2001 National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. Mr. Sursely was elected National 4th Junior Vice-Commander at the 1999 National Convention, advancing thereafter to his current position.

Jim's wife, Jeannie Sursely, and their four children share in Jim's belief that he is living proof that the Disabled American Veterans is the number one veterans' organization in the world and they too are extremely proud of him.

Commander Bowers and delegates to the 83rd National Convention, I am extremely proud and sincerely honored to second the nomination for the office of National Commander of the Disabled American Veterans for 2004-2005, James E. Sursely. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Are there any other nominations for National Commander? Are there any other nominations for National Commander? Are there any other nominations for National Commander?

Since there are no further nominations, I now declare James E. Sursely elected as National Commander and instruct the National Adjutant to cast one unanimous ballot for his election. (Applause)

ADJUTANT WILSON: I, Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant of the Disabled American Veterans, hereby cast one unanimous ballot for James E. Sursely for the office of National Commander. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: The Nominating Committee has nominated Paul Jackson for the office of Senior Vice-Commander. I will now call for further nominations for the office of Senior Vice-Commander. Are there any other nominations for the office of Senior Vice-Commander? Are there any other nominations for the office of Senior Vice-Commander?

Since there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare that Paul Jackson is elected National Senior Vice-Commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Bradley Barton for the office of National 1st Junior Vice-Commander. Are there any other nominations for the office of 1st Junior Vice-Commander? Any other nominations for the office of 1st Junior Vice-Commander? Are there any other nominations for the office of 1st Junior Vice-Commander?

Since there are no further nominations, I close nominations and declare that Brad Barton is elected National 1st Junior Vice-Commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Rob Reynolds for the office of 2nd Junior Vice-Commander. I will now call for further nominations for the office of 2nd Junior Vice-Commander. Are there any other nominations for the office of 2nd Junior Vice-Commander? Any other nominations for the office of 2nd Junior Vice-Commander? Any other nominations for the office of 2nd Junior Vice-Commander?

No further nominations, I close the nominations and declare that Rob Reynolds is elected to the office of National 2nd Junior Vice-Commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Ray Dempsey for the office of 3rd Junior Vice-Commander. I now call for further nominations for the office of 3rd Junior Vice-Commander. Are there any other nominations for the office of 3rd Junior Vice-Commander? Any other nominations for the office of 3rd Junior Vice-Commander? Any other nominations for the office of 3rd Junior Vice-Commander?

No further nominations, I close the nominations and declare that Ray Dempsey is elected National 3rd Junior Vice-Commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Bobby Barrera for the office of 4th Junior Vice-Commander. I now call for any further nominations for the office of 4th Junior Vice-Commander. Are there any further nominations? Any further nominations for the office of 4th Junior Vice-Commander? Any other nominations for the office of 4th Junior Vice-Commander?

No further nominations, I close the nominations and declare that Bobby Barrera is elected National 4th Junior Vice-Commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Mike Dobmeier for the office of National Judge Advocate. I now call for further nominations for the office of National Judge Advocate. Are there any further nominations? Any further nominations for the office of National Judge Advocate? Any further nominations for the office of National Judge Advocate?

Hearing none, nominations are closed and I declare that Mike Dobmeier is elected as National Judge Advocate. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Gerald Stump for the office of National Chaplain. I now call for further nominations for the office of National Chaplain. Are there any further nominations? Any further nominations for the office of National Chaplain? Any further nominations for the office of National Chaplain?

No further nominations, I close the nominations and declare that Gerald Stump is elected National Chaplain. (Applause)

I now instruct the National Adjutant to cast rdone unanimous ballot for these offices.

ADJUTANT WILSON: I, Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant of the Disabled American Veterans, cast one unanimous ballot for Paul W. Jackson for National Senior Vice-Commander; Bradley S. Barton for National 1st Junior Vice-Commander; Robert T. Reynolds for National 2nd Junior Vice-Commander; Raymond E. Dempsey for National 3rd Junior Vice-Commander; Bobby Barrera for National 4th Junior Vice-Commander; Michael E. Dobmeier for National Judge Advocate; and Reverend Gerald V. Stump for National Chaplain. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you, Arthur. I would ask that the newly elected officers be on the stage and the wives of the officers also, if present. I now invite the newly elected officers for their comments.

It is my privilege to introduce to you your new National Commander, James E. Sursely. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER-ELECT JAMES E. SURSELY: Thank you very much. National Commander Bowers, National Adjutant Wilson, department and chapter commanders, honored guests, and delegates to the 83rd National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans, throughout a person's life there are some occasions that seem to stand out above many others.

This is certainly one of those moments for me. I feel very humbled by your support. I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve as your National Commander.

With your help and support, the year ahead is full of promise, and I look forward to carrying on the fine work of Alan Bowers and all of those who have served before as leaders of this great organization,

I thank you, Alan, for all that you do for the DAV. Your stewardship and record of accomplishments will be hard to match. (Applause)

I also want to take a minute to thank a few people who helped make today possible: DAV Central Florida Chapter and Unit 16; Andy Marshall and all of his staff at the National Service Office located in Bay Pines, Orlando, and West Palm Beach; our Past National Commanders in Florida Al Linden, Denny Joyner, and Harry McDonald; and all the members from the Department of Florida that are here today. Would you please stand and be recognized and be loud. (Applause) I could not have done it without all of you and I thank you.

I also want to thank our exceptionally talented professional staff. National Adjutant Art Wilson has assembled a dedicated team of men and women whose expertise and talents have made the DAV the unquestioned leader among veterans service organizations.

I pledge to all of you that I will do all in my power to be worthy of the honor and trust you have placed in me.

Please allow me to introduce my family: My wife, Jeannie (applause); our children, Max; and somehow we lost Ryan today. I don't know where he is.

Jimmy and my daughter Mary and my mom Jen; my brother, Dick; and my sisters Sandra and Diana, whose love and support and understanding have made it possible for me to be here and to serve my fellow disabled veterans. (Applause)

I also feel very lucky to have my aunts, uncles, cousins, in-laws, and friends who came to Reno to share this special event with me. Would all of you please stand and be recognized in the front row? (Applause)

Miles, would you turn around and wave to the crowd? That's my 84-year-old World War II uncle, Miles Sursely. (Applause)

Last night, Coy Hennis signed him up to a membership with one of my campaign pens. (Laughter) Only Coy could do that.

What we as an organization have accomplished in fulfilling our mission of service to disabled veterans and their families is extraordinary, but we have a long history of outstanding accomplishments.

Let's take a look at what we have accomplished over the past decade, which I believe has been a crucial period of the DAV's history.

In the past decade, the DAV has breathed new life into our service programs, reenergized our volunteer programs, strengthened our membership recruitment and retention and cultivated a powerful grassroots legislative advocacy program.

We also reached out to the American public in bold new ways and implemented a far-reaching strategic vision at all levels of our organization, all aimed at one purpose, creating the DAV's

legacy for the future.

We have accomplished all of this through the inspiration and support of our volunteer and professional leadership, working together as never before to get the job done. I am proud to lend my voice in admiration and appreciation to the architects of this remarkable transformation:

DAV leaders like Dick Marbes, Dale Adams, Jesse Brown, Art Wilson, and to my predecessors who have remained committed to our mission and shared that vision of excellence. (Applause)

Just like all of you, I have seen firsthand the results of that vision and commitment to service. Many thousands of today's veterans and their families have reaped the benefits of that dedication.

Many more will also find the DAV's commitment to service is there for them as well. They will find an organization that is ready, willing, and eager to stand up for their rights, not only now, but in the decades to come, thanks to the strong foundation that you and I have to build on, the DAV's legacy for the future.

Ours is a legacy that has been passed on from one generation of disabled veterans to the next, and we have a responsibility to strengthen that legacy so the DAV will continue to fulfill our mission of service and hope. We do that by remaining true to our core values of service, quality, integrity, and leadership, and I pledge to all of you that I will be steadfast in my resolve to do just that. (Applause)

Not long ago, I had the honor of visiting with a number of the brave men and women injured in Iraq and Afghanistan, and I know that some of those fine Americans whose lives are changed forever by their disabilities were just like me when I was injured in Vietnam, years before some of them were even born.

As I recovered from my injuries and began the life-long process of rehabilitation, the DAV became an increasingly important part of my life. I was fortunate to have the strong family support system in rebuilding my life, but the DAV was there for me as well.

So, I know how vital the DAV is to this new generation of disabled veterans. The DAV's legacy for the future, our National Service Officer Corps, its ranks continually replenished with the best-trained, highly motivated wartime disabled veterans that carry on the tradition of excellence nurtured and sustained by our professional leadership staff. (Applause)

There are none better able to ensure that those disabled in service to our country receive all their earned benefits from a government that all too often has failed to honor its commitment to veterans.

Our Mobile Service Office Program continues to be very successful in delivering help where it's needed most. The DAV's Office on Wheels is an integral part of our broader outreach efforts at air shows and other special events where veterans congregate, spreading the word about our service and volunteer programs.

Even more important nowadays is our Transition Service Program, which brings DAV service to our troops as they prepare to leave the military. This kind of preparation and assistance makes a huge difference as veterans return to civilian life.

Our transition service officers provide these men and women with vital information about their veterans' rights and benefits, giving them a head start on claims for VA disability compensation, medical care, and other earned benefits and services.

Our VAVS hospital volunteers and Transportation Network

continue to be the mainstays of the DAV Voluntary Services Programs. Our volunteers continue to outpace every other organization participating in the VAVS program; the most volunteers, the most hours donated, all record-setting statistics, and we are finding new volunteer opportunities for our members.

Those new opportunities are out in the communities where veterans live, in addition to veterans' hospitals, clinics, and nursing homes, which have been the traditional base of our volunteer programs. (Applause)

The Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Volunteer Scholarships reward deserving young men and women who generously donate their time and compassion to sick and disabled veterans in their communities.

They are fine examples of the hundreds of youngsters who have much to give and much to gain by volunteering in their communities.

We have built a stronger, more active membership. We've reinvigorated our recruitment efforts, offered new incentives for recruiters, and created some new membership benefits and services as well.

We've launched an effort to attract, retain, and develop effective leaders throughout this organization. We've seen tremendous results from professional development and leadership training for our employees. We've made a significant investment in computer and information technology and training designed to help them do their jobs more effectively and efficiently.

Leadership development for the fraternal side of our organization has the biggest payoff in our chapters and departments where the benefits of solid leadership have a direct impact on disabled veterans and their families in their own communities. From those chapter and department leaders come tomorrows leaders at the district and national levels of our organization.

The DAV's legacy for the future: We've made tremendous strides in our effort to build greater government and public support for important issues affecting disabled veterans and their families.

As a part of our ongoing strategy in this area, we have been even more proactive in influencing public policy regarding veterans' issues, and we've been successful on many fronts through our grassroots legislative efforts.

Your national legislative staff works hard to keep the membership informed of the many proposals in Congress, and the membership really responds to their calls in action when needed. Thanks in large part to your continued activism, Congress and the Administration have begun to pay more attention to veterans' issues, and well they should. (Applause)

Politicians who had been dead set against it are now falling all over themselves trying to take credit for legislation signed into law that partially repealed the prohibition against concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability compensation for some of our severely disabled veterans. (Applause)

But we can't stop and we won't stop there, and we've exceeded our initial expectations with regards to reforming the budget to guarantee full funding for veterans' health care. We're not there yet, but we've got their attention in Washington, and the issue has been resonating all around the country.

We need to make sure that veterans have timely access to quality health care provided by the VA, both now and in the future.

We will not let Congress and the Administration turn their backs on sick and disabled veterans and simply walk away from the government's responsibility to fully fund veterans' health care. It's not going to happen if we're all united behind that cause. (Applause)

Next year there will be a new Congress and maybe a new administration. But, regardless, veterans will face renewed challenges to benefits and compensation. There will likely be calls by some in Washington to cut spending, curtail veterans' programs, to break America's promise to veterans.

But you have an opportunity to keep that from happening. Know the candidates who support veterans. Use the power of your vote to send a message to Washington that veterans must be a national priority. (Applause)

Let Congress know that veterans vote and vote for those candidates who have the best interest of veterans at heart. It is absolutely vital that we exercise our rights as citizens. We must hold Congress and the Administration accountable for their actions on issues that affect our lives and the lives of our families.

Because, if you don't speak out on the issues and use the power of the vote, politicians will think they can get away with ignoring the rights of veterans. The choice is yours; vote or lose. (Applause)

These are worrisome times in our nation's history. Our nation is at war and thousands of men and women have been injured in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other troubled spots across the world.

Regrettably, the ranks of wartime disabled veterans will continue to expand for the foreseeable future. So, as I assume the awesome responsibility and honor of leading our organization, I do so at a time when the spirit of the DAV is stronger and brighter than at any other time in our history. It is also a time when many more of our comrades will need the DAV for decades to come. (Applause)

The journey leading up to this day has been very exciting and rewarding for me as a national officer. I've had the opportunity to travel around the country and meet many of the members and leaders of our great organization.

So it's a humbling thought to know that you have placed your trust in me to represent our organization to the general public and our lawmakers in Washington. I take this commitment very seriously and I hope that I can live up to your expectations. (Applause)

As your National Commander, I solemnly pledge to continue the traditions that Alan Bowers and all Past National Commanders have set for our organization.

DAV's legacy for the future, a future that will be filled with enormous challenges to be sure, but a future that also will present tremendous opportunities, especially for our departments, chapters, and individual members.

After all, the future belongs to those who are best prepared for it, and that's just what our strategic plan was designed to do, create the DAV's legacy for the future. May God bless America, God bless the DAV, and God bless all of you. Thank you. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER BOWERS: I now invite our new Senior Vice-Commander, Paul Jackson. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT PAUL W. JACKSON: Commander Bowers, your year has been tremendous. I can only tell you that it was my pleasure to serve with you this year and the years prior to that, and I congratulate you for your accomplishments, and I want to thank you for being a friend, not only to myself,

but to our veterans and to our DAV comrades.

I would also like to acknowledge a very good friend of mine who was just elected, the National Commander who had a stirring speech, and I promise you this, Jim, that I've got your back, and I will do all that I can to make sure that you are successful. (Applause)

Certainly, I would probably get thrown out of the place if I didn't acknowledge Mr. Wilson, Mr. Patterson, Mr. Gorman and their staffs. Really, to be very honest with you, they have really made my tenure and my journey so far a pleasure, and I want to thank you, thank you, thank you. (Applause)

But there is one person on that staff that is above many. I think that I'm her favorite, I might not be, but I think that way, Sandy Buchanan, I thank you very, very much. (Applause)

Naturally, I've got to speak about my own district. I want to thank my chapter, Chapter Number 7. I want to thank the Department of Colorado, the Department of New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming and all the people in that district. Would you please stand? (Applause)

The NSOs in the state of Colorado are as good as they come, and I want to thank them for the support that they not only give me, but what they do for my fellow veterans and what they will do in the future for my fellow veterans. Rob, you and your staff, thank you very much. (Applause)

As a national officer, you get a chance to travel around the country. I'm not going to try and name all the states that I've been to. But I'll tell you one thing, every place that I go, I know that they have a sense of commitment, they have a sense of hospitality, and a sense of togetherness, and I want to say to them that I've traveled to this year, those that I've traveled to in the years past, thank you for your service. Thank you for your hospitality to me and my wife. It has been great. Thank you, thank you, thank you. (Applause)

I have one more person that I want to thank. He's my right arm and my left arm. He's in the background. But Mike Terry, our Executive Director and Adjutant of the Department of Colorado, is a friend of mine. He's a friend of the veterans. Mike, I think you've heard everything and I want you to stand up, Mike, please. Mike Terry. (Applause)

I'm not going to make the mistake that some people make. The one person that is constant in my life and has been is my wife and she tells everyone her name is "Mean Jean." It's my wife, Jean Jackson. (Applause)

I would be remiss to not mention the line officers that I served with, not only this year, but in years past. It's been great, and I look forward to being with you because you're a bunch of good people and thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: It's my pleasure to introduce Bradley Barton.

MR. BRADLEY S. BARTON: Thank you. I would like to introduce my wife, Donna Barton, whose love and support and encouragement has allowed me to serve this great organization. Donna, will you please stand? (Applause)

I also have another family member with me here at this convention, my brother, Richard Barton, who is also a service-connected disabled veteran marine. Would you please stand? (Applause)

I also want to thank Art Wilson, whose stellar leadership has given us a decade of excellence in the DAV. Art, thank you for your commitment to our organization and all you do to serve disabled veterans in this country. (Applause)

I would like to thank Dave Gorman and Rick Patterson and their staffs in Washington, D.C., and Cold Springs, Kentucky,

who help us so much that it makes this job easy. Thank you, guys, very much. (Applause)

I've had tremendous support out of my district and those departments in my district, and I would like to recognize them. The 19th District NEC, Jimmey Mayo; the Department of Idaho Commander Charlie Chapin and their delegation;, the Department of Washington, Ernie Hume and their delegation; the Department of Alaska, Clayton Love, a new, young commander and his delegation; the Department of Oregon, Commander Tammy Little and her delegation, also a new commander, young commander. We're glad to have her.

I would like to thank the NSOs, particularly Jay Woodbury, Michele Colpaert, Brian Alspach. They've been very supportive. Thank you very much. (Applause)

With me, I have a delegation from my chapter, Portland, Oregon Chapter 1, and they have been a tremendous help to me over the past three years, not only financially, but also personally and morally.

I would like to recognize Duane Adams, John Almon, Mike Blunk, Stan Barton, Walter Brophy, Clarence Compton, Henry Odum, Clyde Wyant, Jay Woodbury, and our commander, Bruce Young. Thank you, guys. (Applause)

Last night many of you joined me and Rob Reynolds and the Department of Oregon and Virginia in our hospitality rooms. I want to thank Dave Tannenbaum, Rob Reynolds, and the Department of Virginia for allowing me to share that with you. (Applause)

I owe a great deal to this man who has been a friend of mine for over thirty years. He's been my mentor in the DAV. He encouraged me to join the DAV over thirty years ago when we were working together in Indianapolis, Indiana.

I don't know if he's in the room, but Greg Reed, please stand up and take a bow and thank you and Brenda for your love and support. (Applause)

Finally, I want to thank all the members of this great organization for your continued support and confidence in me to be a representative for you. Thank you very much. I promise I will do a great job for this organization. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: It's my privilege to introduce the 2nd National Junior Vice-Commander, Rob Reynolds. (Applause)

2ND JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT ROBERT T. REYNOLDS: Thank you, Commander. First, I would like to start by saying thank you for an outstanding year. Your leadership, your friendship has been exceptional, and I applaud you for that, Commander. (Applause)

Commander-Elect Sursely, I know you're going to be a great leader for this organization; and like Action said, I've got your back, and I wish you the best this year. (Applause)

To National Art Wilson, Executive Directors Rick Patterson, Dave Gorman, the professional staff, all our national service officers, thank you for what you do every day to make this the premier veterans service organization. (Applause)

And to Sandy Buchanan, thank you for everything you do everyday. You're always there when we need you. (Applause)

This couldn't be possible without the support of my chapter, Arlington-Fairfax Chapter 10, my department, Department of Virginia, and our 6th District, which includes West Virginia, Maryland, D.C., Virginia, and Puerto Rico. If you would please stand to be recognized. (Applause)

I could not forget my better half, my wife, Jennifer Reynolds, who is there for me every day. (Applause) And to Dave Tannenbaum, thank you for what you do, even though you've moved to Florida. Thanks for still assisting. (Applause)

And to each of you, we've had a wonderful 83rd convention. We saw our history in the past decade of what we do best, and that's provide service in building better lives for our nation's disabled veterans and families, and I urge you to take that back to your communities and keep the spirit going of service, service, service. Thank each and every one of you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: My privilege to introduce our new 3rd National Junior Vice-Commander, Ray Dempsey. (Applause)

3RD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT RAYMOND E. DEMPSEY: Good afternoon. National Commander Bowers, thank you for your integrity and character in leading us this year. You are an example to all of us. Thank you. (Applause)

National Commander-Elect Jim Sursely, you have to be one of the most popular guys I know, but I'm going to tell you a little story about Jim. He gets embarrassed, but he knows I'm going to tell it sooner or later and probably the last time I say it.

Last year I was going through the C&A; and with my disability, it's bad at times. I had sciatica with it and Jim came up and saw me hardly able to walk and he said, "Ray, what's the matter with you?"

I said, "Jim, I can't walk. I don't know if I can make it down that aisle."

As Jim always takes care of things, Jim says, "Ray, just hold on to the back of my wheelchair, and I'll get you in there." That's the kind of guy Jim Sursely is. (Applause)

I would like to thank National Adjutant Art Wilson for his vision, his leadership, and keeping us all in line. I would also like to thank Rick Patterson and Dave Gorman, our Executive Directors, for keeping the DAV's business on track everyday.

How could I not thank Sandy Buchanan? Now, Sandy Buchanan and I, we talk often, but we always start off our conversations not with DAV business. It's how the Cubs and the Reds are doing and those doggone St. Louis Cardinals.

I would like to thank all the support and help I get from the 12th District. That's the state of Wisconsin and the Department of Illinois.

We have one person that everybody would like to emulate as a person and as a DAV-er in our district, Dick Marbes, and I thank him for all the help and encouragement and just watching what he does makes you all better. So thank you, Dick, and thank you Wisconsin and Illinois. (Applause)

I would like to thank all the help I get from our new commander, Mark Aaron. Al Reynolds, who is the adjutant who has changed our state and made our state one of the best, he's a hard-working person and we all appreciate his work, and, of course, I thank the best NSO supervisor in the United States, Jeff Hall. (Applause)

Could I have the entire 12th District please stand? 12th District, please stand. (Applause) I'm not going to be like Jim and tell you to be noisy because we are very respectful and quiet people in Illinois, as everybody knows.

I left one person out from Illinois that I wanted to mention, and it's very important that I mention this person. This person is the Junior Past Department Commander. He's the NEC-Elect and he is my campaign chairman. But out of all these titles, the best title I could come for him is called friend. So thank you, Norm Resner. (Applause)

No, I will not forget to mention my wife. My wife, Pat, we've been married thirty years and we have two sons and, Pat, stand up. (Applause) This is the woman that I love, that I respect; and most of all, she's my best friend. So thank you, Pat.

To the convention, thank you for giving me the opportunity

to represent you. I love the programs when I go to the states, the service programs, not just the premier service organization NSOs, but the chapter and department service officers and the hard work they do.

I thank all those who volunteer, the HSCs, the Transportation Program, and those who volunteer every day, giving up your time for the DAV. You are special people and the membership, those who are signing up members, great. But those who keep the people in the chapters and getting them out to the meetings, that's even better.

I thank you all for all you do, taking it from Commander Bowers. I'm glad to be here again because I love the DAV; and if you love the DAV, it's just so easy to do your job. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: It's my privilege to introduce our new National 4th Junior Vice-Commander, Bobby Barrera.

4TH JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT ROBERTO BARRERA: Thank you so much, Commander Bowers. Thank you, Mr. Wilson, fellow directorships, fellow line officers, and the delegates out there, comrades. I'm flattered. I'm humbled. I'm honored. I'm scared. (Laughter)

I would like to express some appreciation to several organizations and individuals, the District 20, the Department of the State of Texas and in particular, Chapter 5. Would you all please stand? (Applause) Those are the individuals that have been working hard to make sure that I kept on track. A special thank you to each one of you.

To a lovely lady who for the last thirty years has helped mold me into the individual that I am, to the person that I am, my lovely wife, Maricelia, please. (Applause)

And last of all, but certainly not least, is to my God. Thirty-five years ago next September, I was trying to figure out what was going on in my life, and trying to put my life back together again and asking, why me, why did you allow this to happen?

Little by little, He showed me the way. He showed me that He had a purpose to help my fellow human beings. He united me and connected me to the DAV and said, "I have a purpose for you, Bobby. It's to help your fellow veterans to achieve the things that I am going to show you, that I am going to lead you, that I am going to lay My hand over you and guide you."

Today, this evening, this afternoon is a culmination of that journey, one more step, and I look forward, fellow line officers, to working with you.

I am committed to you all. I am committed to you, the membership. I am committed to the disabled veterans currently and those that are coming that we know from Afghanistan and from Iraq. I thank you all. Thank you so very much and God Bless America. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: We have reelected Michael Dobmeier our National Judge Advocate.

JUDGE ADVOCATE MICHAEL DOBMEIER: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you again for placing your trust in me. It will be my pleasure to serve with this band of brothers in support of Commander Sursely; and, Bobby, welcome to the band and I want to thank -- I used to call them the small, but mighty 14th District. But this year the states of Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota won three of the five membership awards, so would the mighty 14th District please stand? (Applause)

Armando, I didn't forget. Please greet my wife, Sandy, who not only supports me, but she lives and breathes this organization as well; and our professional staff, thank you again for your trust and support and I'm a happy guy. Thank

you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BOWERS: As your immediate Junior Past National Commander, I'm going to exercise a point of personal privilege and introduce the wind beneath my wings. Theresa, would you please stand? (Applause)

Now we will move on and we will continue with the unfinished business of the convention.

The Chair will now entertain a motion to discharge the Credentials Committee. Could I have someone at a microphone, please, with a motion to discharge the Credentials Committee?

MR. MARTIN: Jeff Martin, Chapter 13, Yorktown, Virginia. I make a motion to discharge the Credentials Committee.

MR. W.F. BATES: W.F. Bates from Alabama, Chapter 6. I second that motion.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Thank you. All those in favor, say aye; any opposed. The motion is carried. So ordered.

Arthur Wilson, National Adjutant, will now read the members of the National Executive Committee.

ADJUTANT WILSON: The following members have been elected to the National Executive Committee for the two-year term of 2004-2006:

NEC 2nd District, John J. Skyler; Alternate, Anthony L. Mirando;

NEC 4th District, Richard Manners; Alternate, Paul V. Lardizzone;

NEC 6th District, Robert V. Richard, Sr.; Alternate, German Bravo;

NEC 8th District, Harold J. Hicks; Alternate, Thomas Tucker;

NEC 10th District, Morris Penermon; Alternate, Joseph M. Connelly;

NEC 12th District, Norman J. Resner; Alternate, Alfred C. Reynolds;

NEC 14th District, Richard C. Amos; Alternate, H.G. Krosschell;

NEC 16th District, Dennis W. Weber; Alternate, James Brogan;

NEC 18th District, William Brzezinski; Alternate, Arthur Jones;

NEC 20th District, Leroy Duke Hendershot; Alternate, Vince Morrison.

COMMANDER BOWERS: Well, believe it or not, that concludes today's agenda. (Applause)

We will now be led in the closing prayer. Will you please rise? Comrade Chaplain Regan.

MR. REGAN: Let us pray. At long last, we have successfully reached the conclusion of our convention and have elected our new leaders. Fill their hearts and minds with wisdom and let them remember in practice the ancient words of the philosopher Cicero, who wrote years before your son was born, what could be almost called a DAV mission statement when he said:

> "This is our special duty, that if anyone specially needs our help, we should help him and give him such help to the utmost of our powers."

As we head home soon, remember the words of the old Gaelic blessing; and to all our officers and delegates and members and family, may the road rise before you, may the wind be always at your back and may the Lord keep you in the palm of His hand.

Fellow delegates, usually at the end of a prayer, we have one word. Would you join me now in a loud, enthusiastic one word, Amen. Very good. Thank you very much. Safe home, everybody. God bless.

COMMANDER BOWERS: I now ask the Department of Massachusetts Color Guard to retire the colors.

(Retirement of Colors)

COMMANDER BOWERS: Let's show our appreciation to the Department of Massachusetts Color Guard. (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, the 83rd National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans is now adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 o'clock p.m., August 3, 2004.)

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE 82ND NATIONAL CONVENTION OF DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY HELD AT RENO, NEVADA

August 1-3, 2004

OPENING BUSINESS SESSION

AUGUST 1, 2004

The Opening Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Reno Ballroom of the Reno Hilton, Reno, Nevada, Sunday morning, August 1, 2004, and was called to order at 9:20 o'clock a.m. by National Adjutant Maria M. Tedrow.

ADJUTANT MARIA M. TEDROW: National Sergeant-at-Arms, have the National Officers escorted to the platform, please:

National Chaplain Donna Stinnett, California; National Acting Judge Advocate Lucille McCarthy, Florida; Fourth National Junior Vice Susan Henry from Tennessee; Third National Junior Vice Kathryn Wiley from Washington; Second National Junior Vice Commander Donna Tanner from Massachusetts; First Junior Vice Commander Judy Steinhouse from North Dakota; Senior Vice Commander Gertrude Tidwell from Oklahoma; Immediate Past National Commander Linda Trulio, New Jersey; National Convention Chairman Helen Parcelle, Nevada.

Would you please see that the National Convention Chairman is brought up on the stage, please.

And now the Past National Commanders: Pauline Wright from Colorado; Nelda Wilson, Illinois; Dorothy Van Hoy, Missouri; Chris McGuire, Maryland; Mary Beth Schultz, Ohio; Florence Velgardson, Utah; Betty Hall, Texas; Sally Wilton, Arizona; Rose Marie Schilpp, Missouri; Jane Troutman, North Carolina; Margaret Hass, North Dakota; Evelynne Dunn, Nevada; Evelyn Dorsey, Washington, D.C.; Paula Raymond, Illinois; Carol Gray, Michigan; Renee Jones, North Carolina.

Now it gives me great honor to present those delegates who are representing the various states at this Convention. May I say at this time that the only state that is not present is Wyoming:

Patricia Hicks, Commander, Alabama; Carol Goodman, Commander, Arizona; Vera Hendricks, Senior Vice Commander, Arkansas; Sue Gill, Commander, California; Ernestine Bennett, Commander, Colorado; Sara Kashner, Commander, Delaware; Juanita Giles, Past State Commander, Washington, D.C.; Marna Barnshaw, Commander, Florida; Annie Krause, Commander, Georgia; Lorna Kakesako, Department of Hawaii Commander; Nancy Chapin, Commander of Idaho; Carla Reynolds, Senior Vice Commander of Illinois; Debra Loetz, Commander of Indiana; Jackie Jarvis, Past State Commander, Iowa; Ardith Dillard, Commander, Kansas; Aveeda Gordon, Commander, Kentucky; Mary Dyer, Commander, Louisiana; Tammy Flacco, Commander, Maine; Emily Hall, Commander, Maryland; Mary Bixby, Commander, Massachusetts; Peggy Smith, Senior Vice Commander, Michigan; Robyn Kenney, Commander, Minnesota; Lou Hollis, Adjutant, Mississippi; Sally Botts, Commander, Missouri; Sylvia Machler, Commander, Montana; Ruby Kenney, Commander, Nebraska; Maryann Johnson, Commander, Nevada; Jean Gideon, Commander, New Hampshire; Patricia Sprague, Past State Commander, New Jersey; Betty Jones, Commander, New Mexico; Helen Mazza, Commander, New York; Margaret Warlick, Commander, North Carolina; Phyllis Kindsvogel, Commander, North Dakota; Jackie Hansen, Commander, Ohio; Debi Huddleston, Commander, Oklahoma; Jeanette Carulli, Commander, Oregon; Pauline Cousins, Commander, Pennsylvania; Ann Schatz, Commander of Rhode Island; Monica

Stroud, Commander of South Carolina; Judith Perry, Commander of South Dakota; Barbara Hartley, Past Department Commander of Tennessee; Minnie Boggs, Commander, Texas; Helene Pockrus, Commander, Utah; Aura Lee Nicodemus, Commander, Vermont; Naomi Bethea, Commander, Virginia; Micki Kraft, Commander, Washington; Carolyn Knight, Commander, West Virginia; Sharon Cornell, Commander, Wisconsin; and Mildred Velazquez, Immediate Past Commander of Puerto Rico.

And now will the National Sergeant-at-Arms present our Auxiliary National Commander, Janet Bennett, to the platform. And now will the National Sergeant-at-Arms present the state colors of Nevada.

(Whereupon, the state colors of Nevada were presented and posted.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: And now will the National Sergeant-at-Arms present the national colors.

Whereupon, the national colors were presented.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: And now will the National Sergeant-at-Arms post the colors.

(Whereupon, the national colors were posted.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Sergeant-at-Arms, dismiss the national and host state color bearers at this time.

(Whereupon, the color bearers were dismissed.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: We will now have the prayer by our National Chaplain, Donna Stinnett.

CHAPLAIN DONNA M. STINNETT: Father, we give thanks to You for all things in life. We give thanks to You for this past year under the guidance of our commander, Jan.

We ask for Your love and continued blessings on her as she leads us through the coming days of this national convention.

We thank You for bringing us here safely and ask You to continue to watch over us as we do the business of this Auxiliary.

We also ask that You watch over our men and women serving our country in these perilous times. Bring them home safely. Comfort those that have lost loved ones and heal those that have been wounded. All this we ask in Your most holy name. Amen.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: The Pledge of Allegiance will be lead by National Americanism Chairman Kathryn Wiley.

THIRD JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER KATHRYN A. WILEY: Please face the flag of our country, free your hands, stand at attention, place your right hand over your heart and repeat with me.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Nancy Coulombe at this time will play the National Anthem. Let's all join in, please.

(Whereupon, the National Anthem was played by Nancy Coulombe.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: I want to say that the pages and color bearers were under the direction of our National Sergeant-at-Arms Donna Horton from Massachusetts. (Applause)

At this time, this is probably, believe it or not, one of the highlights of this Convention as I am concerned. Last year we elected a lady and her name was Janet Bennett, and she came from the great state of Nevada. Is Nevada a great state? (Applause)

And she was determined to fill her year with as much activity as possible and to lead this organization to the best of her ability, and that's all we can ask of anyone.

She, of course, has fought a battle of her own, but has never let it change her optimism and her confidence not only in this organization but also in her ability to do the job.

At this time it does give me great honor to present to you our National Auxiliary Commander, Janet Bennett. (Standing

Ovation)

COMMANDER JANET W. BENNETT: Good morning, everyone.

(Responses of "Good morning.)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you. It's a pleasure for me to be here. I always say every day I'm alive is a good day. I don't think about the others so much. (Applause)

I was so looking to coming here. I wish I could read a little better but hopefully that will come along too at some point in my life. But it's nice to see everyone.

I'm going to have Maria come up and do the Convention call, please.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: The Constitution and Bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary state that the supreme legislative 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 82ND National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary be convened at Reno, Nevada.

Consideration and disposition of business brought before this Convention shall be conducted in accordance with the National Constitution and Bylaws now in force.

To all present, take due notice thereof and govern yourselves accordingly. And now back to our National Commander.

COMMANDER BENNETT: I would just like to welcome each and everyone to our great state of Nevada. We have a wonderful lady that has been helping setting up this Convention.

She has done it many times over. She does a great job. I'd like to introduce our National Convention Chairman, Helen Parcelle. (Applause)

MRS. HELEN C. PARCELLE: Good morning, everybody.

(Responses of "Good morning.)

MRS. PARCELLE: National Commander Janet, National Adjutant Maria, National Officers, Past National Commanders, members and honored guests of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary, I would like to welcome all of you to Reno, Nevada, "the biggest little city in the world."

It is my pleasure to see so many smiling faces here today and to share with you information on the many amenities this city has to offer.

Reno is home to the University of Nevada, Reno, which has an outstanding basketball team. We are home to the National Auto Museum, with the Harrah's famous auto of the one-of-a-kind collection. These tours are available to see these spectacular vehicles.

Downtown on Virginia Street you will find a collection of casinos, some old and some new, just waiting for you to enter their doors. Just remember what we tell all tourists, if you leave a little green here, don't despair. In Nevada all gaming revenue goes to educate Nevada's school children.

One-half hour south of town we have Carson City. It is our capitol of Nevada, and in there they have the Carson City Mint. Yes, they are still turning out those silver dollars.

There is a nice museum with some artifacts and memorabilia of the U.S.S. Nevada that was torpedoed on December 7, 1949, at Pearl Harbor. For those history buffs among you, Virginia City is only 45 minutes south of Reno, up in the famous Geiger Pass.

Virginia City is the loveliest ghost town in the West, and the territorial enterprise of the Mark Twain fame is still in existence there.

The Opera House noted for the many celebrities that have graced its stage and the lovely mansions that the Comstock

Silver Mines paid for are all available for tours.

And, of course, while you are there don't miss the Bucket of Blood Saloon or Boot Hill Cemetery. For those of you with a romantic streak in your souls, take the scenic Mount Rose Highway up the mountains to Lake Tahoe.

Enjoy the pristine beauty of the Lake in the Sky. There is a ship that offers a special evening to remember with a dinner cruise around the lake.

While at Lake Tahoe, take the opportunity to tour the famous Cartwright Ranch where the TV series Bonanza was filmed. You will not be disappointed in the spectacular scenery of the Tahoe area.

We suggest that if you leave this hotel, that you may want to take your badges off for security reasons.

At this time I would like my lovely ladies of Nevada to please stand because they have helped me through this year. Would Nevada ladies please rise. (Applause)

Another little suggestion I want to say or a little quote, it's a little quote from Maria, "Let us all be good to one another." Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you, Helen. There are a group of ladies here that come every year, and that I really respect. I've asked them a lot of questions over the years and they've been able to help me.

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce them, and would you hold your applause until I get all through it, please.

First one is Lucille McCarthy, Pauline Wright, Dorothy Van Hoy, Marjorie Maguire, Florence Valgardson, Mary Beth Schulze, Nelda Wilson, Maria Tedrow, Betty Hall, Sally Wilton, Kathrine Pearson, Rose Marie Schilpp, Jane Troutman, Margaret Hass, Evelynne Dunn, Evelyn Dorsey, Paula Raymond, Carol Gray, Renee Jones, and Linda Trulio. (Applause) Thank you, ladies.

And there is a lady that I'd like to just take a moment and have a moment of silence for, and that is Loneita Shoemaker who could not be here because she is ill, so could we just say a little prayer silently for this lady.

(Whereupon, a moment of silence was observed.)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you. I would like to introduce Past National Commander Paula Raymond to bring greetings, please. Would you come forward. Thank you.

PNC PAULA RAYMOND: Good morning.

(Responses of "Good morning.)

PNC RAYMOND: National Commander Janet, National Officers, Past National Commanders, members and guests, I bring you greetings from the Past National Commanders and our wishes for a very successful Convention.

And on behalf of the Past National Commanders, we have something for Janet. Janet, the Past National Commanders want you to know we are very proud of the dignity and grace that you led this organization with this year and of your courage in doing so. Please accept this on our behalf.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you very much.

PNC RAYMOND: Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENNETT: They tell me it's something I always wanted. Can I take a look?

PNC RAYMOND: Yes. (Laughter)

COMMANDER BENNETT: I know what it is. It's the beautiful paperweight. When our officers go out, they always bring a gift from National to the commanders.

And I had called Maria and I said, "Maria, could I buy one of those?" She said, "No." I said, "Okay." I said, "Could I order one?" She said, "No." (Laughter) So I didn't say any more.

Thank you so much. Okay, where do we go from here? Please be patient with me as I try to read some of this stuff.

Would the Convention Credentials Chairman please come up. There she comes. It's Peggy Truttman.

MRS. PEGGY L. TRUTTMAN: Madam Commander, National Officers, Delegates and Guests, the total Units registered are 242; total Departments registered, 45; total of 287.

Delegates registered, 507; Alternates registered, 27; guests, 50; total of 584. Total Unit votes, 1,669; total Department votes, 45; National Officers, 6; PNCs, 18; grand total of votes, 1,738. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you, Peggy. I would like to ask for a motion to accept the preliminary credentials report. May we have a motion?

(Whereupon, a motion was duly made and seconded from the floor.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: The motion was to accept the preliminary credentials report. That's what we want accepted now. And if you get up to make a motion or to second a motion, please get to the mike because we have a stenographer over here that is trying to get your name.

MRS. MARY LEE LUPEJKIS: I stated my name wrong last time. I forget I'm married sometimes so I'm going to start from scratch again. (Laughter)

My name is Mary Lee Lupejkis. I'm from Virginia and my Unit is Virginia Beach 26. I so move that we accept the credentials report.

MRS. LINDA WILSON: My name is Linda Wilson, Unit 7, Carson City, Nevada, and I second the motion.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you. Can we have a vote, please. All those in favor; any opposed. Thank you.

The first order of business is to adopt the National Convention Rules. You all have a copy. The chair will now entertain a motion for adoption of these rules.

MRS. SANDRA SCHULMAN: Sandy Schulman, Unit 26, New Jersey, makes a motion to adopt the rules.

COMMANDER BENNETT: May I have a second?

MRS. VICKI L. O'NEAL: Vicki O'Neal, California, Lakewood 19, seconds.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you. The motion has been adopted. May we have a vote. All in favor; opposed. Okay.

At this time may I have a motion to accept the agenda subject to changes, please.

MRS. DOLORES HUFF: Dolores Huff, Senior Vice from Kentucky. I move that we accept the motion that you want.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you. A second.

MRS. GERTIE RICHARD: Madam Commander, Gertie Richard, Louisiana, Unit 17, I second the motion.

COMMANDER BENNETT: May I have a vote, please. All in favor or not. Thank you.

Before I give my report, Maria is telling us we already had a change. The Finance Chairman will please come forward.

MRS. IRIS A. BRZEZINSKI: National Commander Jan, National Adjutant Maria, National Officers, Past National Commanders, Delegates, alternates, members and guests, it has been an honor serving on the Finance Committee these past two years, and I would like to thank Past National Commander Linda Trulio for appointing me to the Committee and the Committee for electing me to serve as chairman for the past year.

The hard-working committee members at this time, voting members of the committee were: National Commander Jan Bennett; Cathy Watkins, NEC, District 5; Sue Hollingsworth, NEC, District 21; and myself, Iris Brzezinski.

Non-voting members present were: National Senior Vice President Gertrude Tidwell; National Adjutant Maria Tedrow; and Assistant National Adjutant Judy Hezlep.

The Finance Committee met on June 15th, 2004, at the Radisson Hotel, Covington, Kentucky, for the purpose of setting the budget for the year 2005.

We discovered why pencils have erasers and that calculators are only as good as the operator. That was me. (Laughter)

Copies of the final budget have been distributed to you today. You should all have a copy. At this time, Madam Commander, I would like to move for the adoption of that budget.

MRS. M. SUE HOLLINGSWORTH: Madam Chairman, Sue Hollings-worth, Unit 60, Oklahoma, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER BENNETT: I need a vote. It has been moved and seconded and I need a vote. Any discussion? All in favor; opposed. Thank you.

At this time I would like to dismiss the Nominating Committee, and you're meeting in Nevada 5.

Thank you once again for your patience. I know some of this stuff but I can't read it so Maria has been kind of guiding me through all of this. I'd like to have Senior Vice Gertrude Tidwell come forward.

(Whereupon, Senior Vice Commander Gertrude E. Tidwell assumed the Chair.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER GERTRUDE E. TIDWELL: Good morning, ladies.

(Responses of "Good morning".)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER TIDWELL: It is indeed an honor for me to be able to present our National Commander and my friend, Jan Bennett, for the purpose of her report.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you. I am not going to be able to give the report due to the fact that I don't read very well. As you can see, I can't read very well up here, so it is in your packet.

I would like to tell you a few of the things that happened to me along the way. I was only able to go to four conventions this year.

At first they told me I couldn't go to any, but I kind of balked so he said four if I rest. And the first place that I went was Iowa. I've got to tell you, have you ever been in a tornado?

(Responses of "No.")

COMMANDER BENNETT: Well, I hadn't either and so I was upstairs in my bedroom. I had just come up from a meeting. I had taken my wig off because I don't have any hair.

I took my clothes off and put my nightgown on because I was going to rest and somebody knocked at the door. There were two gorgeous-looking men standing there. (Laughter) And there was me. (Laughter)

And so they told me that I could either come downstairs or I could go in the bathroom and shut the door and stay. Since I have never been in one, I wasn't sure what to expect so I put my wig on, stepped in my clothes, and away I went.

I went downstairs with everybody else. I wasn't going to stay in that room by myself. And it was so bad that when it rained, it rained right through the windows, you know, around the sills.

It just poured through there. But, luckily, the tornado went the opposite way. I never did see those two gorgeous men again. They probably took one look at me and ran. (Laughter)

The next place I went, I went to Florida, which was really nice. It was pretty warm. It was nice to get out of the cold weather. We had a great time. Everybody was really nice.

I had something written down about Florida, but I didn't bring it so I can't remember, but I really enjoyed it. They were very nice ladies.

Oh, I got a beautiful sweater from the -- I don't know what the ladies names are, but they make them for the hospital. They do the hair in the hospital.

They set the hair. They've been here many years. And they gave me this gorgeous sweater because it was so cold. It was warm outside but cold in the hotel.

And then from there I went on to Cincinnati to a Finance and Education and Loan, and from there I went on to Massachusetts.

Now let me tell you about Massachusetts if you're never been there. (Laughter) All they do is eat. (Laughter) And I mean eat.

Every time you turn around, you eat, and I'm a small person and I don't eat a lot. But I had a great time. They treated me very nice. It was really nice to be here.

And then from there I went on to New York. And let me tell you about New York. They eat. (Laughter) And they eat. One man, the waiter asked me what I wanted for lunch when I was eating my breakfast. (Laughter) I didn't know what I wanted for lunch. But they treated me very nice and we had a great time.

But we almost had one of our Auxiliary members go through the window, and that was Dolores Robidoux in her chair. It got caught on her button and she couldn't get it off, and she's rolling right towards the window and everybody grabbed her.

I mean, I could just see her floating right outside. She couldn't be here this year. I miss her because I think she's a great lady.

And then from there I went home, and I went to bed and I slept. But I did have a great time. I would have liked to have been able to attend a lot more but I just couldn't.

I did attend the C&A at Washington. I had a handsome young NSO for my escort. He escorted me up to the Hill. It was really nice. He probably took one look at me and said, "Why did I get this assignment with this old lady?" But he was very, very nice.

So all and all it hasn't been too bad, but there were a lot of things I would have liked to have done that I just couldn't do. Maria covered a lot for me, and all the other officers, too, so I really appreciate it. I thank you. And that is it. (Standing Ovation)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER TIDWELL: The chair entertains a motion that you accept the Commander's report as printed and as said at the podium this morning.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Madam Commander, Past National Commander Maria Tedrow. I so move that we accept the National Commander's report.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER TIDWELL: A motion has been made by Past National Commander Maria Tedrow.

PNC EVELYNNE DUNN: Evelynne Dunn, Past National Commander, I second the motion.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER TIDWELL: Evelynne Dunn, Past National Commander, seconds the motion. Any discussion? All those in favor; any opposed. The motion carried. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Commander Bennett resumed the Chair.)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you, Gertrude. Will the National Membership Chairman please come forward.

FIRST JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER JUDY M. STEINHOUSE: Good morning, ladies. It is my pleasure to have spent this past year as Membership Chairman, and I'm here to present the membership

awards.

Group 1, 10 to 50 members, Cape May County, Number 44, New Jersey, with a 20-member increase. (Applause) While she's coming up, we'll go through the rest of them.

Group 2, 51 to 100 members, Orleans County Number 22, Vermont, with a 34-member increase. (Applause)

Group 3, 101 to 200 members, Hardy Shelby Number 45, Tennessee, 68-member increase.

And Group 4, 201 and over, Elkhart Number 19, Indiana, 49-member increase. (Applause)

Monetary awards will be given in each of these categories and they will be sent out after the convention, so you'll get your certificates here and the money, you know, the check is in the mail. (Laughter)

And Group Number 5, New Unit, most new members, Norfolk Number 4, Virginia, 24 new members. (Applause)

We have Group Number 6, Department with the largest percentage increase, State Department of Tennessee, 5.67 percent increase. (Applause)

And Group Number 7, Department with the largest numerical increase is the State Department of Kentucky, 151-member increase. (Applause)

We have two special membership awards. The first one goes to Carolyn Irby, North Carolina, Number 61, for signing up 33 new senior members. (Applause) I don't believe Carolyn is here but if somebody would like to come.

And the other special membership award goes to Barbara Hartley, Tennessee Number 3, for 17 new senior members. (Applause)

That concludes the membership awards. Thank you, Commander Janet, for allowing me to serve you this year as membership chairman. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you, Judy. Before we go on with the reports, I'd like to ask Jim Hall if he would just step to the microphone for a few minutes, please.

This man has helped me a great deal this year. Sometime when I couldn't write my speeches, I'd call him and ask him for some help. And the other person that isn't in this room but was a great help was my husband, Jim.

And so I have -- oh, there you are. He's awfully quiet when he walks. Anyway, Jim, I'd like to present you with this gift for all the nice things that you have done for me this year. And I thank you. (Applause)

MR. JIM HALL: Thank you so much. It was the easiest job I had all year. (Laughter)

COMMANDER BENNETT: We'll have the Finance Committee report, please. You had that. Okay, I'll mark it off.

The first-time reading of the Constitution and Bylaws, Evelyn Dorsey, chairman.

PNC EVELYN B. DORSEY: Good morning.

(Responses of "Good morning".)

PNC DORSEY: National Commander Jan, National Adjutant, National Officers, Past National Commanders, Delegates and guests, this is the first reading of the proposed amendments to the National Constitution and Bylaws.

As you know, there will be no discussion at this time. You should have a copy in your packet. You can follow along as I read.

National Constitution, Article III, Eligibility for Membership: Delete entire Article III and substitute the following Article:

Article III, Eligibility for Membership.

Section 1: The spouse, surviving spouse,

parents, siblings, children, grandparents, grand-children and great grandchildren of any person eligible or any deceased person who was eligible for Disabled American Veterans membership are eligible for membership in the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

Section 2: Children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren of members of the Auxiliary who are not otherwise eligible for membership are eligible for membership in the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

Section 3: Any person who is eligible for membership in the Disabled American Veterans is also eligible for membership in the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

A member eligible for membership in both the parent organization and the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary shall not eligible to vote nor hold any office, elective or appointive, and/or chairmanship in the Auxiliary while holding any office, elective or appointive, and/or chair-manship in the Disabled American Veterans.

Section 4: The spouse, surviving spouse, parents, siblings, children, grandparents, grand-children, and great grandchildren of any person who was injured or disabled while serving with any of the armed forces of the nations associated with the United States of America and therefore eligible for membership in the Disabled American Veterans, and who was honorably discharged and who became an American citizen, are also eligible.

Section 5: The surviving spouse, parents, siblings, children, grandparents, grand-children and great grandchildren of any person who has since died of injury, wounds, or disability received in eligible service, as in Section 1 above, are eligible for membership in the Auxiliary.

Section 6: The Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary shall not have honorary members.

Rationale: More and more women are active in the military and through this action have become eligible for membership in the parent organization. Therefore, looking to the future, it is only fair that the eligibilities listed above be considered for membership in the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

Statement of Notice: If and when this amendment is adopted and ratified in accordance with the Constitution, the Interim Constitution and Bylaws Committee will make the necessary changes within the Bylaws in order to comply with the Constitution.

Page N-25, Article VII, Membership, Section 5: Membership Classification, B. Life Member-ship, Paragraph 4, delete entire Paragraph 4 and substitute the following:

Effective July 1, 2005, Life Membership fees shall be as follows: Age 18 to 30, $250.00; 31 to 45, $230.00; 46 to 60, $200.00; 61 to 70, $180.00; 71 and over, $140.00. Minimum down payment is $40.00. Birth date must be indicated on the membership application.

Notwithstanding anything in this Article to the contrary, upon attaining the age of 80, no person eligible for membership shall be required to pay either initial dues or the balance due of an existing account and shall be immediately declared a member for life in the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

Rationale: Members are living longer; therefore, in order to continue to cover the benefits and privileges of membership, it is necessary to increase the cost of a life membership.

Page N-25, Article VII, Membership, Section 5:

Membership Classification, B. Life Member-ship, Paragraph 6, delete entire paragraph 6 and substitute the following:

Effective July 1, 2005, the following annual distribution shall be made from the Life Membership Fund during the lifetime of a member: $.50 to the Unit; $.50 to the State Department; and $4.00 to National Headquarters.

Provided, however, that unless it is determined by the National Finance Committee that such payments from the Life Membership Fund are not on a sound actuarial basis, based upon an internal audit, the above payment will not be reduced.

Rationale: Members are living longer, and interest rates are lower; therefore, to protect and stabilize the Life Membership Fund, annual distributions need to be reduced in a prudent and responsible manner.

Page N-26, Article VII, Membership, Section 5: Membership Classification, C. Members-at-Large, Paragraph 1, Line 5, delete $10 and insert $15. Paragraph C.1, would then read:

National Members-at-Large: Provision is hereby made for membership-at-large to a person eligible under Article VII, Section 5.

An annual membership card will be issued upon receipt of a $15.00 payment to National Headquarters. This membership does not count in any state or unit. Effective July 1, 2005.

Rationale: The cost of processing national at-large memberships has increased.

Page N-32, Article VIII, Finances, Section 2: Per Capita Tax, Paragraph 2, delete entire paragraph 2 and substitute the following:

The National per capita tax for life members is $4.00, effective July 1, 2005.

Rationale: This will then agree with the amendment to Article VII, Membership, Section 5: Membership Classification, B. Life Membership, Paragraph 6.

Page N-32, Article VIII, Finances, Section 2: Per Capita Tax, Paragraph 3, delete entire Paragraph 3 and substitute the following:

The National per capita tax for junior members is $3.00, effective July 1, 2005.

Rationale: The present junior per capita tax is unrealistic. An increase is necessary to cover the cost of junior membership applications and the processing of same.

Page N-32, Article VIII, Finances, Section 3: National Mandates, Line 2, delete $15.00 and insert $25.00. Section 3 would then read:

Each membership year national head-quarters shall withhold the sum of $25.00 from each Unit's per capita distribution to cover the following national mandates: Auxiliary Education Loan Fund, Auxiliary Service/Support Fund, and Fidelity Bond Premium.

The mandate must be paid in order for a Unit to have bond coverage for all persons having custody of Unit funds and for the Unit to be eligible to vote at a national convention. Effective July 1, 2005.

Rationale: Cost of the premium for the Fidelity Bond has increased due to the number of claims submitted to the bonding company by the Units and State Departments.

Page N-33, Article VIII, Finances, Section 4: Fidelity Bond, Paragraph 1, Line 1, delete $25.00 and insert $50.00. Section 4, Paragraph 1 would then read:

The Fidelity Bond Premium shall be $50.00 for each State Department. National Headquarters shall withhold

this sum from each state department's per capita distribution to cover the Fidelity Bond Premium. Effective July 1, 2005.

The rationale is the same as above.

Paragraph N-34, Article IX, State Departments, Section 2: State Department Charter, paragraph 2, Line 4, delete $25.00 and insert $50.00. Section 2, Paragraph 2, would then read:

An application for a State Department Charter must be accompanied by a charter fee of $5.00 per Unit for each Unit signing the application and a $50.00 Fidelity Bond Premium. Such application shall be approved by the State Executive Committee of the Disabled American Veterans. Effective July 1, 2005.

Rationale: Same as above.

Page N-36, Article X, Local Units, Section 1, Paragraph 2, Line 4, delete $2.50 and insert $12.50. Section 1, Paragraph 2, would then read:

All applications for Charter shall be made directly to National Headquarters. Applications shall be accompanied with a $5.00 national charter fee, $12.50 Fidelity Bond Premium, and the entire amount of dues for each member. Effective July 1, 2005.

Rationale: Same as above.

Page S-15, Article VIII, Finances, Section 2, State Per Capita, Paragraph 1, delete entire Paragraph 1 and substitute the following:

The state per capita for Life members shall be $.50, effective July 1, 2005.

Rationale: This paragraph will then agree with the amendment to Article VII, Member-ship, Section 5: Membership Classification, B. Life Membership, Paragraph 6.

S-16, Article VIII, Finances, Section 6, Paragraph 1, Line 2, delete $25.00 and insert $50.00. Section 6, Paragraph 1, would then read:

The Fidelity Bond Premium for the State Department shall be $50.00. This sum shall be withheld from the State Department per capita distribution. Effective July 1, 2005.

Rationale: This will then agree with Article VIII, Finances, Section 4: Fidelity Bond, Paragraph 1.

Page U-12, Article XV, Unit Finance and Dues, Section 2, National Mandates, Line 2, delete $15.00 and insert $25.00. Section 2 would then read:

Each membership year National Head-quarters shall withhold the sum of $25.00 from each Unit's per capita distribution to cover the national mandates.

This mandate must be paid in order for a Unit to have bond coverage for all persons having custody of Unit funds and for the Unit to be eligible to vote at national convention. Effective July 1, 2005.

Rationale: This will then agree with Article VIII, Section 3: National Mandates.

Thank you.

MEMBER: Madam Commander.

COMMANDER BENNETT: No questions on this at this time.

MEMBER: I'm not questioning. I am simply stating that the body, all of the body does not have copies of the proposed changes in the Bylaws.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: The reason they do not, they were put on the chairs, and I made an announcement early this morning that we have five-hundred-and-some people registered.

We had 750 copies so people have been picking them up from the chairs. If anybody has more than one copy, I want you to

raise your hand. There are extra copies down here on these chairs.

MEMBER: Madam Chairman, I have a question on Article VIII, eligibility for membership on Section III. It states, any person who is eligible for membership.

COMMANDER BENENTT: Would you please listen to me for a moment before you continue. There will be no questions asked at this time. It will happen at a later time. Thank you.

I've also been asked to say when you step to the microphone, please present your name. I would appreciate it. Thank you.

At this time we're going to continue on with the reports and the awards. Would the Americanism Chairman, Kathryn Wiley, please come forward.

THIRD JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER WILEY: This is a little low. There we go, now I can talk. Good morning, everybody.

(Responses of "Good morning.)

THIRD JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER WILEY: Well, that was kind of exciting stuff we just heard. Good morning. Let's get excited, you're all kind of dull. Come on. Yes, great, okay.

Okay, this morning I want to call forward the chairman. Oh, she's already stood up. I didn't even have to say her name. District 10, Lorene Penermon, please come forward.

While she's coming forward, I want to thank all of you for this last year. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve you as your Americanism Chair.

I can't think of anything greater to have done. You're a great group of ladies, and here comes a real special lady who got a surprise yesterday when she showed up at the meeting. (Laughter) And here's our chair.

MRS. LORENE PENERMON: National Commander, Jan, National Adjutant Maria, National Officers, Past National Commanders, Delegates, members and friends, good morning.

(Responses of "Good morning.)

MRS. PENERMON: Well, I had the privilege of chairing the Americanism Committee. That group worked very hard. They diligently scanned and evaluated and judged each report.

It wasn't an easy job. It took us a couple hours to get it done, but then we were all in agreement. We had a great time doing it, and now here are the results.

Group 1, 10 to 50 members, was the Michael J. Thomas Number 5, North Carolina. (Applause) Group 2, 51 to 100 members, was Morgantown, North Carolina, Unit Number 53. (Applause)

Group 3, 101 to 200 members, Arizona, Prescott Number 16. (Applause)

Group Number 4, 201 members and over, Arizona, Cactus Number 21. (Applause)

Now in addition to those awards, we also had special Americanism awards and this time we have two of those. Our national chairman felt that it would be only fair to break it down into two groups: 10 to 200 members and 201 members and over.

So for the 10 to 200 members, it was Michigan City, Unit Number 23, Indiana. (Applause)

And for the Group 2, 201 members and over, Cactus Unit Number 2, Arizona again. (Applause)

The Committee did have some following recommendations:

One of the main one was please don't write on the reports. If you have a need, if you feel that you need something to write on, why don't you make a copy of one of the reports and have a working copy and then write on that report.

Also, be sure that you only send in the winner for your state. We did receive sometimes two or three from each state,

and that just prolongs the process of doing the judging.

And also when you're talking in your special projects and you speak of dignitaries, put their names in there so that we'll know who you are talking about, and the proper names will be there.

And also then, too, make sure that you put the proper information on the form. There is sometimes confusion of what is community service and Americanism or hospital and Americanism so make sure you put the proper information on the form.

Other than that, we had pretty good -- well, it was a good job, a great job done by all. We saw a lot of wonderful things that were done in Americanism. We each got ideas to take back home with us so I think everybody did a great job.

Now I'll take the opportunity to introduce our Committee. And please if I mispronounce your name, don't hold it against me.

District 1, Jacqueline Burning -- please stand when I call your name so you can be recognized -- District 2, Lucita Christensen; District 3, Florence Patten; District 4, Patricia Sprague; District 5, Pauline Cousins; District 6, Mildred Velazquez -- I hope I said that right, probably not -- District 7, Annabell Raulerson; District 8, Patricia Hicks; District 9, Monica Stroud; District 10, yours truly here; District 11, Ann Offutt; District 12, Freida Gattung; District 13, Debora Lynn Loetz; District 14, Leeann Karg; District 15, Glenda Cooper; District 16, Ruth Ann Fowler; District 17, Felicia Reed; District 18, Gigi Quellet-Fisher; District 19, Janine Henson; District 20, Joyce Hume; District 21, Kathryn Freeman.

It was my pleasure to serve on the committee with each and every one of you. Although what they did to me, the ones that got there before I did, when I walked in they said, "Where are you from?"

I said, "Michigan." And they said, "Oh, we have a surprise for you." (Laughter) I said, "What is it?" "You're the chairman." (Laughter) Well, anyway, thanks, and thanks, Maria. And thanks to you all. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN BENENTT: Thank you, ladies. I would like to say one thing before we go on. For the lady who had a question, I can see you sitting there, I didn't mean to be rude to you, but you will be able to ask your question later at the second reading. Thank you.

Next report we'll do is Community Service with Susan Henry.

FOURTH JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER SUSAN M. HENRY: Madam Commander, National Adjutant Maria, members, guests, it was a great privilege to serve as Community Service chairman this year, and I'd like to bring up the Convention Chairman, Angela Lara.

I'd also like to say you guys did a great job in Community Service this year. If you look at my report and see the numbers, they are outstanding.

MRS. ANGELA LARA: Good morning.

(Responses of "Good morning".)

MRS. LARA: My name is Angela Lara. I'm NEC Alternate for District 17. I belong to Hot Springs Unit in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico.

National Commander, National Adjutant, National Officers, Past National Commanders, Delegates, guests of the Convention, I want to tell you it was a great surprise for me when I showed up in the room.

I was quite embarrassed because I got lost, and I showed up a few minutes late. And, thankfully, there was a very nice young page that helped me find the room.

And then when I got in there, Susan said, "You're the

chairperson." I thought she was joking. Then I found out she wasn't and I thank you very much for giving me the honor to serve as the chairperson.

The National Service Convention Committee met in the Cascade Room 1 at 1:30 on July 31st, 2004. Our advisor, as you know, was Susan Henry. We had appointed secretary Esther Cherry.

What I would like to do is recognize the committee members. They worked really hard for many hours. And community service, as you know, has a lot of categories. I'm very proud of what these ladies did.

District 1 -- and please forgive me if I pronounce your names wrong -- District 1, Nancy Mooney from Massachusetts, Unit 33; District 2, Esther Cherry from New York, Unit 1; District 3, Aura Nicodemus, Vermont, Unit 3; District 4, Marjorie Fleming, New Jersey, Unit 42; District 5, Helen M. Peconi from Pennsylvania, Unit 53; District 6, Carolyn Knight from West Virginia, Unit 6; District 7, Judith A. Clamp from Florida, Unit 78; District 8, Francis McClure from Tennessee Unit 42; District 9, Ann Krause from Georgia, Unit 27; District 10, Pamela Poest from Michigan, Unit 14; District 11, Eloise Cupp from Ohio, Unit 36; District 12, Rose Williams, Wisconsin, Unit 54; District 13, Esther Houston, Indiana, Unit 19; District 14, Lois McCarron from Minnesota, Unit 39; District 15, Ellen Braman from Nebraska, Unit 35; District 16, Florine Hicks from California, Unit 55; Chairperson Angela Lara, Unit 17, New Mexico; Unit 18, Barbara Gentry from Arizona, Unit 20; District 19, Marcia Read from Oregon, Unit 6; District 20, Mary Burns-Michael, Texas, Unit 28; and last but not least, we have District 21, Courtney White from Oklahoma Number 7. Please give our ladies a round of applause. (Applause) Thank you, ladies, you may be seated.

The following Units were judged to be the best in their categories for the National Community Service Award:

We have our Group 1, which is 10 to 50 members, the winner is Washington County Number 7, Oregon. (Applause) Please come forward.

Group 2, which is 51 to 100 members, we have Charles Castone Unit Number 94 from Florida. (Applause)

Group 3, which is 101 to 200 members, Oakland Number 7 from California. (Applause)

Group 4, 201 plus members, Bay Pines Holiday Isles, Florida, Unit 13. (Applause) Thank you, ladies.

Our committee did have some recommendations: That Units do not double count values of items, in other words, no double-dipping; and itemize all things in bookkeeping style not in generalization; and as you've already heard, please, states only send in first place report winners. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENENTT: Are you getting tired? Let's stand up and do a little. Where's the piano player? Let's stand up and just shake our bodies, shake our legs, shake our hands just to kind of get us moving.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Hey, that was pretty good, but I want to remind everybody, I see people leaving the room. There will be a caucus of the Districts as soon as this meeting is recessed.

At that time your District representative will go over the Constitution and Bylaws with you. If you are not at that District caucus and you're outside some place, and you say you don't understand or you haven't heard about it, it's not our fault. So, remember, we will break and you will have a District caucus prior to going to lunch.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Are we energized a little bit, a little bit better?

(Responses of "Yes.")

COMMANDER BENNETT: Okay, you may be seated please and we're going to continue on. Please be seated, ladies.

The next person that's going to come up is the Hospital, and that's Dorothy Reese. Is she here? There she comes. Keep our voices down so you can hear this lady when she talks. Thank you.

MRS. DOROTHY L. REESE: Good morning, everybody.

(Responses of "Good morning.)

MRS. REESE: I'm handicapped this morning so please bear with me. National Commander Janet, National Adjutant Maria, National Officers, Past National Commanders, Delegates and guests at the 82nd National Auxiliary Conference, the National Hospital Convention Committee met in the Shasta 1 at 1:50 p.m. July 31, 2004.

The advisor was myself, Dorothy Reese, and the Secretary was Sandy Dobmeier. We elected and appointed her as the secretary.

The following Units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Hospital Awards: Group 1, 10 to 50 members, John Blake Unit 15, Brattleboro, Vermont. (Applause)

Second place for 51 to 100 members, DAVA Morrison County, Unit 12, Little Forks, Minnesota. (Applause)

Third place, 101 to 200 members, John Karg, Jr., Unit 13, Columbia, South Carolina. (Applause) Group 4, 201 members or over, William Allen Smith, Jr. Unit 2, Grand Rapids, Michigan. (Applause)

The Committee submitted the following recommendations, which we all know most of them is do not write or highlight on the reports.

And on Number 7, they had a lot of questions about what a "badge" means. When you go to the hospitals and you go as a volunteer, you're supposed to go through an orientation system, and you're supposed to get a badge.

Now I understand there are some smaller facilities that do not do this, so that's what the badges are described as.

And I'd like to introduce the people from my Committee: District 1, Gloria Fallon; District 2, Diane Winesky; District 3, Linda Fallmel of Rhode Island; District 4, Rose Herme; District 6, Lena Mae Maki; District 7, Harriet Cordon; District 8, Bea Martin; District 9, Margaret Warlick; District 10, Cornelia Johnson; District 11, Mary Beth Schulze; District 12, Carla Reynolds; District 13, Shelba Hunt; District 14, Sandy Dobmeier; District 15, Jackie Jarvis; District 16, Jan Devenish; District 18, Maryann Johnson; District 19, Juanita Wiley; and District 20, Belinda McKinney.

I want to say that the ladies did a wonderful thing during the meeting. There were a lot of reports. There were a lot of questions that they asked.

We had a lot of people in there for the first time that really have not had any actual hands-on with some of the reports that is going out, and there was a lot of hard decisionmaking out there.

There were a lot of reports that were really super. I thank the committee members for being there and I appreciate everything you've done. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you, Dorothy. Next we'll have Junior Activities with Joan Fletcher.

MRS. JOAN F. FLETCHER: Good morning.

(Responses of "Good morning.)

MRS. FLETCHER: National Commander Jan, National Adjutant Maria, National Officers, Past National Commanders, Delegates, I am so thrilled that Jan gave me this chairmanship.

It was something that I've always dreamed I would have but

never thought I would get, and the Juniors have done such an excellent job. In the one category alone we had 44 entries.

It was a hard time to get through that but they did, and they've done a lovely job. I would like to call the chairman, Mary Lou Weber, up here, if she would, please.

The Juniors are doing such a wonderful job. In my report I showed the total hours Juniors had done in every category. We added each and every one of those papers up, and it was just marvelous.

I don't know how they got their school work done or slept, but they did a good job and we're in good hands. They're going to grow up to be great.

MRS. MARY LOU WEBER: The committee met in the Teton Room at 1:30 on 7/31/04. Our advisor was Joan Fletcher.

The following Units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Junior Activities Award:

Group 1, 1 to 25 members, Washington County Number 7, Hillsborough, Oregon; (Applause)

Group 2, 26 to 50 members, Pikeville Number 134, Pikeville, Kentucky; (Applause)

Group 3, 51 to 100 members, Glendale Unit Number 20, Glendale, Arizona; (Applause)

Group 4, 101 and over, Clarence Tom Lindley 24, Valley City, North Dakota. (Applause)

We did not have a Junior Activities Book. The National Junior Miss is Erin Conliff, Number 94, Lehigh Acres, Florida. (Applause)

National Miss Teen is Courtney Cortez, Unit 10, Escondido, California. (Applause)

The National Mini-Miss is Lauren E. McCain, Unit 45, Jackson, Ohio. (Applause)

The ladies on my Committee were: District 1, Marie Clancy; Number 2, Patricia Weinert; Number 3, Wanda Lee Furbish; District 4, Mary K. Wischmann; District 6, Sylvia Harl; District 7, Josie Haynes; District 8, Kathrine Daniels; District 9, Ethel Bussey; District 10, Marie Hekkema; District 11, Dorothy Jane Clark; District 12, Nancy Colby; District 13, Tana Penland; District 14, Mary L. Weber; District 15, Arlene Dillard; District 16, Bernice Vieira; District 17, Rachel Thomas; District 18, Elizabeth Murbach; District 19, Deborah Mazza; District 20, Patricia Hendershot. That's it. (Applause)

I want to thank you girls for serving on the Committee. You did a wonderful job.

The Committee submitted the following recommendations: Make sure the reports are legible. The first sheet was fine but there were second sheets they could not read.

And when Juniors are doing projects, make sure they're not projects they're being paid for. This is to be volunteer work. And specify the number of Junior girls working in each category.

Change the Department categories to National Membership breakdowns. And on your grading sheet, specify one to ten points. It doesn't have to be every Unit gets ten points for everything. They can get seven or six.

And thank you very much for letting me do this committee. I really appreciate it. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENNETT: The next one is going to be Legislation with Donna Tanner.

SECOND JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER DONNA M. TANNER: Hello, everyone.

(Responses of "Hello.)

SECOND JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER TANNER: Jane Daniels was our chairman so, Jane, are you here? Come on up. Do I see her moving? Oh, there she is.

While Jane is on her way, I'd like to say thank you very much for the opportunity to serve this year as the Legislative Chairman. I want to say that we had quite a lively group in our committee yesterday.

They were very outspoken. They were very interesting, and they worked very good together as a team. We had some fun and we got the business done at the same time. So at this time I'd like to present Jane Daniels, our chairman. (Applause)

MRS. JANE A. DANIELS: Good morning. I'm glad to be getting this over with. I can have a comfortable lunch. (Laughter)

National Commander Janet, National Adjutant Maria, National Officers, Past National Commanders, Delegates and guests of this 82nd National Auxiliary Convention, the National Legislative Convention Committee met in the Teton 2 Room at 1:30 p.m. July 31st, 2004.

Our advisor was Donna Tanner. Dolores Huff was appointed secretary. It was a unanimous decision of our committee to have an honorable mention. The reason we did this was to show the honorable mention that with just a little more effort, they could have got the national recognition.

It doesn't take much because these reports we really did study, choosing the right one. I would like to recognize now, if you would stand the ladies on our committee:

District 1, Lillian Halpin; District 2, Anita Tears; District 3, Tammie Flacco; District 4, Melva Matlack; District 5, Shirlee Boarts; District 6, Diane Brinkley; District 7, Lee Brown; District 8, Loriece Cole; District 10, Peggy Smith; District 11, Jane Wood; District 12, Sandy Resner; District 13, Dolores Huff; District 14, Phyllis Kindsvogel; District 15, myself, Jane Daniels; District 16, Ann Stewart; District 16, Meta Staker; District 18, Lorna Kakesako our new Department from Hawaii; District 19, Cathryn Foster; and District 20, Joanne Johnson. (Applause)

And the winners are:

Group 1, 10 to 50, Weekly County, Unit 98, Tennessee; (Applause) with an honorable mention to Michael J. Thomas Unit 5, North Carolina; (Applause) Group 2, 51 to 100 members, Monroe County Powers Unit 15, New York; (Applause) with an honorable mention to Pikeville Unit Number 134, Kentucky; (Applause)

101 to 200 Roll of Honor, Unit 120, New York; (Applause) with the honorable mention going to Tri- City's Unit 46, Washington State; (Applause)

201 and over, Greater Daytona, Unit 84, Florida; (Applause) with honorable mention going to -- and I didn't get the name -- Unit 20, Arizona. (Applause)

I would like to thank the ladies on the committee that served together. It was a pleasure serving with Donna Tanner our advisory. Thank you, Donna.

I have recommendations, yes, we do: The Number 1 recommendation was that the Units have more direct contact and cooperation through the state level of Department of Veterans Affairs with supporting their bills;

Number 2, on the reports state the bill number and topic;

Number 3, on the report state bills that pertain to veterans and family only;

Number 4, on the reports state the number of letters sent -- we just changed that one word in there -- as follow up thank you for your support on the listed bill.

We thought it was important that you know our Number 5 is as a DAV member you can, yourself, write a resolution -- yes, a legislative resolution. That concludes our report. (Applause)

SECOND JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER TANNER: I just want to thank you all for your hard work in Legislation this year. The reports were outstanding. The contacts were unbelievable and I thank you very much for your hard work.

It was an honor and a pleasure to have Hawaii, Lorna from Hawaii, choose our committee to sit on to learn. And we welcome her. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you. The next one is going to be Mae Holmes and it's going to be with Gertrude Tidwell.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER TIDWELL: Good morning again, ladies. May I ask Patty Rapisand, my chairman, to please come forward. And while she's coming forward, I would like to say thank you to all the Units that submitted reports.

I did not receive reports from lots of states, but we had several Unit reports to judge yesterday. In fact, I only had seven states to report to me for the check-off list.

And in the committee yesterday you had lots of beautiful reports but you didn't read where it says "form only", and you added attachments which disqualified your report. I'm sorry but that's the way it is.

So please read it. If it says "form only", only put the hospital form not the breakdown for the $1,000 on the hospital and not the breakdown for the $1,000 on community service, only the report only.

Love you all. Worked hard. (Applause) I now am going to turn the podium over to my chairman, Patty Rapisand from Texas. (Applause)

MRS. PATTY RAPISAND: Hi, everybody.

(Responses of "Hi.")

MRS. RAPISAND: National Commander, National Adjutant, National Officers, Past National Commanders, Delegates and guests of the 82nd National Auxiliary Convention, this Committee was a wonderful experience.

I went around telling everybody that I was the Convention Chairman and nobody got excited. I was so excited and so it was nice to see other people up here who were just as excited as I was.

The group that were on this Committee were a wonderful group. They paid very close attention to every detail. I really feel that they made wonderful decisions. It was truly a great experience.

And the winners are:

Group 1, 10 to 50 members, North Missouri, Unit Number 48, from Kirksville, Missouri; (Applause)

Group 2, 51 to 100 members, Al Bartrow, Jr., Unit 50, Mount Aire, North Carolina; (Applause) Group 3, 101 to 200 members, Frank E. Walker, Senior and Junior, Unit 61, from Chesterfield County, Virginia; (Applause)

Group 4, 200 members or over, from Worcester Unit 4, Worcester, Massachusetts. (Applause) Congratulations to all of you.

And now I'd like to recognize all the wonderful ladies that were on this Committee:

District 1, Sandra Fincel; District 2, Helen Mazza; District 3, Jeanne Gideon; District 4, Jennie Bizon; District 5, Catherine Watkins; District 6, Ruth McMichael; District 7, Donella Strobel; District 8, Fairee Bridges; District 9, Patricia Ann Wright; District 10, Hilda A. Cool; District 11, Debby Hall; District 12, Nelda Wilson; District 13, Carolyn Vogel; District 14, Robyn Kenney; District 15, Juna Ridenhour, and she also served as our secretary to the Committee; District 16, Florence Swisher; District 17, Jo Anne Hinton; District 18, Carol Goodwin; District 19, Jeannette Carulli; District 20 was

me; District 21, Geraldine Griffin. (Applause) Thank you, ladies. You really did a great job.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER TIDWELL: Madam Commander, I want to say thank you for allowing me to serve as your Mae Holmes Chairman this year. I think we had a really wonderful year. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you, Gertrude. In a few minutes we're going to have a recess, but don't all jump out at one time. You're each going to caucus and you need to let the people know where you're going to be so that they can meet with you and then we'll come back.

Maria said you can meet under your signs. That probably would be the easiest. We're going to recess. We'll come back at 2:00 o'clock today and finish up. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 11:35 o'clock a.m. August 1, 2004.)

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION

AUGUST 1, 2004

The Second Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Reno Ballroom of the Reno Hilton, Reno, Nevada, Sunday morning, August 1, 2004, and was called to order at 2:05 o'clock p.m. by National Commander Janet W. Bennett.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Please be seated. If we can get through this afternoon, we can have four hours off tomorrow before the "Forget-me-not" Luncheon, but we need to get through today.

We will continue with the reports. We still have two to do. One is the History Chairman, Kay Egan. Are you in the room? Please come up.

MRS. KAY EGAN: Good afternoon, ladies.

(Responses of "Good afternoon.)

MRS. EGAN: Are you all settled firmly in your seats?

(Responses of "Yes.")

MRS. EGAN: Good. Let's proceed with the proceedings. I was lucky enough to be the History Chairman this year and had a marvelous time collecting pictures, and right now I want to thank everyone who sent me pictures for Jan's book.

The next fun thing I did was be part of the judging, and I would like at this point to introduce the chairman of our History Book Committee, Judith Lenhart from Ohio. (Applause)

MRS. JUDITH LENHART: Good afternoon, ladies.

(Responses of "Good afternoon.)

MRS. LENHART: National State Department History Book Committee Convention report. National Commander, National Adjutant, National Officers, Past National Commanders, Delegates and guests of this 82nd National Auxiliary Convention, the National State Department History Book Convention Committee met in the Shasta 2 at 1:30 on July 31st, 2004.

Our advisor was Kay Egan. Our secretary was Geneva "Peggy" Jackson. First of all, I want to mention we had seven books submitted this year, and I'd like to mention those states: Alabama, Arizona, California, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Texas.

And they were all excellent books. They all did a wonderful job. They were very neatly done. We were all very impressed by all of them and we thank them for all the work that they put in those books because that's a real job.

And without further ado, we'll say the National State Department History Book Award this year goes to the State

Department of Texas. (Applause) The State History Book Chairman for Texas was Anita Cox, if they would come forward.

And while they're coming up, we're going to go through the recommendations from the Committee. One was that the winning book be displayed for the remainder of this National Convention so that everyone can see what work these ladies do. This was a tremendous book.

Also, they would like for it to be brought up at Fall Conference, a decision on the judgment of one- or two-sided pages in these books because it is really not mentioned in the rules.

Also, the Committee would like to see a copy of the judging tally sheets for each state book put in each losing book so that they can see where improvements could be made next year in their book. They think that would be very helpful.

I would like to recognize the people that were on this Committee:

District 1, Maxine Tapley of Massachusetts; District 2, Anita Ingram of New York; District 3, Ann Shatz of Rhode Island; District 4, Dorothy Kashner of Delaware; we had no one from District 5; District 6, Naomi Bethea of Virginia; District 7, June Cormier of Florida; District 8, Geneva Jackson of Alabama; District 9, Margaret Snelling of North Carolina; District 10, Ethel Stafford of Michigan; District 11 was myself from Ohio; District 12, Carol Lawrence of Wisconsin; District 13, Arveeda Gordon of Kentucky; District 14, Sylvia Machler of Montana; District 15, Elaine Regan of Kansas; District 16, Cathleen Corey of California; District 17, Glenna Smith of Colorado; District 18, Janet Pickering of Nevada; District 19, Nancy Chapin of Idaho; District 20, Ruth Ann Gates of Texas; and District 21, Barbara Sharon Eddy of Oklahoma.

I'd like to thank each and every one of your women. You did a wonderful job. (Applause) Thank you.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you. Next can we have the VAVS Chairman. Terri Herrle, please come forward.

MRS. TERESA HERRLE: Good afternoon. Could our chairman Carolyn Cox please come up front. And as Carolyn comes up, Commander Janet, I want to thank you so much for letting me be your VAVS chairman this year.

I have had an absolute ball. Janet was unable to attend the Winter Sports Clinic this year, and I have to tell you that was the highlight of my year was being able to represent the Auxiliary there. It was absolutely amazing. And here's Carolyn.

MRS. CAROLYN J. COX: Thank you. I want to call these ladies names and please stand:

District 1, Barbara DeLuca, Massachusetts; Holly Darfler, New York; Donna Folcarelli, Rhode Island; Sandra Schulman, New Jersey; Ellen Griggs, West Virginia; Barbara May Clark, Florida; Linda Acosta, Louisiana; Aliene Warchak, Georgia; Mary Kabler, Ohio; Gladys Daniels, Michigan; Sharon Carnell, Wisconsin; Irene Eckerle, Indiana; Shirley Vermillion, Montana; Nancy Rigby, Iowa; Leona Galloway, California; Helene Pockrus, Utah; Ruth Ann Tucker, Arizona; Roberta Bishop, Washington; Cynthia Jauregar, Texas; and Carolyn Cox from Arkansas.

We had a really, really good group of ladies in choosing this VAVS. Okay, everybody has seen you all. You all sit down. (Applause) Thank you.

I'm going to change my name next year to Christina Vandigligler so she won't put me on as chairman. (Laughter) I walk in and like all these other ladies, Maria goes through that list and she picks. "She's a good one. She's a good one. She's a good one." (Laughter)

But, anyway, this is the hardest. I have worked on everything I think but this VAVS and I said that's the hardest one I know and I'm going to tackle it this year, and I think next year I'll go back to Mae Holmes. (Laughter)

This is very difficult, and we had a lot of questions. I think it's communication between the Hospital VAVS chairman that's appointed and the Chapter VAVS person that does the reports and the adjutants.

We were confused, a lot of them, on the hours that they could count; if they could count the hours that they worked on projects at home or if only they were in the hospital.

And some of them was thinking that the hospital had something to do with how many hours they were counted for.

I know that there were a lot of problems but as we went through, you probably knew what you put down and what you did, but it was confusing to the graders and we had a lot of questions.

And one of the things that we wanted to ask that we be clarified on maybe was the hours and the amount of money that was spent and whether or not you could say 50 robes at so much money and 100 something else at so much money and have it all on the front of the sheet rather than relist the same thing on the back, so we needed a little bit of clarification.

A lot of groups had lots of donations and they had to list for over the $1,000 where some groups had only four things that they accounted for and to list them on the back, they questioned whether they needed to do that again.

I think it's communication and clarify-cation on all the problems that we encountered, but it was a wonderful group of ladies.

And, also, the hospital, whether it was a VA hospital or one of the outlying VA places, hospitals that you did your work at, be sure that you put the correct name in the correct place. There is a hospital and then there is -- what do they call that -- satellite. Be sure that those are correctly named.

And, after much, much discussion, the Group 1 from 10 to 50 members is Michael J. Thomas Unit 5, Sanford, North Carolina; (Applause)

51 to 100 members, Al Bartrow Jr., Chesterfield, Virginia, Unit 50; (Applause)

Group 3, 100 to 200 members, Santa Bernardino, California, Unit 12; (Applause)

Group 4, 201 members and over, Phoenix, Number 1. (Applause)

I was impressed with so much of the work that the ladies have done. And it has been all morning, as we listened to these awards being given out, it wasn't just one great big one here.

It has been really -- it has been scattered all through and that's great because everybody is doing a lot of work.

And like one of the girls said, we probably needed an honorable mention because they were so close, one couple just got to a fight in there. (Laughter)

It became very difficult to determine just a few points on how well you're doing, and we were so proud of every one of you and to know that we've got that many good ladies out there doing such a tremendous job. We really enjoyed it and appreciated it, thanks. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you. I'd also like to thank all the Units that received awards and the wonderful Auxiliary that does all the work. I'm very proud of all of you as you should be proud of yourselves.

And now we're going to do the second reading of the Constitution and Bylaws. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you notify

Nevada 5 for the Nominating Committee.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: The Nominating Committee is in Nevada 5 and they would like to come down when we start the reading of the Bylaws, so would you have someone call Nevada 5 and tell them we're about to begin. Thank you.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Past National Commander Evelyn Dorsey, please come forward for the Constitution reading, please. We're changing a few things, always. While we're waiting can we have the Education and Loan. Renee Jones, please come forward.

PNC R. RENEE JONES: National Commander, National Officers, Past National Commanders, Delegates, Alternates and guests, the National Education Loan Fund Committee met in Cincinnati, Ohio, on June 15, 2004.

Members present were National Commander Janet Bennett, National Senior Vice Commander Gertrude Tidwell, Immediate Past National Commander Linda Trulio and myself, Renee Jones, as chairman. Also in attendance were National Adjutant Maria Tedrow and National Assistant Adjutant Judy Hezlep.

The Committee reviewed the renewal and new applications. The Committee awarded $43,000 in loans to those who met the eligibility requirements.

The Committee also reviewed the eligibility, guidelines and the application form. The Committee did not make any changes to the eligibility or the form.

Discussion was held as to whether Junior members who have not yet reached the senior membership status would be eligible for the loan.

The Committee agreed that if a Junior member has not reached the senior member status she would be eligible as long as her mother or grandmother is a full paid life member.

Once the Junior member reaches the senior membership age, she would then need to become a full paid life member in order to be considered for a renewal loan the following year or years.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to say thank you to the members, the Units and the Departments who have supported the Education Loan Fund during this year.

Without your support, we would not be able to continue this program. We would like to encourage you to spread the word about the Education Loan Fund.

If there is someone who is eligible, please have them request an application from Auxiliary National Headquarters before the deadline of March 1st.

For those of you who are not familiar with the eligibility, let me share them. The applicant, if eligible, must be a full paid life member of the DAV Auxiliary.

If the applicant is not eligible, the mother must be a full paid life member of the DAV Auxiliary or the grandmother must be a full paid life member of the DAV Auxiliary.

As chairman I would like to say thank you to National Assistant Judy Hezlep for her daily work with the Education Loan Fund. We couldn't do it without you. And thanks also goes to the members who served on the Committee.

It was indeed my pleasure to be the chairman this year of Education Loan Fund. And at this time if any of you have donations that you would like to make, please come forward. Okay, come on, everybody get up. Surely someone won the jackpot and they're ready to donate it. (Laughter)

MRS. NAOMI H. BETHEA: I'm Number 1, sweetie.

PNC JONES: You go right ahead.

MRS. BETHEA: The Department of Virginia would like to present to you $150. (Applause) Oh, I'm Naomi Bethea, Unit 26, Commander, Department of Virginia, DAVA.

PNC JONES: Ladies, please be sure to state your name and

what Unit or Department you're from. Come on up.

MRS. PEGGY L. TRUTTMAN: I'm Peggy Truttman from Carson City, Unit 7, and this is from the Department of Nevada. I wish to present you these checks.

PNC JONES: Thank you very much.

MRS. DEBRA LYNN LOETZ: Debbie Loetz from Indiana. The Department of Indiana would like to present a check for the National Education Loan Fund and also for the Women's Service Fund.

PNC JONES: Twenty-five hundred dollars to the Service Fund and $1,000 to Ed Loan. (Applause) Thank you, Indiana.

MRS. ERNESTINE SCHUMANN HEINK: I am the commander of Unit 2, Kansas City, and we would like to donate $300 to the Education and Loan Fund.

PNC JONES: Thank you very much. (Applause)

MRS. AURA LEE NICODEMUS: On behalf of the Department Vermont, I'm Aura Lee Nicodemus. I'd like to present you a check for $200 to the Education Loan Fund, $200 to the Auxiliary Service Support Fund and $75 to the Freedom Foundation. (Applause)

MRS. MARY BIXBY: Mary Bixby, Commander, Department of Massachusetts. I have a check from the Department of Massachusetts for the DAV National Loan Fund for $500 and also a check for $500 from the Department of Massachusetts for the National Service Fund, and my own private check for the National Education Loan Fund. (Applause)

MRS. SARA N. KASHNER: I'm Sara Kashner from First State Unit 1, Delaware. I'm the Commander for First State, and this is a check for the Educational Fund. (Applause)

MRS. JEANETTE M. CARULLI: I'm Jeannette Carulli, Department of Oregon. We have money to spend this year, so I have three larger bonus checks for the Hospitalized Veterans Program, the DAVA Education Fund, and the Financial Assistance Program.

I have our regular, annual donations for the Financial Assistance Fund, the National Education Loan Fund and the Hospitalized Veterans Writing Program. (Applause)

MRS. PEGGY SMITH: Peggy Smith, Depart-ment of Michigan, and I have a check for the National Education Loan Fund and also the Service Support Fund. (Applause)

MRS. FAYE A. LITZINGER: Faye Litzinger, Grand Forks, North Dakota, Unit 2, and I have a check for the National Education Loan Fund and a check for the National Service Project. (Applause)

MRS. ELLEN DROGO: I'm Ellen Drogo from Braintree Unit 29 in Braintree, Massachusetts, and I'm here on behalf of Past Department Commander Margaret, who is ill, in memory of her husband, John, a check for the DAVA Service Fund, a check in memory of her sister, Past National Commander Florence Daley, for the Freedom Foundation, and a check in memory of Phyllis Greaney for the DAVA Education Loan Fund. (Applause)

MRS. VERA HENDRICKSON: Vera Hendrickson from the Department of Arkansas. I would like to present the check for the Education Loan and the Service Support Fund. (Applause)

MRS. HELEN MAZZA: Hi, I'm Helen Mazza from the Department of New York. I have for National Service Fund a check for $602 and for the National Ed Loan, $502. Thank you. (Applause)

MRS. PAULINE COUSINS: Pauline Cousins, the State Commander of Pennsylvania. I have three checks: Freedom Foundation, $75; National Education Fund, $75; and the National Service Fund, $250. (Applause)

MRS. JACQUELINE HANSEN: Hello, I'm Jackie Hansen from the State of Ohio, and we have two checks, one for the Education and

Loan Fund and the Service Support Fund from the Department. Thank you. (Applause)

MRS. JEANNE GIDEON: I'm from the Depart-ment of New Hampshire, Jeanne Gideon. We have a check for the Service Fund and for the Education Fund. (Applause)

MRS. MARNA BARNSHAW: Marna Barnshaw and I have a check from the Department of Florida for the National Service and Support Fund. (Applause)

MRS. JAXENE JARVIS: Jackie Jarvis for the Department of Iowa. I've got a check for the Hospital Writing Fund, the Freedom's Foundation, Education Loan, and Service Project. Thank you. (Applause)

MRS. ANNIE F. KRAUSE: I'm Annie Krause from the Department of Georgia. I have a check for the National Education Loan Fund, National Department Service Fund, Hospitalized Veterans Writing Program, and the Freedom's Foundation Fund. (Applause)

MRS. PATRICA A. HICKS: I'm Patricia Hicks from the Department of Alabama and I have a check for the National Education Fund. (Applause)

MRS. ANNIE ROSE CAMERON: Annie Cameron, Department of Washington. This is McKenna Williams who is one of our new Junior girls, Unit 32.

And we would like to donate $20 to the -- turn loose, baby (Laughter) -- to the Disabled Veterans Winter Sports. And she came all the way from California to be my flower girl today. She's my great granddaughter. (Applause)

MRS. NANCY E. CHAPIN: Nancy Chapin from the Department of Idaho. I have a check for the Education Fund and also for the Support Program. (Applause)

MRS. JENNIE BIZON: Jennie Bizon from New Jersey and I'd like to give a personal check in memory of my sisters and brothers, a DAVA-er from Day One, for the Service Fund.

MRS. ARVEEDA GORDON: Arveeda Gordon, Department of Kentucky. The Department of Kentucky has a check for the DAV Service Foundation and a check for the DAV Education Fund. (Applause)

PNC EVELYNNE DUNN: Unit 13 from Las Vegas, Nevada; Women's Service, $150; Ed Loan, $75; Freedom's Foundation $75. Thank you.

PNC JONES: Thanks again to each of you. We take IOUs and any little amount or any big amount that you're willing to give, credit cards, (laughter), anything that you're willing to give because any small amount goes a long way to help those in need. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you, everyone. There's a lady in here that just got married. Annie, are you still here? Stand up. She just got married. Congratulations. (Applause) Thank you.

And now we're going to have the second reading of the Constitution and Bylaws, Evelyn Dorsey. Has the Nominating Committee come in the room yet?

(Responses of "No, not yet.")

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS DONNA L. HORTON: Yes, they went down to tell them to come up. They were in the middle of interviewing somebody and then they were going to come up.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Let's do a couple door prizes. Everybody got their tickets? Maria is going to tell you about the stupidest question she ever heard at the office. Maria.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: I was out of the office and Judy took this call. When I came back and she told me, I said, "I can't believe it." We'd been busy with reports and the reports are important to a lot of the Units because it shows how much work they did.

But the call was from a state which I will not identify, from a Unit which I will not identify, from a member which I will not identify. (Laughter)

And the question was this, "Can we take the hour that we watched President Reagan's funeral and put it on our reports?" (Laughter) And as I said, we heard a lot of questions but that was an original.

And so until we top it, and I hope to gosh we never do, (laughter) that's going to stand as the Number 1 question coming into National Headquarters concerning reports. (Laughter)

COMMANDER BENNETT: That's interesting. While we're waiting for the Nominating Committee to come in, I'd like Maria to come back up here for just a second.

Without this lady, I would not have made it this year. I couldn't have done it on my own, and she helped me in many, many ways. I am so very grateful for her because there was a time I was thinking about I'm going to have to give it up because I just can't do it. But then she told me, no, that she would help me.

And, believe me, she has helped me. And for all that you have done for me, Maria, I probably could never repay you, but I thank you so very much and I'd like to give you a little gift, just from me to you.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Thank you. (Applause) I want to say at this time that Jan gave me every bit as much this year as I gave her through her bravery and her willingness to accept the responsibility. Thank you, Jan. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Well, they haven't come in yet so let's do a little song. Do you want to sing? Oh, no, I'm sorry. See, I don't think real well. We're going to do the door prizes, two door prizes. Yes, ma'am.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HORTON: The Nominating Committee just arrived.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Forget the door prizes, we'll do them later.

PNC DORSEY: While they're being seated, I'll just tell you how we're going to do this, this time.

I'll remind you, I will be reading each article or section in its entirety and then we will open it up for the vote or questions as we go along.

In other words, looking at Page 1, I will not stop at Section 1 or at Section 2. I will read the whole Article III and then open it up for discussion. Yes, we will adopt the whole article and not by section. Madam Commander, there is someone at the mike.

PNC JONES: We can't hear you.

PNC DORSEY: You can't? I will speak louder, I promise. This is the second and final reading of the proposed amendments to the National Constitution and Bylaws as submitted by the Interim Constitution and Bylaws Committee for 2004.

National Constitution, Article III, Eligibility for Membership. Delete entire Article III and substitute the following article:

Article III, Eligibility for Membership:

Section 1: The spouse, surviving spouse, parents, siblings, children, grandparents, grand-children and great grandchildren of any person eligible or any deceased person who was eligible for Disabled American Veterans membership are eligible for membership in the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

Section 2: Children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren of members of the Auxiliary who are not otherwise eligible for membership are eligible for membership in the

Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

Section 3: Any person who is eligible for membership in the Disabled American Veterans is also eligible for membership in the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

A member eligible for membership in both the parent organization and the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary shall not be eligible to vote nor hold any office, elective or appointive, and/or chairmanship in the Auxiliary while holding any office, elective or appointive, and/or chairmanship in the Disabled American Veterans.

Section 4: The spouse, surviving spouse, parents, siblings, children, grandparents, grand-children, and great grandchildren of any person who was injured or disabled while serving with any of the armed forces of the nations associated with the United States of America and therefore eligible for membership in the Disabled American Veterans and who was honorably discharged and who became an American citizen are also eligible.

Section 5: The surviving spouse, parents, siblings, children, grandparents, grand-children and great grandchildren of any person who has since died of injury, wounds, or disability received in eligible service, as in Section 1 above, are eligible for membership in the Auxiliary.

Section 6: The Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary shall not have honorary members.

Madam Commander, I move for the adoption of this Article III.

MRS. KATHY L. HICKE: Madam Commander, Kathy Hicke, District 12, Unit 14, Wisconsin. I second that motion.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Is there any discussion? Any discussion? Yes, ma'am.

MRS. DOLORES HUFF: Dolores Huff from Kentucky. We were looking at Section 3 where it states "any person who is eligible for membership in the DAV is also eligible for membership in the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary." Do we need to have that clarified stating male or female?

(Responses of "No.)

COMMANDER BENNETT: I don't think so. No.

MRS. HUFF: Then it is open for the males to join the Auxiliary?

(Responses of "Yes.")

MRS. HUFF: We now have what they call the "marriage" between male and male and female and female. Does that interfere with what our amendments are?

COMMANDER BENNETT: Maria is going to come up for a minute, please.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: First of all, we don't like to go that route. What we are saying is right now if it is a male-male or a female-female, we would handle it the same way as we do common law.

Common law is legal in some states and therefore if they fill out an application and they put that person down as their wife, we have to accept it because the federal government does.

Now, as far as male-male, female-female, that's not the intent of this. The intent of this is right now Auxiliary members who have been in the service and are eligible for the DAV can now be a member of both sides of the organization.

All we're saying here is the same thing, only we're saying any person who is eligible, so a DAV member could now be eligible in the Auxiliary.

But if you go further down to the next paragraph, you will see that even if they are eligible, we are restricting their privileges, which has not been done before.

PNC DORSEY: Yes, ma'am.

MRS. BOBBE MORGAN: Yes, District 19, Bobbe Morgan, Unit 46, Tri-Cities, Washington State. District 19 would like to vote to amend Article III, Section 2 to include stepchildren because so many families are blended families now.

If the wife joins the DAVA, the children will be eligible for juniors and we need them for our seniors later. I have all the signatures of District 19.

Stepchildren are left out of this, but you have to remember when you marry again, you're getting more children. And if they are eligible and the wife is eligible for the first time and if it's the husband's children, they should be eligible, see.

So it's just if they're not, then are they with the wife? You have to bring in the family sometime because not everybody stays married to the same spouse all the time. That's a question that we have. What about the stepchildren because we have a lot of stepchildren.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Right now we accept stepchildren if they meet this criteria, if they meet this criteria. If a DAV member, a member, a veteran, a male veteran belongs to the DAV, and he has a wife, and they are her children, but they're not his, they're his stepchildren, he has not legally adopted them or anything else, they're just his stepchildren, and they're her children, if she joins the Auxiliary, they are eligible through her.

And it would be the same thing with this. If you have a DAV member and he wants to join the Auxiliary, then his children would be eligible through him. We're still at the same thing. We'd still accept it that way.

Okay, do any of you understand what I'm saying?

(Responses of "Yes.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Thank you.

MRS. MIRIAM A. DALEY: Miriam Daley, Unit 27. Just one point on that, Maria, she is eligible. Even though she's not a member, they can join through her eligibility, even if she doesn't join.

I must commend the Interim Committee for going through this thing. I don't know whether I've been living under a rock or what but is this something that is mandated by National DAV or is this something that we have to do ourselves to let men of all ages into this? Why is it deemed so necessary?

ADJUTANT TEDROW: First of all, let me explain something. Good question, Miriam. Why didn't she sit down? (Laughter)

MRS. DALEY: I might have another comment and I couldn't get back up.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: You can only speak once. Okay, it is a good question. First of all, as you know, a couple years ago the DAV took the word "Women's" out of their constitution.

As long as that word was there, then our membership was limited to the female gender. But when they removed that little word "women's" out of their constitution, then we no longer had that whatever it was, wall.

So, we are the ones that put the eligibility in our constitution. We were the ones that specified mother, sister, et cetera.

When they took that out - and it took them I think twice to go try for ratification. And if we adopt it right now, say it's approved today, it still is not law until the Units ratify it because this is in the constitution, and a ballot has to go out to every Unit, and it has to be ratified. The DAV did it twice.

But the reason is the pressure that more and more women -- I think right now on the DAV list there are better than 40,000 women veterans, disabled women veterans.

And the push is coming, why can't our spouse be eligible because we are the disabled and they are the caretakers. Now, there are lawsuits. One has lost. A Unit has already lost, at least that's what I've been told. It has been costly.

We would have had a pretty good excuse of saying we're at least trying but we didn't bring it up, it was tabled last year.

Now, this is not the only case right now. There are a couple others pending. I don't know what's going to happen. So we've got to make some kind of a decision.

But, I'm just saying that it has gotten to the place now where as you know people sue for no reason at all.

This one suit may spread to other Units, and they will be tested. And they're not suing the DAV; they are suing the Auxiliary. So, that's why I say this has been brought up on the floor right now.

Do we want to realize that we do have to look forward to the future and see that we have to be like the DAV who has accepted women veterans right along? Have I answered your question, Miriam?

MRS. DALEY: Almost.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Oh, good.

MRS. DALEY: If you were taking it to court and you've --

ADJUTANT TEDROW: I didn't take it to court.

MRS. DALEY: Okay, by going to court and losing, can we now say, yes, we've tried and we've lost, and it will probably cut down on some of these cases or is that going to make it worse?

ADJUTANT TEDROW: I don't know. I'm just saying that we haven't even made an attempt. And, like I said, even though it's approved here in whatever form you approve it, it doesn't mean that it's going to be law because we have to go through things just like the DAV did.

You can adopt here by a majority vote but it is still up to the Units to ratify. It took the DAV two tries to get it done. And if we lose here, I can rest assured it's going to come out again.

I don't know what's going to happen to these cases that are pending. That's all I can say. That's why we're bringing it forward on the floor. Like I said, people were expecting it to come on the floor last year, and it never made it.

It was tabled. It should not have been tabled. It should have come out on the floor last year. It might have prevented some of the ones that look like they are going to finally sue from doing it.

MRS. NANCY CHAPIN: Nancy Chapin, Commander, State of Idaho. I have a question in the old book. Section VI is Gold Star's Relatives, a person eligible for Disabled American Veterans membership: widows, mothers, sisters, daughters grandmothers, granddaughters and great granddaughters are eligible for membership in the Auxiliary. Are we eliminating that?

PNC DORSEY: No, it's really redundant. We are still referring to widows, we're just not referring to them as "Gold Star."

MRS. CHAPIN: Oh, okay. Thank you.

PNC DORSEY: But it's still included.

MRS. MARGARET SIMPSON: Margaret Simpson, Cape Cod, Unit 96. I have a question on Section III here where I'm a veteran and I have a claim in. If it gets passed, I am thinking about joining the DAV but remaining active in the Auxiliary because that has been what I've done all these -- it quit. Can you hear me?

(Responses of "No.)

MRS. SIMPSON: Can you hear me? Okay, thank you.

PNC DORSEY: Identify yourself again, please.

MRS. SIMPSON: I'm Margaret Simpson, Unit 96, Massachusetts. I'm thinking about joining the DAV is my disability comes through, but I want to remain active in the DAVA because that's what I've always done. What I'm wondering on Section III here is it says here I always knew that I could do both sides if I wanted to but not hold an office on both sides at the same time.

This says that, okay, I'm not eligible to vote or hold an office. Is it basically the same thing?

PNC DORSEY: Basically.

MRS. SIMPSON: It's all the same thing but it looks like it's a little bit more sticky, though, this new one. It's the same thing exactly?

PNC DORSEY: It's the exact same thing. You can belong on both sides but you can only be active on one side.

MRS. SIMPSON: That's what it was on --

PNC DORSEY: Yes, and that's the way it's always been.

MRS. SIMPSON: That's the same thing. Okay, thank you.

MRS. ROBERTA A. BISHOP: Hi, Robbi Bishop, Unit Number 4, Washington. I understand your clarification on stepchildren, but I have an example for you.

I have a girlfriend that does not qualify any other way than a step-parent. She wants to belong really, really bad but her mother refuses to join.

So, that's why it was important for the stepchild to be brought up because she would be a real asset to our Unit in our state, and unfortunately because of that she cannot belong.

I have beat my head up against the wall trying to figure out a way and I can't.

PNC DORSEY: Yes, I was going to say is there any reason why someone couldn't prevail upon the mother to join in order for her daughter to become eligible? She doesn't have to become active, just join. And maybe a Unit or friends or family could pay her membership.

MRS. BISHOP: Well, it was suggested that the daughter go ahead and pay her membership and just not tell her, but financially that's not feasible for her right now to do both, to pay her mother's and hers.

PNC DORSEY: What about the Unit that the daughter is interested in joining?

MRS. BISHOP: Okay, I will take that suggestion back. Thank you very much.

PNC DORSEY: There is more than one way to skin a cat. (Laughter) Yes, ma'am.

MRS. MELVA J. MATLACK: I'm Melva Matlack, Unit 41, New Jersey. I'm not hearing you say that the mother has to join before the children are eligible.

If I'm hearing that, then why don't we take out grandparents and great grandchildren in Section 1? Am I hearing you say now in your discussions that the parent has to be a member before the children if they're of age be a member? I'm not hearing you say that.

PNC DORSEY: We were talking about stepchildren then. Yes, let's make this clear. If you have your old book, you can follow along with us and you'll see really that this is really no different other than the substitution of the word "spouse" and "parents" and grandparents." There is no difference in what was already printed and in force.

MRS. MATLACK: So if the stepchildren are not eligible through the step-parent, there are very, very few families in this world that haven't been touched by war, and that would certainly eliminate it.

Why would they have to go on or try to get there under the eligibility of the step-parent? There is no reason why they can't find in their history a grandfather or a great grandfather or someone that has had service.

Why must it always be through the step-parent attempting to get membership for their children? Are you hearing what I'm saying? Am I not being clear?

PNC DORSEY: Not to me, but I'm going to defer.

MRS. LUCILLE McCARTHY: Stepchildren would be -- you would have to be related to the parents, not to the grandparents. You're addressing step children.

MRS. MATLACK: But they would not be eligible under their grandparents?

MRS. McCARTHY: No, they're not stepchildren of the grandparents. They're stepchildren of their mother and father.

MRS. MATLACK: All right, but they are grandparents -- I mean, they're grandchildren of somebody's grandparents out there. Couldn't they encompass the whole thing?

MRS. McCARTHY: I would think that you would have to individually discuss or consider each case as far as a stepchild, and you would have to define eligibility individually. You cannot make a blanket statement.

MRS. MATLACK: That's what I'm saying, though, individually.

MRS. McCARTHY: And I think we've had the process very clearly and properly over the years. I think Maria has given a very good example, and so I really don't know how much further we can go on this as far as addressing stepchildren.

MRS. MATLACK: Yes, they could be covered by someone else. Thank you very much.

PNC DORSEY: Nancy.

MRS. NANCY COULOMBE: Nancy Coulombe, Cape Cod, 96, Massachusetts. I'd like to speak to the issue of the men joining the Auxiliary, which is basically what that is saying.

It was brought very clearly to me at an installation this year. I looked at the new officers being installed, and two of them were women, line officers.

And I said to a group of people, I said, "It's time to look at this" because a couple of reasons, Number 1, what Maria has said about the lawsuit. It is basically we were open to that discrimination suit.

But one of the things that can happen if we don't adopt this and we don't understand that it is time to move forward on this, the men, themselves, could decide to have an auxiliary of sorts or some sort of a branch off of their own parent organization and we, then, would lose the membership.

This is a great opportunity for membership because we can bring in all of our sons and all of our grandsons. (Applause) I think we need to really look at this.

It would not have been my first choice as an Auxiliary member, but I believe that it is time because of the fact that we have women in combat now and so many that will be looking for the eligibility. And it will increase our membership. Thank you.

PNC DORSEY: Thank you.

MRS. DOROTHY M. VAN HOY: Dorothy Van Hoy, Past National Commander. It is working?

PNC DORSEY: I can hear you; get closer.

MRS. VAN HOY: Dorothy Van Hoy, Past National Commander. I'd like to clear something. In Section III, Paragraph 2, it says a member eligible for a membership in both the parent organization and the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary shall not be eligible to vote or hold an office. How come they can't

vote in both. If they are an active member in both organizations, can they vote?

PNC DORSEY: It's not allowed now.

MRS. VAN HOY: Our Constitution and Bylaws doesn't say it isn't. They can't hold an office, but it doesn't say they can't vote, unless I'm missing it.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Dorothy, it may not say that, but we've always said that members can't belong to more than one -- they can belong to all the states they want to, they can only vote in one state.

So what they're doing is saying, okay, here's an organization, you cannot be split. These two organizations are going to be very tied together.

So what they're saying is that you've got to choose. In other words, this will open it up to all DAV members to join.

They will belong to this so they can come into your Unit, into the Unit, and vote the way they feel the DAV would want them to vote and then go back into the Chapter and vote too, so that's what we're prohibiting.

They can vote but they've got to pick the side of the organization they want to do it to. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENNETT: In the Convention Rules it says, Number 6, I can't read it but maybe somebody else can, right there.

MRS. DALEY: I know I shouldn't be up here twice, but I want a clarification on your answer because I think I got a wrong answer. Can I make believe I'm somebody else?

PNC DORSEY: Can you have someone else present that, Miriam, so we'll be in conformance with our Convention Rules.

And what we're referring to is Rule Number 6 of our National Convention Rules. It says, "Recognition shall be granted only once to any one speaker on any one subject."

MRS. GLORIA FOLLIS: Gloria Follis, Unit 27. My question is this, a man marries a woman. The woman has two children. She does not chose to join, but her children may be because she is eligible, even though she didn't join.

PNC DORSEY: That eligibility is not viable until she joins. She has to join in order for the children to be --

MRS. FOLLIS: All you have to do is be eligible.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: That's true with the DAV, not for the Auxiliary. Let's stop and think of the two organizations. Our organization says that a woman can join the Auxiliary if she has an eligibility through the DAV.

But we don't say a thing about children are eligible through their mother if she is eligible. We don't accept any children now, Miriam, that come in and say, "My mother is eligible but she doesn't want to join." All primary eligibilities originate through the parent organization.

We have always insisted that membership be established. If you don't, you're going to have all kinds of juniors for your membership and no involvement.

MRS. FLORENCE MERRIFIELD: Madam Chair-man, Florence Merrifield from Kentucky, Past Department Commander, and Unit 6. These ladies that are -- can't hear me?

These ladies that have served and are married, I can understand why they would like for their husbands to be an Auxiliary member. Why can't these ladies encourage their husbands to form an Auxiliary of an organization which would be the males?

(Responses of "No.)

MRS. McCARTHY: This was one of the questions brought up at our last Convention, National Convention, at the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. There were certain questions we had to have clarified by the parent organization.

I don't have the letter here with me, but it was definitely stated by the parent organization that we cannot have another auxiliary, that they do not allow it (applause) and also that they will not establish another auxiliary.

The parent organization will not, so, therefore, it means that we're going to have to include it in our eligibility, period. They have no choice.

If you're going to include the spouses and the male children, it has to be included in our eligibility and not by forming another auxiliary.

MRS. MERRIFIELD: Thank you for your clarification.

PNC DORSEY: Yes, ma'am.

MRS. ANNABELL RAULERSON: Madam Chairman, my name is Annabell Raulerson. I am from District 7, Unit 11, Clearwater, Florida. I think everyone understands that what we are presenting here today is the fact that we would like males or females to join the Auxiliary as long as there is an established disabled American veteran, either male or female, who is in the DAV.

I think everyone understands that's what we're saying so what we're asking is a family member, as it says, a spouse, parent, siblings, children, so forth, I think that's all understood so can we go ahead and have a vote. (Applause)

PNC DORSEY: It has been motioned and seconded that we adopt Article III, Eligibility for Membership.

CHAIRMAN BENNETT: Would all the registered Delegates please stand up. If you don't have your badge, you've got to have it on. If you don't have it, you can't vote.

How many don't have it with them? Oh, you have it right there. Everybody understand that? Put the badges on if you have them. You can take it off after that, but put it on so we can see it. Thank you.

The reason this is important, it may avoid a roll call so would some of the Pages take a look and make sure that everybody has it on. You need to put it on. Okay everyone, sit down one more time. Ready for the vote?

(Responses of "Yes.)

COMMANDER BENENTT: All those in favor of adopting this, please rise; all those opposed, please rise. The majority rules; the motion is passed. (Applause)

PNC DORSEY: Moving right along, Page 2.

Page N-25, Article VII, Membership, Section 5: Membership Classification, B. Life Membership, Paragraph 4, delete entire Paragraph 4 and substitute the following:

Effective July 1, 2005, Life Membership fees shall be as follows: Age 18 through 30, $250.00; 31 to 45, $230.00; 46 through 60, $200.00; 61 through 70, $180.00; 71 or over, $140.00. Minimum down payment is $40.00. Birth date must be indicated on the membership application.

Notwithstanding anything in this Article to the contrary, upon attaining the age of 80, no person eligible for membership shall be required to pay either initial dues or the balance due of an existing account and shall be immediately declared a member for life in the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

Madam Commander, I move for the adoption of this paragraph.

MRS. JEANNE KAY LePORTE: Madam Commander, Jeanne LePorte, Unit 30, New York. I second the motion.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Do I have any discussion?

MRS. RICHARD: Madam Commander, Gertie Richard, Unit 17 from Louisiana. I second the motion.

MRS. BARBARA A. WILLIAMS: Madam Chairman, my name is Barbara Williams and I'm from Unit Number 10 in Augusta,

Georgia.

The Ninth District would like to amend Page N-25, Article 7, Section 5 under the Membership Classification B. Life Membership, Paragraph 4, to read:

Effective July 1, 2005, the Life Member-ship fees shall be as follows: Age 18 to 30 will be $200.00; age 31 through 45 will be $180.00; age 46 to 60, be $160.00; from Age 61 to 70, be $140.00; and from age 71 and over, to be $100.00, with the minimum down payment at $30.00.

And the rationale is be to keep the membership low enough for every eligible member to join.

MRS. NICODEMUS: Aura Lee Nicodemus, Department of Vermont. I would second that.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Okay, the change has been made and seconded, but I'd like to say something. Life Membership Fund is slowly depleting.

There is a little clause in our Bylaws that says that we will pay distribution to the States and to the Units and to National for as long as the member lives.

Now, we have broken this down or the Committee has broken this down into five categories, which is even more fair than the DAV. But we are in the price range of the DAV and we always run into trouble when the DAV raises theirs, and there is some confusion.

Right now we are getting all kinds of inquiries. Have you raised your life membership? They expect it. But, getting back to life membership right now, we distributed $2 million this year and last year on life memberships, $1 million once a year.

We now have approximately $5 million in our life membership because we are not getting money. We are not getting interest on our money. You guys know. You go to the bank, you see what you're getting.

Now some interesting facts that came out that I had done before we came to this Convention was our life members. We have 46,000-plus life members 80 years of age or over.

We have some that are still 110 years of age. Now, I don't know about you but I'm kind of dubious about members where they're 110 years of age. I also asked for 90 to 95. And we have better than 36,000 in that price range or age range, and we have quite a few that are 120 years of age.

Now, guess what, members and Units are not reporting their deceased. Now I can tell you what I'm going to do when we get back to National Headquarters.

I'm going to get a listing of all these members that are 90 and 95 years of age and we're going to send out letters. And if they come back "deceased", you can bet your life you're going to lose members, because we cannot continue to pay out of that life membership, you know, on people that aren't even here.

We are good enough to pay label money to you on deceased people. We've cleaned the deceased out on July the 1st. But we're paying money on the Label Program to the State Departments on deceased.

But what I am saying is that the term says that distribution will be made on life membership from the Life Membership Fund. Now, we're talking about new members. This is not going to grandfather anybody.

This is not going to go back and say, okay, you owe this much additional, but we're going to have to put some blood in that life membership.

Once the Life Membership Fund is depleted, there will be no distributions, period, even though it says we will pay on the term of the member's lifetime.

If you don't have the money, you can't pay it. The Interim

Committee thought this breakdown was a reasonable breakdown because the DAV has four categories. We're giving five categories.

We're also giving a chance for anybody that starts a part life and hits that 80-year-old mark, that even if she has only paid in $50, she's a life member.

You will not get distributions from her. The only distribution you will get from her is if she has paid in $50; and she automatically becomes a life member because of her age, you will continue to get the distribution until the $50 is gone.

From that time on, you will never get any more distribution on her. And it's the same way with these complimentary members that are 80 years of age.

I was asked the question does this mean annual members, and it does not mean annual members. It's talking about part life and initial members.

But that's why we're doing this. Nobody likes to raise things, but, people, God bless them, are living longer. You know, we're living longer.

When these amounts were first put in, we raised it a couple years ago because the DAV raised it. We went for years and never raised it, and the Life Fund is now beginning to really show it.

The Interim Committee thought, well, let's at least break it down in five parts, and it requires a $40 down payment. You'll still get billed every three months. That's all I have to say on the subject. Thank you.

PND DORSEY: Yes, ma'am.

MRS. ANN M. SCHATZ: Ann Schatz from the State of Rhode Island. I'm from a small state and from New England, and I'm against raising the rates at this time.

We're trying to increase our membership and we're not going to be able to do it with new rates at the same time, so we really want to keep them steady so that we can get the membership in. (Applause)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: This will not take effect for one year, and it's about time that some of the State Departments got busy with a membership drive.

Send out a notice saying, "Big sale." Women love sales. "You can save $100 if you join today." You've got a year to do it. You've got a year to do it. Okay? (Applause)

MRS. JARVIS: Jackie Jarvis, Department of Iowa. We're talking $40 to sign up if we go with this. Forty dollars, that's less than a can of pop a week, and at this hotel you could pay for it in six months. (Laughter)

I don't think these number are out of line. We are here for a purpose and I think it's worth every bit of it. (Applause)

PNC DORSEY: Thank you for your comments.

MRS. CAROLINE M. WESSING: Yes, Caroline Wessing from Unit Number 2, Missouri. My question is you have 71 or over, $140, is that a typo? Should it be 71 to 79, because you're saying that 80 -- I thought you said at 80, that they would have their dues --

ADJUTANT TEDROW: If they're an annual and don't want -- you know, if they're still paying annual dues, it would still include the 80 or over. We're just saying 71 and over.

MRS. WESSING: It's on the life membership.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: We're just saying 71 and over. We're not making that distinction of 79. The system will do that.

MRS. WESSING: Oh, okay.

MRS. JOANNE D. LAWS: Joanne Laws, Unit 19, Northern Kentucky. There is nothing in the Constitution and Bylaws that

say that you cannot have a bake sale or some kind of a fundraiser to help pay for the little bit extra that you would be paying for the new life membership amounts.

It would be very simple for you to have some kind of a membership drive and then help the ladies pay for it by having a fundraiser. Am I correct?

PNC DORSEY: That's a good suggestion. Thank you. (Applause)

MRS. SIMPSON: Margaret Simpson, Unit 96, Massachusetts. I think when I look at these figures I think the problem is an increase is I think very -- it's appropriate right now.

We haven't had an increase in a long time and it's appropriate. My only problem is when I first looked at it, it's a bit of a shock to the system. It's a large amount.

We're increasing a large amount. And that's the problem that I ran into when I first looked at it. It is a large amount.

I was wondering is there any way logically to increase maybe one step and then the next year increase another step to get to this amount?

(Responses of "No.)

MRS. SIMPSON: There isn't? We have to go this large amount right away? Okay, that's the only thing I wanted to ask. Thank you.

MRS. McCARTHY: That would mean also that you would have to bring it up at each Convention, also. It would be just like amending the Bylaws at each Convention and new applications, Maria says.

MRS. COULOMBE: Nancy Coulombe, Cape Cod 96, just one comment on that amount. I think, ladies, you will find that people will use that for an excuse for not joining. People will always find the money to do that which they want to do, so that's for the most part.

My other thought on this is the Units, if the Units could agree to pick up a portion of that or all of it for their first year, even individuals that might band together to pick up, donate $10 or something, but there is no reason that we shouldn't have this increase. It's a very reasonable amount.

MRS. McCARTHY: You do have an amendment on the floor that is a motion that has been made and seconded, and I think there should have been enough discussion on that particular amendment, unless -- does yours refer to that particular amendment?

MRS. JOANNE C. JOHNSON: Yes. I'm Joanne Johnson from Unit 128, Texas. I stand in support of the lady who spoke that it's already difficult to get people to join for the prices that we have.

This price, if it is approved, will not go into effect until July 2005. Also in July 2005 I expect that we will have many new memberships from the males that are coming into the DAVA (applause) which will offset the increase that is proposed.

And, also, we now will not have to spend money for attorney fees because we have approved this section. (Laughter) I stand for leaving the membership fees as they are at this time.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Are you ready to vote on the amendment?

MRS. McCARTHY: No, this is the amendment that was made to the original amendment, all right, the Age 18 through 30 -- what you're voting on is the amendment that was made by Georgia, changing the 18 to 30 would read $200.00; 31 to 45 would be $180.00; 46 to 60 $160.00; 61 to 70 would be $140.00; and 71 and older would be $100.00. The down payment would be $30.00. A motion has been made and has been seconded.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Are you ready to vote on the amendment? Okay, to this one that she just read. Not the one that she

read, the one that she read. Okay, I'll call for the vote. All in favor; opposed. Okay, the amendment is lost.

MRS. McCARTHY: Now that amendment was lost, so now what you're going to vote on is the one that you have in your hands now and the one that was read by Evelynne Dorsey.

You are now voting on the one that you have printed. You're voting on the:

Effective July 1, 2005, Life Membership fees shall be as follows: Age 18 to 30, $250.00; 31 to 45, $230.00; 46 to 60, $200.00; 61 to 70, $180.00; 71 or over, $140.00. Minimum down payment is $40.00. The birth date must be indicated on the membership application.

And you're also voting on:

Notwithstanding anything in this Article to the contrary upon attaining the age of 80, no person eligible for membership shall be required to pay either initial dues or the balance due of existing account and shall be immediately declared a member for life in the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

COMMANDER BENNETT: All those in favor; opposed. Okay, let's do this. All those in favor please stand; all those that oppose, please stand. The amendment passes. Thank you. (Applause)

PNC DORSEY: All right, moving right along.

Page N-25, Article VII, Membership, Section 5: Membership Classification, B. Life Membership, Paragraph 6, delete entire paragraph 6 and substitute the following:

Effective July 1, 2005, the following annual distribution shall be made from the Life Membership Fund during the lifetime of a member: $.50 to the Unit; $.50 to the State Department; and $4.00 to National Headquarters.

Provided, however, that unless it is determined by the National Finance Committee that such payments from the Life Membership Fund are not on a sound actuarial basis, based upon an internal audit, the above payment will not be reduced.

Madam Commander, I move for the adoption of this change.

MRS. HICKE: Madam Commander, Kathy Hicke, Unit 14, Wisconsin. I second that motion.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Any discussion? Sorry, I didn't see you.

MRS. LARA: Angela Lara, Unit 11 in New Mexico. I think if we're raising the price on the membership, why are we having to cut how much we're giving back to the Units?

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Because the life membership is very close to being depleted and will be depleted in two years. So to give it a little bit of blood and a little bit of existence, we are lowering this.

That's not saying that in two or three years, that once we built up, that we can't take it up. We have taken it up. We took it up quite a while ago. And now we're just bringing it back down so that life membership will retain some of the funds from the per capita.

Now, on the State level, you're being cut in half. You were getting $1.00. You're going to get $.50. But we're giving you a Label Program. You're getting money from a Label Program that you didn't have before.

On the Unit level we're cutting you by $.50. Okay, but Units have fundraisers. National Headquarters does not have fundraisers, and we're taking the biggest cut of all because we were taking $7.00 and now we're taking $4.00. I think we can all kind of tighten our belt a little bit and see how this goes.

There is nothing that says that once this membership starts to build because, remember, it will distribute on the lifetime

of the member, and that's what we've got to be looking at, how long are these members going to live?

We're looking into the future. Right now let's tighten our belt a little bit. National Headquarters doesn't we don't have a fundraiser. We do not have a fundraiser. The State has one because we give them the money.

And Units get approval for fundraisers all the time, so, like I said, we're taking the biggest cut of all, so I would think that hopefully trying to rebuild this fund, that you'll all make the sacrifice. Thank you.

COMMANDER BENNETT: All those in favor; opposed. It carries. Thank you.

PNC DORSEY: Page N-26, Article VII, Membership, Section 5: Membership Classification, C. Members-at-Large, Paragraph 1, Line 5, delete $10 and insert $15. Paragraph 1 would then read:

National Members-at-Large: Provision is hereby made for membership-at-large to a person eligible under Article VII, Section 5.

An annual membership card will be issued upon receipt of a $15.00 payment to National Headquarters. This membership does not count in any state or unit. Effective July 1, 2005.

Madam Commander, I move for the adoption of this paragraph.

MRS. WILLIAMS: Madam Commander, Rose Williams, Wisconsin, Unit 54. I second that motion.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Is there any discussion? All in favor; opposed. Just to break this up a little bit, Maria told me I needed a bar stool. I haven't sat at a bar in 25 years. (Laughter)

PNC DORSEY: Page N-32, Article VIII, Finances, Section 2: Per Capita Tax, Paragraph 2, delete entire paragraph 2 and substitute the following:

The National per capita tax for life members is $4.00, effective July 1, 2005.

Madam Commander, I move for the adoption of the revised Paragraph 2.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Is there any discussion?

MRS. CHRISTINA L. FAIRIN: Madam Commander, Christina Fairin, Young Hill County Chapter, Oregon, Unit 5. I second the motion.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Okay, thank you. All in favor; opposed. Thank you.

PNC DORSEY: Page N-32, Article VIII, Finances, Section 2: Per Capita Tax, Paragraph 3, delete entire Paragraph 3 and substitute the following:

The National per capita tax for junior members is $3.00 effective July 1, 2005.

Madam Commander, I move for the adoption of the revised Paragraph 3.

MRS. MARY K. DYER: Mary Dyer, Unit 17, Louisiana. I second that motion.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Any discussion?

MRS. ANN BLASER YOUNG: Ann Blaser Young, Unit 21, North Carolina. I'd like to amend that to be $1.50.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Okay, thank you, we have some others.

MRS. LOUISE BARRETT: Louise Barrett, Unit 40, Massachusetts. We pay for all of our Juniors. You figure if we've got 150 to 200 Juniors, that's quite a bit out of our pocket to pay for these Juniors.

We don't get nothing back for the Juniors. We have to pay in for the Juniors. We have 150 to 200. It's going to -- we're going to have to drop all these Juniors. We're going to lose our membership.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Do you want to answer that?

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Oh, yes, you do, ladies. You get $1.20 back on a Junior this year to the State Department of Massachusetts because it comes from the Label Program. We pay on Juniors. If that's in your membership, we pay on Juniors.

You're talking about a Unit but you say you get nothing back from the Juniors. I'm saying that the State Department certainly does.

MRS. LILLIAM R. HALPIN: Lillian Halpin from Worcester, Unit 4, Massachusetts. I also disagree on raising that to $3.00 because our Unit pays almost $70 for the Junior members, and we don't have enough money in our funds to continue this if it goes up to $3.00.

And then we'll lose all our Juniors because we won't be able to afford to pay the dues.

COMMANDER BENNETT: I'd like to ask you a question. Why are you paying it and not the parents? (Applause)

MRS. HALPIN: Because most of them are all out of staters that are all over the country. They've moved to Florida. They're grandparents, et cetera, that have moved away so that's why we pay them.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Why don't you send them each a letter when it's time to renew? You could send them a letter.

MRS. HALPIN: Yes, we could do that. Okay, thank you.

MRS. ANNIE F. KRAUSE: Annie Krause, Department of Georgia. I second the amendment to change.

COMMANDER BENNETT: We can't hear you. Would you speak a little louder.

MRS. KRAUSE: Annie Krause from the Department of Georgia. I second the amendment.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you.

MRS. DOROTHY JANE CLARK: I am Dorothy Clark, Unit 115 of Ohio. The way I feel about it, I've listened to everything that has been said dealing with the fact that the State needs the money. I understand that.

However, in the situation of our Juniors in the State of Ohio, many Units do pay for their Juniors. We had 33 last year. To up that from $1.00 to $3.00 seems rather drastic to me.

I would propose something moderate such as $2.00 so that Units can get a chance to get used to this increase before you lay on the whole burden of $3.00. Let them get used to it a little bit before you take on a whole 200 percent increase. Thank you.

MRS. COULOMBE: On the $3.00, $3.00 time 33, you're only talking under $100. It's more important that this organization have fiscal soundness. That's the most important thing.

And we're a volunteer organization. If we're talking about $100 or $300-$400-$500, I think each one of us could contribute $5 or $10, as I said on the other thing.

There is no reason for that. It's more important that the parent organization, that our Auxiliary be fiscally sound rather than that we fuss over a couple of bucks apiece.

We're not talking vast amounts of money. And there is no reason why all of the Units should be paying for all of the Juniors. That's their choice, and those that choose to should be donating that money.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you, Nancy. (Applause)

MRS. DEBORAH L. MAZZA: I'm Deborah Mazza. I'm with Unit 11, Grants Pass, Oregon. I agree with this lady here. These kids can go out and pick up cans. Grandparents can pick up cans.

I have seventeen grandchildren. It's hard for me to pay the dollar but, hey, I pay it $5.00 at a time. I pay theirs up

in advance.

There is no reason that I can go to my Unit and ask my Unit to pay my Junior's dues when it's my responsibility as the member of that Unit to pay those dues if I want my kids in that Junior membership. I'm 100 percent behind Juniors. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you.

MRS. MAZZA: I think kids are a very important part of our organization, but it's my responsibility as a member, not my Unit's responsibility.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you very much. (Applause)

MRS. LINDA L. WILSON: My name is Linda Wilson, Unit 7, Carson City. I have a couple of suggestions.

Number 1, the Units that are paying for their Juniors could keep on paying for their Juniors and make up the difference by the Juniors having car washes or providing bake sales or something of that nature to provide the extra money that is needed.

Number 2, the suggestion of writing the letters to the parents to provide the extra funds or -- I lost my train of thought -- or have car washes. Have car washes, think of things that can provide the extra funds needed for the Juniors.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you very much.

MRS. DALEY: Miriam Daley, Seminole 27. I like the idea of $1.50 but if we have prepaid for ten years, are they going to be honored even though there is an increase in the Junior fee?

ADJUTANT TEDROW: I'd like to respond to the $1.50. The Junior application is the most expensive application we have at Headquarters. It is a three-part, carbonated application, and it has a little membership card on it.

It's the only application that we have. A dollar does not cover that application. A dollar twenty-five does not cover that application, so $1.50, to me, is an unrealistic amount.

Now, I want to ask another question -- and I was an adjutant of a Unit and I know. How many Unit adjutants do we have in this room? Now I want all of you to be honest; I know you are.

How many times do the Juniors get that membership card? How many adjutants out there personally put them in an envelope with a $.37 stamp and send it across the country for their Junior, or do they just say in the Units?

And how many of you -- and I love Juniors, believe me, I want to encourage them, but how many of you are just paying for Juniors for quota and you don't even have any Junior activities? (Applause)

You're better off with 3 Juniors in your Unit that are active than 50 of them that you don't even know. (Applause) But $1.50 is an unrealistic amount. It would not even pay for our application, believe me, plus, processing, plus mailing.

And those are no charge to you. You don't pay anything for those applications. We're glad to give them to you. I just wanted to speak on that one that was seconded.

MRS. DENESE M. DEAN: I'm Denese Dean from Unit 30 --

ADJUTANT TEDROW: And you can still pay in advance if you wish to, and it will -- any that are on there, you know, that you can pay in advance now, we're not going to go back and sock you with the additional amount. Anyone that is prepaid now are not going to be affected by this in 2005. Like if you've paid, you can also prepay.

I think you may even be able to pay more than that. So if you've prepaid a Junior for three years -- now listen to me close here. If you've prepaid her for three years and she's under that $1.00, we're not going to come back and bill you in 2005 for those two years that have changed. Do you understand

what I'm saying?

(Responses of Yes.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Okay, that's all I had to say on that amendment over there because $1.50 is not a realistic amount.

PNC DORSEY: Is there any more discussion on the amendment that was made to what I read about the $1.50? Is there any more discussion on that?

MRS. GIDEON: I'm Department State of New Hampshire, Jeanne Gideon. I know a lot of you people have probably big Units, a lot of people helping out, a lot of Juniors helping out, but for us this is just going to let us go one more time maybe to the VA Hospital to help the patients play bingo.

We are a small group and we have a lot of elderly people. Our Unit is not paying the Juniors. Our elderly people who are there are paying their own Juniors, and it's going to be a whack to them to go up.

But $1.50, they probably could do that; but $3.00, no, we won't have no Juniors. A lot of our people are elderly and we are trying to recruit, but it's not getting that better but we're trying. Thank you.

PNC DORSEY: Sylvia.

MRS. SYLVIA L. HEATH: Sylvia Heath, Unit 11, Maine. Whether this fee goes up or not, I'm hearing a lot of people saying, "Why is the Unit paying?"

Well, when you're out trying to get membership and you have some of your people at our states, you say, "Membership, why aren't you signing up your Juniors? Why aren't your Units paying for your Juniors? It's a great way to get membership."

Sign up the Juniors. You've got grandchildren out there. Well, my grandchildren are spread all over the country so they're not going to be doing car washes.

I don't mind that the fee goes up or whatever. I just don't like everybody saying now, "Why are you doing it this way?" Well, we're doing it this way because it was recommended that this was a great way to increase our membership.

PNC DORSEY: And it still is, Sylvia, it still is a great way. We were just throwing out suggestions. Well, but not all Units do that, not all Units do it. Joan.

MRS. FLETCHER: Yes, this is Joan Fletcher, Junior Activities Chairman for National. We charge the $2.00. The $1.00 goes to you; $.50 we keep and $.50 we send to Department.

If you charge $1.00 more, then you could keep the extra $.50 for yourself to help pay for the Juniors if you want to pay. Now our Juniors are active.

We have an active Junior Unit. In fact, the commander is sitting right behind you of these Juniors. They have their own bank account.

They go out and they sell a cake and pie and stuff like that at bake sales and they get their money and they put it in their account, which is held by the Auxiliary.

But there's ways for them to make money. And if you have your Juniors working, you can get so darned proud of them that you'd pay $5.00 because you're proud of what they do and what they're going to grow up to be: Auxiliary members that are going to (applause) be Auxiliary members that some day will be leading this organization. Thank you.

PNC DORSEY: Thank you. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. ELIZABETH?? A. MURBACH: Lisa Murbach, Unit 20, Glendale, Arizona. I have a suggestion to help defray the administrative costs of processing those applications.

Yes, they are a three-part application. Yes, a lot of them do not go out in the mail or are not handed to the person individually.

Okay, so what I am suggesting is to forego that application all entirely and as you have to do a reprint anyway on the new membership applications, to mark it as a Junior Auxiliary membership application and have them check the appropriate box. (Applause)

PNC DORSEY: Yes, that has come up. Thank you. Okay, there is an amendment to the motion that was on the floor.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Are we ready to vote? All in favor. Oh, I'm so sorry, you are voting on the amendment to change it to $1.50, the National Per Capita Tax for Junior members is $1.50 effective July 1, 2005.

All those in favor; opposed. The motion is lost. Okay, here is the other one.

The National Per Capita Tax for Junior members is $3.00 effective July 1, 2005. All those in favor; opposed. It passed.

At this time the Nominating Committee can be dismissed.

PNC DORSEY: As they exit, ladies, can we get back to this so we can finish it. Moving along, we're now at Page N-32, Article VIII, Finances, Section 3: National Mandates, Line 2, delete $15.00 and insert $25.00. Section 3 would then read:

Each membership year National Head-quarters shall withhold the sum of $25.00 from each Unit's per capita distribution to cover the following national mandates: Auxiliary Education Loan Fund, Auxiliary Service/Support Fund, and Fidelity Bond Premium.

The mandate must be paid in order for a Unit to have a bond coverage for all persons having custody of Unit funds and for the Unit to be eligible to vote at a National Convention. Effective July 1, 2005.

Madam Commander, I move for the adoption of the revised Section III.

MRS. HICKE: Kathy Hicke, Unit 14, Wisconsin. I second that motion.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Is there any discussion?

MRS. CAROL A. GRAY: Madam Commander, Carol Gray, Past National Commander. I would like to amend this to read, insert after "Auxiliary Education Loan Fund" in parentheses $6.50, in parentheses after "Auxiliary Service/Support Fund" $6.00, and in parentheses after "Fidelity Bond Premium" $12.50, so that the Units will know where their money is being disbursed.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Okay, we have an amendment. We need a second, first. Is there a second?

PNC JONES: Renee Jones, Past National Commander, I second.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you, Renee. Okay, any discussion? All those in favor; those opposed. Passed, thank you.

PNC DORSEY: Now we've got to go back to the way I read it. I read it without the amounts in parentheses. That's the only difference.

COMMANDER BENNETT: I need a vote to approve as amended as she read it. I can't think of her name. I'm tired. Have you got that? Those in favor; opposed. It passed. Thank you.

PNC DORSEY: I'll make that clear. This change passed with the amendment as proposed by Past National Commander Carol Gray. Do you want me to read it as she mentioned it?

(Responses of "No.)

PNC DORSEY: No? Okay, thank you. Page N-33, Article VIII, Finances, Section 4: Fidelity Bond, Paragraph 1, Line 1, delete $25.00 and insert $50.00. Section 4, Paragraph 1 would then read:

The Fidelity Bond Premium shall be $50.00 for each State Department. National Headquarters shall withhold this sum from each state department's per capita distribution to

cover the Fidelity Bond Premium. Effective July 1, 2005.

Madam Commander, I move for the adoption of the revised Section 4, Paragraph 1.

MRS. LEPORTE: Madam Commander, Jeanne LePorte, Unit 30, New York. I second the motion.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you, Jeanne. Any discussion? All those in favor; opposed. It passed. Thank you.

PNC DORSEY: Page N-34, Article IX, State Departments, Section 2: State Department Charter, Paragraph 2, Line 4, delete $25.00 and insert $50.00. Section 2, Paragraph 2, would then read:

An application for a State Department Charter must be accompanied by a charter fee of $5.00 per Unit for each Unit signing the application and a $50.00 Fidelity Bond Premium.

Such application shall be approved by the State Executive Committee of the Disabled American Veterans. Effective July 1, 2005.

Madam Commander, I move for the adoption of Section 2, Paragraph 2, as revised.

MRS. HANSEN: Madam Commander, I second. Jackie Hansen, Ohio.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Any discussion? All those in favor; opposed. Thank you.

PNC DORSEY: Page N-36, Article X, Local Units, Section 1, Paragraph 2, Line 4, delete $2.50 and insert $12.50. Section 1, Paragraph 2, would then read:

All applications for Charter shall be made directly to National Headquarters. Applications shall be accompanied with a $5.00 national charter fee, $12.50 Fidelity Bond Premium, and the entire amount of dues for each member. Effective July 1, 2005.

Madam Commander, I move for the adoption of Section 1, Paragraph 2, as revised.

MRS. SCHULMAN: Sandy Schulman, Unit 26, New Jersey, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Any discussion?

MRS. SHIRLEY VERMILLION: Madam Commander, Shirley Vermillion, Unit 3, Montana, going back to the one we just passed it says --

COMMANDER BENNETT: No.

MRS. VERMILLION: But I think a word is left out. I think "Auxiliary" is left out.

COMMANDER BENNETT: No.

MRS. VERMILLION: No?

MRS. McCARTHY: "Auxiliary" was not left out. A charter application has to be approved by the Executive Committee of the Disabled American Veterans, not the Auxiliary, if it's a state charter.

PNC DORSEY: Page S-15, Article VIII, Finances, Section 2, State -- oh, I'm getting too anxious. I'm sorry.

COMMANDER BENNETT: We're sorry. All those in favor; opposed. Thank you.

PNC DORSEY: Okay, getting down there. Page S-15, Article VIII, Finances, Section 2, State Per Capita, Paragraph 1, delete entire Paragraph 1 and substitute the following:

The state per capita for Life members shall be $.50, effective July 1, 2005.

Madam Commander, I move for the revision as read.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER TIDWELL: Madam Commander, Gertrude Tidwell, Senior Vice Commander. I second the motion.

MRS. CHARLOTTE R. ALVINO: Charlotte Alvino, Madam Commander --

COMMANDER BENNETT: It has already been seconded, sorry.

Gertrude Tidwell seconded up here. Any discussion? Those in favor; opposed. Thank you.

PNC DORSEY: Page S-16, Article VIII, Finances, Section 6, Paragraph 1, Line 2, delete $25.00 and insert $50.00. Ladies, that's a typo there. That should read, Section 6, Paragraph 1, would then read:

The Fidelity Bond Premium for the State Department shall be $50.00. This sum shall be withheld from the State Department per capita distribution. Effective July 1, 2005.

Madam Commander, I move for the adoption of the revised paragraph.

MRS. WILSON: Linda Wilson of Carson City, Unit 7. I second the motion.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Any discussion? All in favor; opposed. Passed.

PNC DORSEY: Page U-12, Article XV, Unit Finance and Dues, Section 2, National Mandates, Line 2, delete $15.00 and insert $25.00. Section 2 would then read:

Each membership year National Head-quarters shall withhold the sum of $25.00 from each Unit's per capita distribution to cover the national mandates.

This mandate must be paid in order for a Unit to have bond coverage for all persons having custody of Unit funds and for the Unit to be eligible to vote at National Convention. Effective July 1, 2005.

Madam Commander, I move for the adoption of this Section 2.

MRS. LePORTE: Madam Commander, Jeanne LePorte, New York 30. I second the motion.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you. Any discussion?

(Responses of "No".)

COMMANDER BENNETT: All those in favor; opposed. Oh, ladies, thank you so very much. (Applause) I'm sorry it was so long but it just had to take time.

PNC DORSEY: Ladies, give yourselves a hand. I think you've done marvelous this afternoon. (Applause) Thank you so much.

National Commander Jan, National Adjutant Maria, National Officers, Past National Commanders, Delegates and guests, the National Constitution and Bylaws Convention Committee met in Sierra Room Number 2 at 1:30 p.m. on July 31st, 2004.

Our advisor was Past National Commander Lucille McCarthy. Deborah Emery was elected as our secretary. At this time I'd like to call the names of all of those who served on the Committee and I'd ask you to stand and be acknowledged and remain standing until I've called all of the names:

District 1, Mary Bixby; District 2, Jeanne Kay LePorte; District 3, Ann T. Young; District 4, Charlotte R. Alvino; District 5, Rhea G. Lynn; District 6, Evelynne Dorsey; District 7, Marna Barnshaw; District 8, Mary K. Dyer; District 9, Ruth R. Koon; District 10, Deborah J. Emery; District 11, Jacqueline Hansen; District 12, Kathy L. Hicke; District 13, Mildred Brown; District 14, Faye A. Litzinger; District 15, Rose M. Schilpp; District 16, Susan A. Gill; District 17, Ernestine Bennett; District 18, Evelyn Dunn; District 19, Christina L. Fairin; District 20, Betty Hall; and District 21, M. Sue Hollingsworth. Give them a hand for a job well done. (Applause)

And, again, ladies, I thank you for the opportunity to serve in this capacity. It has been a trying experience, but I think we all did a great job here, and you are to be commended. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you. I'd also like to thank you for your patience this afternoon and your questions. Questions

are important. If we don't ask, we don't know. Then we're going to have some door prizes and I think, Maria, do you have any announcements, Maria?

ADJUTANT TEDROW: I, too, want to thank you. Some of those changes were necessary because of occurrences and events that have happened, but most of all I want to thank our National Commander for her up and down and up and down efforts to come to the podium.

I know that she is tired but she deserves a big hand of applause (applause) because we knew it was going to be rough this time because of such an important change.

(Whereupon, announcements were given by National Adjutant Maria Tedrow.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: I know that we're all going to go out there; and when we leave here just remember, the vote may not have gone the way we wanted it to, or it may have gone the way we wanted it to, but that's not important.

The thing is that it was adopted by a governing body and we're going to deal with it and we're going to work with it and we're going to work in harmony and we're going to be good to each other. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENNETT: The next time we're going to meet will be Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. in the morning. We're going to have a drawing right now. Hope you win something. And thank you once again. And right after the Forget-me-not Luncheon, we'll have a caucus. Don't forget. Thank you.

(Whereupon, drawings for door prizes were held.)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Have a good evening and enjoy yourselves.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 4:30 o'clock p.m. August 1, 2004.)

FINAL BUSINESS SESSION

AUGUST 3, 2004

The Final Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Reno Ballroom of the Reno Hilton, Reno, Nevada, Tuesday morning, August 3, 2004, and was called to order at 9:23 o'clock a.m. by National President Janet W. Bennett.

ADJUTANT TEDORW: Good, everybody paying attention? Ed Loan, this is the total of the monies received through donations from the generous states, members and Units: Education Loan, $4,592; (Applause) Service/Support, $7,092; (Applause) Freedom's Foundation, $395; (Applause) Hospitalized Veterans Writing Program, $800; (Applause) and $20 to the Sports Clinic. That is a total of all the donations we've taken. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENENTT: Good morning.

(Responses of "Good morning.)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Will Donna Stinnett come and give the prayer, please.

CHAPLAIN STINNETT: Father, You made the heavens and their starry hosts, the earth and all that is in it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything. You gave us eyes to see them and lips to tell how great You are.

We thank You for all things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small, all things wise and wonderful. You have made them all. We thank you, Father. Amen.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Will Kathy Wiley please come forward to give the Pledge of Allegiance.

THIRD JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER WILEY: Face our flag. Stand

at attention. Free your hands. Place your hand over your heart and join me in saying our Pledge of Allegiance.

(Pledge of Allegiance)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Remain standing for the National Anthem, please.

(National Anthem.)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Be seated. Thank you. Before I start all this, there is something that I would ask, and I forgot to, and I apologize once again.

Do we have anybody here for the first time at our National Convention. If we do, would you please stand. (Applause) Thank you. I hope you keep coming back.

I hope you also will attend the Fall Conference, which is where we really do learn a whole lot. But, once again, congratulations to each and every one of you that are here for the first time, and we hope to see you for many, many years coming. Thank you.

The National Adjutant will now call the roll of the newly National Executive Committeewoman and Alternates. As your name is called, please come forward for the purpose of installation. Maria.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: If there is any confusion out there, the National Commander is going to install the newly elected National Executive Committee-women so they will be installed and in place when we have the NEC meeting.

I will call only the newly elected because the other ones were installed and you serve a two-year term. We elected this year from what districts?

(Responses of "Even.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Even. So, Deborah Barbuto, NEC; Anita Tears Alternate. Please come forward.

District 4, Dorothy Kashner, Alternate Sandra Schulman;

District 6, Juanita Giles, her alternate, Mildred Velazquez;

District 8, Loiece Cole, Alternate, Linda Acosta;

District 10, Lorene Penermon, and her alternate, Peggy Smith;

District 12, Betty Buck, and her alternate, Sandy Resner;

District 14, Leann Karg, and her alternate, Donna Holmquist;

District 16, Florence Swisher and her alternate, June Adema;

District 18, Ruth Ann Tucker, and her alternate, Yvonne Pitts;

District 20, Ruth Gates and her alternate Teresa Herrle.

Madam Commander, the newly elected National Executive Committeewomen and Alternates are in place and ready for the installation.

COMMANDER BENNETT: You are required to remain silent during the ceremony of the installation. As newly elected National Executive Committeewomen and Alternates, are you willing to assume the oath of your office?

(Responses of "I am.)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Members, please stand. Place your right hand over your heart, and pronounce your name, repeat after me the obligation of your office.

I, Janet Bennett, having been selected as a National Executive Committeewoman or Alternate of this Auxiliary, do most solemnly pledge myself to faithfully and impartially perform in all letters and spirit all the duties of the office I am about to enter.

I promise to obey the lawful order of my superior officers and exact the obedience of others thereto to the best of my

ability and means.

When my successor has been 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. You may be seated. (Applause) Wait a minute. Delegates and guests -- you guys walked away and I don't read very fast any more -- I just would like to present you your new officers and I wish them the very best. Thank you. (Applause)

Would the Credentials Chairman please come forward. Please be patient with me. It's the first time I've read. Thank you.

MRS. TROUTMAN: Madam Commander, National Officers, Delegates and guests, good morning. The Credentials Report is as follows. This will be the final reading of the credentials.

Total Units registered, 247; total Departments registered, 45; total of 292. Delegates registered, 522; Alternates registered, 26; guests, 56; making a total of 604.

Total Unit votes, 1,692; total Department votes, 45; National Officers, 6; PNCs, 16, a grand total of votes, 1,759. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENNETT: I move for a motion to approve the revised Credentials report.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER TIDWELL: Madam Commander, Gertrude Tidwell, Senior Vice Commander. I make a motion that we accept the Credentials report as read.

(Whereupon, the motion was seconded from the floor.)

COMMANDER BENNETT: We don't have any microphones on the floor. I ask for a vote, please. All those in favor; opposed. Thank you.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: I'm sorry there are no mikes. I'm just glad the flags are here, and that's because I told one of our staff from Headquarters to see that they were not disturbed. The DAV apparently used this room last night. No mikes.

Call maintenance and get some microphones up here. Okay, very good. Just be patient. Whatever can go wrong will go wrong. By the way, anybody lose a cell phone? (Laughter) While we're killing a little bit of time, I've been requested to ask, yes --

MEMBER: Last night a gentleman lost his cell phone.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Okay, if I don't have a claim, I'm going to take it to Security and he can pick it up there.

To kill a little bit of time, but not to kill too much, every year we do something to celebrate everybody's birthday that is either this week or approximately sometime this week, so how many have a birthday during this week or this time at the Convention?

All right, stand up. Come on. Okay, now we're going to sing to you. How about that? Here we go.

(Whereupon, "Happy Birthday" was sung.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Okay, we got that done, and to save a little bit more time how about -- I was going to get to that. I've got a note up here at my desk. Thank you.

We have a boy in District 11, yes, Mikey, right, who would like a pin from every state for a flag for his Boy Scouts; so if you have any extra pins or would like to give him one, see Mikey in District 11.

And in order to save a little bit more time, why don't I reverse the meeting here and give you the announcements? Is that all right with you, Commander?

Those officers that will be elected today, the installation information is this: officers and NECs, and that's all NECs, are to meet in the Blue Room, Casino Level, at 5:00 o'clock p.m. Now what time?

(Responses of "Five.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: What color is the room?

(Responses of "Blue.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Who is supposed to be there?

(Responses of "NECs and Officers.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: The introduction of National Officers and the social will take place in the Hilton Pavilion at 6:00 o'clock, so the Officers and NECs meet at 5:00, but the introduction will take place at 6:00.

Our Fall Conference will be September 23rd to the 25th, 2004, at the Marriot Resort at Griffin Gate in Lexington, Kentucky.

If you've never been to Lexington or you've never been to a Fall Conference, get together with some friends, share the expense and come on down because you'll have a lot of fun and a lot of information will go back. Room rate, $89 plus tax.

Now, the next date you want to remember, the 2005 National Convention. Guess where it's going to be? Las Vegas, Nevada (applause) so you'd better save your money all year.

And it will be August the 6th to the 11th, 2005, at Bally's Hotel. Room rate, $105 plus tax.

Now I'd like to say something about the National Convention. You will find in the magazine, when the DAV puts it on the back cover or inside the magazine, they will give you one date; and when I send out the information, I'll give you another.

And the reason for that is normally the dates they give you are Saturday, which is when they have the joint open session, until Tuesday. Do you understand that? That's why they have those dates.

That's usually their joint opening session, starting with the joint opening session and ending with Tuesday. I do it differently. I want you in here before that.

I want you to be registered. I want you to be able to, if you're an NEC, to attend an NEC meeting because we have it on Thursday evening. We have the District meetings on Friday morning; so if you go by these dates, you could be late for both so just remember that.

When a bulletin comes out, if I show a different date in the Happenings at Headquarters, that's why, because I want to make sure that you are here for the whole thing.

I have a gentleman back there -- is he still back there? -- is it a Past State Commander pin? I guess the gentleman left. Well, anyway, did anybody lose a Past State Commander pin? There was a gentleman out there someplace that had a Past State Commander pin.

Now this morning you saw the National Commander give the installation to the members who will be the new NECs and alternates.

There is a little phrase in that installation that says "When my successor has been duly elected and installed, I promise to surrender to her all of the property in my possession."

Does everybody understand that sentence? We have a lot of problems on Unit level especially where officers may not get elected that thought they should have been or somebody has been careless with records or they won't turn them over.

Those are not a person's records. They're the records of the office you hold. And when you take that oath, you are saying now I am this officer but when I am no longer this officer, everything I have pertaining to this Unit or State Department goes to my successor. Is that plain?

And are we still waiting for mikes? We didn't know we were

going to have a workshop, did we, Judy? (Laughter)

Another thing, Convention books, right now we gave you last year's books or Bylaws in your packet.

Take them home and utilize them. Of course, they're not going to be any good after this Convention. However, there are some things in that book that have not changed so you can still utilize it.

Now, when are you going to get the new books? That's always the question. Are you going to have them ready next week? Are you going to have them ready in a month?

Well, truthfully, I can't tell you that answer. I can't give you that answer because what happens is when we go back to National Headquarters, all the changes are typed.

They are sent to the printer. The printer makes the proof. He sends it back to us. We find mistakes in it. Then the proof has to go back and it has to be corrected.

And then sometimes it comes back and something that wasn't changed is wrong and we have go to back, so it's a series of proofing, proofing, proofing.

And no matter how many of us proof at that office, it invariably goes out with something wrong in it. I think this year some of the pages were upside down.

But what I wanted to say is we try to get them as quickly as possible. And, it will be in the Happenings at Headquarters. Does everybody know what the Happenings at Headquarters is? And who gets the mail in your Unit? Your adjutant.

And whether or not your adjutant is at that meeting or not, if she doesn't bring that mail in, you know, that mail does not say, "Jane Smith, personal, confidential, don't let anybody read this." (Laughter)

It says, "Jane Smith, Unit Adjutant." That means it belongs to the whole Unit and they need to know about it, so we will put it in there when the Bylaws are ready.

I had a question a while back of why do we have to have new Bylaws every year? Well, not only do they change them, but your Constitution and Bylaws is more than Constitution and Bylaws. It's also an address book.

We change officers. We elect officers on an annual basis because that's what our Constitution and Bylaws say.

So, if you keep a book that's ten years old, I don't know who was National Commander ten years ago, but she isn't National Commander any more so your book is outdated.

You need that to keep up with who your new NECs are, who your new chairmen are and who your new officers are. So it's more than just a Constitution and Bylaw book, it's an information book, too. And we will put it in the Happenings at Headquarters. I think I've taken enough time. How long is it going to take to set that up?

MEMBER: There's a microphone here, Maria, that they can use.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Just keep talking? And yesterday we talked about Juniors, or the day before, whatever day it was, sometime this week, and you know we used to -- for those that don't know, we used to prepay Juniors, and I said yesterday, or the day we talked about it, that you could prepay them for ten years or if they were paid for this year you can prepay them for nine more years.

So, everybody likes sales, right? Women adore sales. Even if they don't need it, if it's cheap, I'll buy it. (Laughter)

Okay, this new system, you can prepay for 18 years, so if you have a newborn baby, you can prepay for 18 years, and even the Bylaws, even if the Bylaws change, it's not going to affect that membership.

I think that's a pretty good sale so stop and think about it. It's $1.00 a year but we can prepay up to 18 years. So that to me is a sale.

Okay, stretch it out some more? Stretch. (Laughter) Do we have any questions on the floor? Just be careful what you ask because you may not get an answer. (Laughter)

This new system is not a system that we like. Do we like it, Judy?

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT JUDY HEZLEP: Yes.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Yes. (Laughter) What happens on this new system, if you send in a change -- all right, let's take two people, say a husband and wife that are separated.

If he sends in a change of address and they change his address, it changes hers automatically. And that's a problem with Juniors or any of the others, so you cannot change it online.

You have to send something in to National Headquarters so that we are able to change the addresses. But that's why. It's just an automatic thing.

If we change an Auxiliary member, it changes the DAV member, too. So, we had that problem a while back where there were two or three Juniors and they had moved out of the household, but the address was still the same as the grandmothers.

In other words, they were 17 years of age, so we told her, send them in and we can do it at National Headquarters. It takes a little bit but you cannot do it online.

MRS. BETTY L. JONES: Maria, my name is Betty Jones. I'm the State Commander for New Mexico, and I want to know if we are going to ever find out about the yellow books.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Good question. (Laughter) My answer is, I hope, shortly. The yellow book, I've been doing in my spare time and revising and Judy has been proofing it.

We had it finished, ready to go to print, and then this new membership system came in. And now all that has to be scratched and a new membership explanation and program has to be put in the manual.

I don't feel that I want to put it in until we're a little bit more secure with the membership system we have so that we can put right answers in that manual.

I am hoping -- don't hold me to this promise and don't put me on a stake -- I'm hoping we can have it maybe by the end of the year. But, there again, it will be in the Happenings at Headquarters.

And if you have an old manual, actually you can still use it except go to the membership section and change that life membership amount. I think the old manual still has $125. But, believe me, we are working on it. Oh, I think a mike is working.

AUDIO VISUAL WORKER: Madam Chairman, your mikes are working.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Madam Chairman, your mikes are working. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN BENNETT: Okay, we'll go on. Would the chairman of the Nominating Committee please come forward.

MRS. JANE TROUTMAN: National Commander Jan, National Adjutant Maria Tedrow, National Officers, Past National Commanders, Delegates to this Convention, the Nominating Committee met at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, July the 31st, 2004, in the Sierra on the Mezzanine Level.

Our advisor was Past National Commander Linda Trulio. She reviewed all the guidelines and then we had the election of the chairman. Past National Commander Jane Troutman was elected

chairman and Past National Commander Paula Raymond was elected secretary.

If the following members of the Nominating Committee would stand, I would like to recognize them:

District 1, Miriam Daley; District 2, Deborah Barbuto; District 3, Sylvia Heath; District 4, Doris Martelli; District 5, Marian Sawdey; District 6, Barbara A. Forbes; District 7, Merallyn McDonald; District 8, Jeannette Janet; District 9, Jane Troutman; District 10, Carol Lee; District 11, Joyce Hutchinson; District 12, Paula Raymond; District 13, Edith Jackson; District 14, Margaret Hass; District 15, Dorothy Van Hoy; District 16, Vicki O'Neal; District 17, Jane Jackson; District 18, Iris Brzezinski; District 19, Ruth Hammer; District 20, Louise Rapisand; District 21, Debi Huddleston.

And our advisor, Past National Commander Linda Trulio. (Applause) Thank you, ladies.

We are pleased to submit the following slate for your consideration to serve as the 2004-2005 officers:

Commander, Gertrude Tidwell;
Senior Vice Commander, Judy Steinhouse;
First Junior Vice Commander, Donna Tanner;
Second Junior Vice Commander, Kathryn Wiley;
Third Junior Vice Commander, Kay Egan;
Fourth Junior Vice Commander, Donna Stinnett;
Chaplain, Melva Matlack;
and Judge Advocate, Shelia Allred.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you very much. I wish to thank the Nominating Committee for all their work and their effort that they did. I've been on it so I know it's not easy.

I also would like to thank all the Convention Committee members for your work during the Convention. I would like to discharge the Nominating Committee and all other Convention Committees at this time.

At this time would all the officers please leave the podium and go to your respective Districts. Thank you.

Okay, I need to appoint some tellers, so I would like Iris Brzezinski, Sandy from the office, and how about Miriam Daley as teller. Thank you. How about Joyce Hutchinson. Is she here?

And now we're going to take a break so that -- we have to get the machines in here. You may have a five-minute break. Thank you.

(Whereupon, a short recess was taken.)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Please take your seats and would the tellers come forward, please. Everybody, let's take our seats so we can get started again, please.

We're going to start. Thank you. Before we start, Maria has a change on the National Convention for next year.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: I've just been informed that National Convention next year will be August 13th through the 16th. That will lower the rooms to $95 a night. Okay, August 13th to 16th so forget what I told you before.

COMMANDER BENNETT: Okay, that's a better price than what they had. Okay, everyone ready?

(Responses of "Yes.)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Thank you. You have heard the report from the Nominating Committee.

Gertrude Tidwell has been nominated for the office of National Commander.

MRS. HOLLINGSWORTH: Madam Commander, Sue Hollingsworth, Unit 60, Oklahoma. May I approach your station for the purpose of endorsing this candidate?

COMMANDER BENNETT: Yes, you may.

MRS. HOLLINGSWORTH: Commander Janet, Adjutant Maria,

National Officers, Past National Commanders, Delegates and guests, it's my honor to stand before you this morning to endorse Gertrude Tidwell for National Commander of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

Okay, now I got that part over with. (Laughter) Most of you call her "Gertrude", and some who have known her for many years call her "Gertie." But I have the privilege and the pleasure of calling her "Momma" or sometimes, as my daughter calls her, "Shookie." (Laughter)

Her eligibility for this organization is through her late husband, my father, Claude Tidwell, a veteran of the Korean War; and through her brother, Riley Siebert, a veteran of the Vietnam War.

She became a member in 1983 and helped reorganize Unit 60 of Atoka, Oklahoma, at that time. She has served her Unit well, several times as commander. She is currently the state executive committeewoman from Unit 60.

She has served the Department of Oklahoma as commander twice and was judge advocate for ten terms. She currently serves the State Department as the state veterans volunteer services representative for the Tallahana Veterans Home.

She is a woman with a strong and abiding faith in God. She was elected as National Chaplain in 1997 and again in 1998. We were blessed by her sincere and heartfelt words offered in prayer.

In 1999 she was elected National Fourth Junior Vice Commander and has advanced through the chairs in consecutive years and today serves as Senior Vice Commander.

Fall Conferences has shown us she can lead with innovative and fun programs. We have been treated to a carousel of community service. We were witness to a moving flag disposal ceremony.

We became "WILD Women," Women Interested In Legislative Development. We met Susan B. Anthony, Eleanor Roosevelt, Dolly Madison, and Lady Bird Johnson who were all "WILD" women.

We even met an alien from the future who warned us of what would happen if our Auxiliary did not remain strong and legislatively active.

She surprised and delighted us as membership chairman by dressing as a Tyrannosaurus Rex and admonishing us to "think pink, not extinct" as we signed new and delinquent members.

She utilized the crazy quilt to illustrate the importance of all our programs with membership at the heart as Mae Holmes chairman.

She became a member of the now infamous "Arkhoma Raisins" and shared information through the grapevine. And if you all saw us, please forget it. (Laughter)

She has come to this point with an inherent honesty and a just-plain "Gertie" attitude. Again, it is my privilege and honor to endorse Gertrude Tidwell, my momma, for National Commander of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary. (Applause)

COMMANDER BENNETT: Gertrude Tidwell has been nominated by the committee for the office of National Commander. Are there any other nominations?

Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of National Commander.

All those in favor of Gertrude Tidwell for the office of National Commander, sign by saying aye; opposed.

The ayes have it and Gertrude Tidwell has been elected National Commander. Congratulations, Gertrude. (Applause)

Judy Steinhouse has been nominated by the Committee for the office of National Senior Vice Commander. 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 Judy Steinhouse; those opposed. The ayes have it and Judy Steinhouse has been elected Senior Vice Commander. Congratulations, Judy. (Applause)

Donna Tanner has been nominated by the committee for the office of First Junior Vice Commander. Are there any other nominations?

I declare the nominations closed for the office of National First Junior Vice Commander.

All those in favor of Donna Tanner for the office of National First Junior Vice, please say aye; opposed. They ayes have it and Donna Tanner has been elected National First Junior Vice. (Applause) Congratulations, Donna.

Kathryn Wiley has been nominated by the committee for the office of National Second Junior Vice Commander. Are there any other nominations?

Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of National Second Junior Vice Commander. All in favor; those opposed. The Ayes have it. Kathy Wiley has been elected National Second Junior Vice. (Applause)

Kay Egan has been nominated by the committee for the office of National Third Junior Vice. Are there any other nominations?

Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of National Third Junior Vice Commander. All those in favor of Kay Egan, say aye; those opposed. Okay, Kay Egan has been elected as Third Junior Vice. (Applause) Congratulations, Kay. (Applause)

Donna Stinnett has been nominated by the Committee for the office of National Fourth Junior Vice Commander. Are there any other nominations?

Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of National Fourth Junior Vice. All those in favor of Donna Stinnett for the office of National Fourth Junior Vice Commander, say aye; any opposed. Donna Stinnett has been elected National Fourth Junior Vice Commander. (Applause)

Melva Matlack has been nominated by the committee for the office of National Chaplain. Are there any other nominations?

Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of National Chaplain.

All in those in favor of Melva Matlack for the office of National Chaplain, sign by saying aye; those opposed.

The ayes have it and Melva Matlack has been elected to the office of National Chaplain. (Applause) Congratulations, Melva, wherever you might be.

Shelia Allred has been nominated by the committee for the office of National Judge Advocate. 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 say aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Shelia Allred has been elected to the office of National Judge Advocate. Congratulations. (Applause)

I know that she'll be pleased. It seems strange not to see her here, but she'll be back.

Okay, I can dismiss the tellers, please. Thank you so much. The election having been completed, I now ask for the National Sergeant-at-Arms to come to the podium for the purpose of introducing the National Executive Committeewomen and those members who served as Pages. Donna Horton, please come forward.

(Whereupon, Janet Bennett sang "The Old Gray Mare.")

COMMANDER BENNETT: Jingle Bells would have sounded better.

(Laughter) She wanted to know if she was the Old Gray Mare. I'm the Old Gray Mare. (Laughter) She has blond hair.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HORTON: Past National Commanders, Officers, Delegates and friends, Commander Jan, it has been such a pleasure serving you as your National Sergeant-at-Arms and I want to thank you again for giving me the privilege.

Would the NECs and the personal pages please come forward. First of all, I would like to introduce the personal pages. We have Sara Ann Coursey; Rose Coursey; M. Sue Hollingsworth; Mary Lou Weber; Sandra Fincel; G. Ruth Hammer; Ruth Gates; Linda Kafka; and Jillian Stinnett. And we also had two other Junior pages -- one other one, Anna Hollingsworth.

I would like to introduce the NECs who have so ably helped me:

District 1, Frances Costa; District 2 is the alternate, Deborah Barbuto; District 3, Donna Folcarelli; District 4, Dorothea Campanelli; District 5, Catherine Watkins; District 6, Ellen Griggs; District 7, Winona Eastin; District 8, Billie Schultz; District 9, Margaret Snelling; District 10, Deborah Emery; District 11, Carolyn Reed; District 12, Patricia Davis; District 13, Jan Walters; District 14, Shirley Vermillion; District 15, Elaine Regan; District 16, Joan Turbeville; District 17, Ramona Ganong; District 18, Iris Brzezinski; District 19, Barbara Reding; District 20, Beverly Barron; and District 21, Margaret Sue Hollingsworth. (Applause)

I'd just like to say thank you to all of you for all your help, and thanks again, Jan, just thank you again for asking me.

MRS. MARGARET M. SNELLING: Donna, we have certainly enjoyed working with you; and on behalf of all of the pages and the NECs, we would like to present this nice little token of appreciation from all of us. Thank you.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HORTON: Thank you. (Applause) Okay, we're dismissed.

COMMANDER BENENTT: Thank you, everyone. You did a great job. And, Donna, you did a very good job. (Applause)

I'd also like to acknowledge the National Color Bearers. Are they in the room? If they're not, I still want to thank them. They did a very good job. And, Nancy, I want to thank you. You always do a wonderful job. Thank you so very much. (Applause)

Is there any other business to come before this Convention? ADJUTANT TEDROW: First of all, if anyone has been approached by the newly elected Commander to be a chairman, they are to remain in this room even though we are going to go into a National Executive Committee meeting.

Also, Jan has done a great job. She keeps apologizing and I said, "Don't apologize. You don't need to." Jan. (Standing Ovation) Because that's one thing about the Auxiliary, we will get through come hell or high water. (Laughter)

I would be remiss at this time not to give our sincere appreciation and gratitude to Past National Commander Lucille McCarthy for filling in as Judge Advocate. Thank you, Lucille. (Applause) And that is all I've got to say.

COMMANDER BENNETT: There was a card going around for Loneita. Does anybody have it? Okay, would you bring it up, please. Thank you very much.

Okay, hearing none, I now declare the 82nd National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary hereby adjourned. We will immediately go into the National Executive Committee meeting.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 10:50 o'clock a.m., August 3, 2004.)

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