109th Congress, 1st Session House Document 109-77

NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE NATIONAL ADJUTANT, THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

TRANSMITTING

2005 NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS, PURSUANT TO 36 U.S.C. 90i AND 44 U.S.C. 1332

DECEMBER 22, 2005 – Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and ordered to be printed

---

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON: 2005

25-589

AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

U.S. CODE, TITLE 44, SECTION 1332

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,

December 22, 2005

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 herby certify as to the authenticity of the reports and the proceedings of our National Convention, held in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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, 2004, as required by the provisions of section 3 of the Public Law 88-504, approved August 30, 1964.

Sincerely,

ARTHUR H. WILSON
National Adjutant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JOINT OPENING SESSION, SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 14, 2005

Call to Order, Commander James E. Sursely 1
Welcoming Remarks:
- Convention Chairman 2
- R. Lee Ermey 3

Introduction of National Officers 4
Commander's Report 4
Address, Secretary of Veterans Affairs R. James Nicholson 8
Presentations:
- Bugle Awards 17
- Ford Motor Company 19
- Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year Award 21
- Outstanding Auxiliary Member of the Year Award 24
- George H. Seal Memorial Awards 26
- Youth Volunteer Scholarship Awards 28

Recess 30

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION, SUNDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 14, 2005

Call to Order, Commander James E. Sursely 30
Partial Credentials Report 31
Adoption of Rules 31
Adoption of Statement of Policy 33
Introduction of National Executive Committee 34
National Adjutant's Report 35
Membership Report and Awards 39
National Board of Directors' Report 41
List of Delegates and Alternates for Convention Committees 66
Appointments of Convention Committee Advisors 75
Recess 75

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION, MONDAY MORNING, AUGUST 15, 2005

Call to Order, Commander James E. Sursely 75
Address, Congressman Jon Porter 76
Address, Staff Asst. to Rep. Berkley, Gerri Schroeder 78
Report of Washington Headquarters Executive Director 79
Written Reports:
- National Service Director 100
- Recapitulation of Service Activities 108
- National Director of Voluntary Services 132
- National Legislative Director 140

Presentation of Employment Awards 158
First Reading of Amendments to Constitution and Bylaws 163
Committee Reports:
- Finance 166
- Legislation and Veterans Rights 167
- Employment 195

Recess 204

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION, WEDNESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 17, 2005

Call to Order, Commander James E. Sursely 204
Partial Credentials Report 205
Second Reading of Amendments to Constitution and Bylaws 204
Committee Reports:
General Resolutions and Membership 209
Hospital and Voluntary Services 220
Introduction and Remarks, National Order of Trench Rats 240
National Service Foundation Report 242
Charitable Trust Report 262
Remarks, Commanders and Adjutants Association 277
Recess 278

FINAL BUSINESS SESSION, WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 17, 2005

Call to Order, James E. Sursely 279
Presentation by POW/MIA Standing Committee 279
Credential Committee Final Report 280
Nomination and Election of National Officers 280
Newly Elected National Officers' Remarks 281
Announcement of New National Executive Committee Members 292
Adjournment 292

MOTIONS

Motion	Page	Action	Page
Accept Commander's Report	33	Carried	33
Amend & Adopt Rules of Convention	32	Carried	32
Adopt Statement of Policy	33	Carried	33
Accept Adjutant's Report	35	Carried	39
Accept Membership Report	39	Carried	41
Adopt Report of Board of Directors	41	Carried	42
Admit List of Delegates & Alternates to serve on Convention Committees	66	Carried	66
Accept Report of Washington Headquarters Executive Director	79	Carried	79
Adopt Report of Committee on Finance	166	Carried	167
Adopt Resolutions from Committee on Legislative and Veterans Rights	167	Carried	167
Adopt Resolutions from Committee on Employment	196	Carried	196
Adopt Resolutions from Constitution and Bylaws Committee:			
217	205	Carried	205
218	206	Carried	206
219	207	Carried	207
220	207	Carried	207
221	208	Carried	208
222	208	Carried	208
223	209	Carried	209
Adopt Resolutions from Committee on General Resolutions	210	Carried	210
Adopt Resolutions from Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services	239	Carried	240
Accept Report from National Service Foundation	252	Carried	252
Accept Charitable Service Trust Report	262	Carried	262
Accept Final Credentials Committee Report	280	Carried	280
Adopt Report of committee on Nomination of National Officers & Discharge Committee	280	Carried	280
Discharge Credentials Committee	291	Carried	291

NATIONAL OFFICERS 2005-2006

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

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

National Senior Vice Commander
Bradley S. Barton, 4765 S.W. Chunut Court, Tualatin, OR 97062

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

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

Third Junior Vice Commander
Roberto Barrera, 1307 S. Main Street, Del Rio, TX 78840

Fourth Junior Vice Commander
Wallace E. Tyson, 625 New Bern Avenue, Raleigh, NC 27601

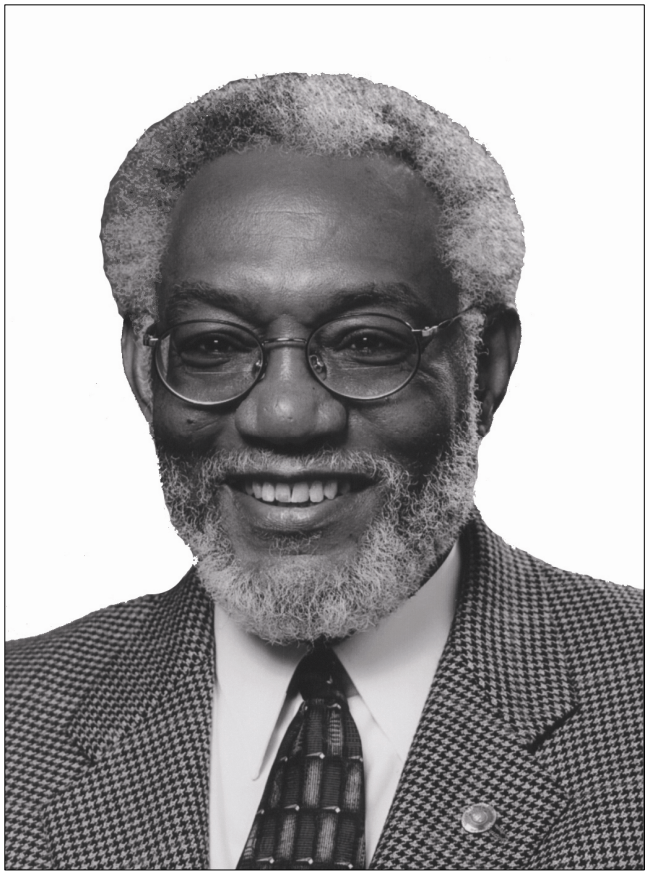
National Judge Advocate
Michael E. Dobmeier, P.O. Box 6188, Grand Forks, ND 58206

National Chaplain
Rev. Edward Bastille, 633 Vanessa Drive, San Mateo, CA 94402

Past National Commander
James E. Sursely, 517 Spring Hollow Blvd., Apopka, FL 32712

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

First district: James H. Tanner, 48 Holly Avenue, Lynn, MA 01904
Second district: John J. Skyler, 26 Shanley Street, Cheektowaga, NY 14206
Third district: Anthony T. Karam, 237 S. Lincoln St., Manchester, NH 03103
Fourth district: Richard E. Manners, 190-10 Gibson Blvd., Clark, NJ 06066
Fifth district: John E. Ogozaly, 34 Cemetery Street, Simpson, PA 18407
Sixth district: Robert V. Richard, Sr., 6420 North Capitol Street, NW, Washington, DC 20012
Seventh district: Edward S. Barnshaw, 808 53rd Avenue East, #174-J, Bradenton, FL 34203
Eighth district: Harold J. Hicks, 14190 Fox Hollow, Harvest, AL 35749
Ninth district: William L. Coward, 112 Churchill Circle, Leesburg, GA 31763
Tenth district: Morris Penermon, 14164 Whitcomb, Detroit, MI 48227
Eleventh district: Harlan F. Plummer, 1211 McCoy Road, Peebles, OH 45660
Twelfth district: Norman J. Resner, 818 Hastings Lane, Hanover Park, IL 60133
Thirteenth district: James S. Huff, 3658 Hwy. 54 East, Fordsville, KY 42343
Fourteenth district: Richard C. Amos, 2413 East 18th Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57103
Fifteenth district: Franklin C. Bergquist, 4255 S. Laura Circle, Wichita, KS 67216
Sixteenth district: Dennis W. Weber, 9907 Shadow Hills Drive, Sunland, CA 91040
Seventeenth district: Floyd Watson, Jr., 219 Ames Avenue, Cheyenne, WY 82007
Eighteenth district: William D. Brzezinski, 6224 N. Amory Street, North Las Vegas, NV 89081
Nineteenth district: Albert H. Buster, P.O. Box 1717, Silverdale, WA 98383
Twentieth district: L. Duke Hendershot, 1169 Loma Verde Drive, New Braunfels, TX 78130
Twenty-first district: Irvin D. Eddy, Route 1, Box 38, Custer, OK 73639



Paul W. Jackson
National Commander
2005-2006
Disabled American Veterans



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

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
Roberto Barrera, 218 Saddle Blanket Trail, 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 07066
Fifth district: Kirby Lindsey, 1 Mill Street, Sheffield, PA 16347
Sixth district: Robert V. Richard, Sr., 6420 North Capitol Street, N.W., 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 Drive, 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 E. 18th Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57103
Fifteenth district: Lyle J. Dean, 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, 6224 N. Amory Street, North Las Vegas, NV 89031
Nineteenth district: Jimmey W. Mayo, P.O. Box 201, Delta Junction, AK 99737
Twentieth district: Leroy Duke Henderson, 1169 Loma Verde Drive, New Braunfells, TX 78130
Twenty-first district: David Spurgin, 700 Prairie Creek Road, Mena, AR 71953

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 (deceased 2005)
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 (deceased 2005)
2003-04: Alan W. Bowers, Royalston, Massachusetts
2004-05: James E. Sursely, Apopka, Florida

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 84TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS HELD AT LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

August 14, 2005

JOINT OPENING SESSION

The Joint Opening Session of the Disabled American Veterans and Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Events Center of Bally's Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada, on Sunday morning August 14, 2005, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by National Commander James E. Sursely.

COMMANDER JAMES E. SURSELY: Ladies and gentlemen, good morning. We hope you enjoyed our military service medley. I now call to order the 84th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans. Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant, will you please read the call to Convention.

ADJUTANT ARTHUR H. WILSON: The Constitution and Bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans state that the supreme legislative powers of this organization shall be vested in an annual National Convention, composed of the National Officers and representatives of the state departments and chapters.

In accordance with these directives, I, Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant, declare the 84th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans to be convened at Las Vegas, Nevada, at 9:00 a.m., Sunday, August 14, 2005.

Consideration and disposition of business brought before this Convention shall be conducted in accordance with the National Constitution and Bylaws now in force.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Present the Colors.

(Whereupon, the Colors were presented.)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Now for the invocation, National Chaplain, the Reverend Gerald Stump.

CHAPLAIN, REVEREND GERALD V. STUMP: My soul shall praise the Lord. I will sing praises to the Lord all my life. I will sing to the Lord for as long as I live.

And we thank You, Heavenly Father, that we can assemble here in this great assembly to sing the praises to You from hearts of thanksgiving for our country called "America."

We come, Father, with our hearts and our minds turned towards You. But, Lord, we also have our hearts and our eyes upon our men and women in uniform that are defending this great freedom.

We thank You for Your blessings upon them, for Your protection. And, Father, we ask that You continue to bless them for their cause is right. When their mission is finished, bring them home safely to us, and we will rejoice in Your name for this great blessing.

We thank You, Lord, for this great organization, for, Lord, we have a task of making life better for American veterans and their families. And it is a task that You have given us. It is a mission that we embrace. It is one we long to fulfill.

Bless our Adjutant, these officers, and this great organization to that end. We invoke Your presence upon these proceedings, that everything that is said and done here will honor and glorify You, will bless America and will make life better for its veterans and their families until we assemble in that great assembly before You we ask Your blessings upon us here and now. For God's glory we pray, Amen.

COMMANDER SURSELY: 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 all around you today and what you will experience over the course of this special event is the result of teamwork, pride and dedication to you, the Disabled American Veterans and DAV Auxiliary.

For over 85 years, disabled veterans have gathered together as a band of brothers. Time and again, the accomplishments of our Annual Meeting have been the result of dynamic leadership and hard work.

Fortunately, this year's Convention Chairman is a dynamic leader who isn't afraid of hard work. Jerry Ogle is the adjutant of Chapter 12 located in Henderson, Nevada. Jerry enlisted in the Marine Corps in October of 1953 and embarked on a 31-year career.

A former embassy guard and drill instructor, he made an amphibious landing in Beirut in 1958 and survived two tours in Vietnam. After retiring from the Marines as a high school ROTC instructor, Jerry became a volunteer driver for the DAV Transportation Program.

Jerry has served as both a department and chapter commander and was on the National Convention Nominating Committee for the past two years. Please give a warm welcome to our 2005 Convention Chairman, Jerry L. Ogle. (Applause)

MR. JERRY L. OGLE: National Commander Sursely, National Adjutant Wilson, Auxiliary National Commander Tidwell, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Nicholson, comrades and guests, it is a pleasure to have the honor to address this august Disabled American Veterans for the purpose of welcoming you to the 84th National Convention here in the "Entertainment Capital of the World," the "City that Never Sleeps", "Sin City." "What goes on in Vegas stays in Vegas." (Laughter) And "Viva Las Vegas." If you want it, we've got it.

It is an exciting time to have our Convention here in Las Vegas. We are celebrating our 100th birthday. Las Vegas has a rich and interesting history.

The name "Las Vegas" or The Meadows, derived from the artesian water supply founded in the valley, which was a prime location for the settlers and railroad developers, thus the advent of the railroad led to the founding of Las Vegas on May the 15th, 1905.

The railroad continued to be the focus of the community until the mid '20s when the main yards were moved to a little town called Caliente. With the loss of the railroad and the effects of the Depression Las Vegas' future was uncertain.

However, three events would change the face of Las Vegas: gambling, it became legal in 1931; also at the same time the divorce laws were changed to quickie divorces (Laughter).

These events along with the construction of Boulder Dam, later named Hoover Dam, brought a new flux of federal monies and construction to the Valley. World War II brought more federal money in the form of military defense.

In 1941 they opened the Las Vegas Army Airfield and it's now called Nellis Air Force Base along with the magnesium plant out in Henderson that supplied raw materials for the United States War Department.

By far, the most celebrated of the early resorts was the Flamingo Hotel, built by mobster Benjamin "Bugsy" Segal. Well, the records reflect that he didn't like the name "Bugsy." Now, he didn't last long after the casino was completed because he came down with a very bad case of lead poisoning. (Laughter)

Since the 1990s the Strip has become a wonderland of worldwide travel, breathtaking architecture and food. You can eat your way around the world.

Las Vegas is a go-go-24-hour city that entices 37 million tourists a year, not to mention the 5,000 new residents that moved into the valley each month.

Whether you head out to the casinos to win big, hit the megabucks, or just watch all of the excitement, eat all the world famous, at the world-famous restaurants, you will find you are not alone in wanting to be where the action is, just travel up and down the Strip and you can find it.

Visit the Statue of Liberty at New York, New York or the Eiffel Towel in Paris, or head out to the Barberry Coast, Treasure Island, Gold Coast, Orleans, Boardwalk, cross the Atlantic to England and the Excalibur.

Go on to the Mediterranean, the Riviera, on to Italy and visit Caesar's Palace, Bellagio, the Venetian, and sail on to Monte Carlo, and then out to the South Pacific, the Mandalay Bay.

There are many more hotels upon the Strip that you will have a chance to visit while you're here. The one that I would like to mention, our newest, is the Wynn Las Vegas Resort. I haven't been there yet but I know it cost $2.7 billion to build.

If you wish to get away from the Strip you can visit Hoover Dam, take a helicopter ride to the Grand Canyon, visit Lake Meade or Red Rock. And if you have any questions check with the hotel staff and they will be glad to assist you in getting these.

Shopping, we have plenty of shopping. Every large hotel has a shopping mall. There is up and down the Fashion Show Mall and also there is in the close vicinity, those discount malls. So, shopping you won't have any problem with.

Transportation, we have a monorail that starts at the Sahara and runs to the MGM and it goes from seven in the morning until two in the morning. We also have the CAT bus that runs up and down the Strip and we have taxis.

Well, you have heard me rant and rave about the availability of excitement, food and entertainment. Let us not lose sight of the DAV mission and what the Convention has to offer.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the great programs that the National Organization has scheduled for you to take advantage of. I know you have read the busy schedule with all of the seminars, lectures and entertainment.

It makes no difference if this is your 1st or your 84th National Convention, there is something new and interesting and knowledge that you can learn from the workshops about the Disabled American Veterans.

On behalf of the Department of Nevada and the Department Commander Jose Garcia, it is a great honor to be the host state for the 2005 National Disabled American Veterans Convention.

Have fun. Enjoy the camaraderie. Take advantage of the information and enjoy the entertainment. And one more thing, "keep Nevada green." (Laughter) Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Jerry, for that warm Nevada welcome. Do I see you about all my losses out there in the casino? (Laughter) R. Lee Ermey is known to many veterans for the military roles he portrayed early in his acting career, like "Full Metal Jacket," "The Boys of Company C," and "Apocalypse Now."

What many people don't realize is that Lee is no stranger to the needs of disabled veterans. He was medically discharged as a staff sergeant in 1972. However, Lee remains very active with the military and veterans; so involved, in fact, that he considers himself still on active duty -- and the Marine Corps tends to agree.

Lee's support of Marines and veterans led to his honorary promotion to the rank of gunnery sergeant more than two decades after his retirement. Here now to welcome one and all is the one and only Marine gunnery sergeant, R. Lee Ermey.

(Whereupon, R. Lee Ermey addressed the convention via video.)

MR. R. LEE ERMEY: All right, listen up people. My name is Gunnery Sergeant R. Lee Ermey, United States Marine Corps veteran. I am here to motivate you, but first of all let me weed out all the non-packers who do not pack the gear to be here in the first place.

If you are a disabled veteran, welcome aboard and God bless you. If you are the spouse or the family of a disabled veteran, glad to have you on board. If you support the brave men and women in uniform who have sacrificed for our beloved nation, we are honored to have you. Do I see any Marines out there? Well, you're welcome, too.

If, however, you think that veterans benefits should be cut on a whim or some pork barrel project, get out of here. If you believe that the people who have sacrificed for our great nation deserve anything less than a higher care, get out.

If you are months behind on your membership dues, you're out of here. Just kidding about the dues. But, seriously, you need to get them paid up soon.

Welcome to the DAV 84th National Convention. We've got a lot on our plates this year and a whole new generation of veterans who need our help more than ever. These men and women deserve our very best so let's stay motivated and get involved. Hoo-hah. Sempter Fi. Carry on. (Applause)

MR. ROB LEWIS: And now, let's meet your DAV National Officers. At the Past National Commander position, a rousing welcome for Alan Bowers; (Applause) from Connersville, North Carolina, your National Chaplain, a heavenly welcome for the Reverend Gerald Stump; (Applause) the pride of North Dakota, your National Judge Advocate, Mike Dobmeier; (Applause) your National Fourth Junior Vice Commander, a native from Del Rio, Texas, let's hear it for Bobby Barrera; your National Third Junior Vice Commander, from Illinois, a rousing welcome for Raymond Dempsey; your National Second Junior Vice Commander a native of Arlington, Virginia, Robert Reynolds; (Applause) your National First Junior Vice Commander, from scenic Oregon, please give it up for Brad Barton; (Applause) and last, but certainly not least, your National Senior Vice Commander from Colorado Springs, Colorado, please welcome Paul Jackson. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER PAUL JACKSON: Each year the National Senior Vice Commander has the distinct pleasure of introducing the National Commander for the purpose of presenting his report to the Convention delegates.

This year the honor falls on me. And I am so proud to introduce a man who has lived up and often exceeded the expectation of leadership and commitments we've come to expect from our national commanders.

In a time of war, National Commander Jim Sursely has inspired our organization to reach new heights in building better lives for disabled American veterans.

His passion for serving his fellow man, his charisma and fortitude will probably go down in the annals of DAV history. Ladies and gentlemen, it is certainly my sincere pleasure to introduce to you James E. Sursely, National Commander of the Disabled American Veterans. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Paul, for that very kind introduction and good morning. I trust you are all ready to conduct the business of the Disabled American Veterans at this, our 84th National Convention. I know I am.

I also know that many of you came a great distance for this Convention and thank you very much for being here. And thanks to all of you the DAV has had a really great year.

Let me start by saying that I consider my year as your National Commander as a tremendous honor and a great opportunity to catch a glimpse into the future of our organization.

I can tell you that the future has much to offer -- great challenges, stunning successes, and more opportunities for service. But let me first take a look back for a moment.

The DAV this year marks it's 84th anniversary, a truly noteworthy milestone. There has been a long list of great National Commanders who have served before me, forming a continuous line of service for disabled veterans and their families.

That line was broken for some this year as we witnessed the passing of Past National Commanders Oliver Meadows and Ed Heath. We will miss their companionship, but we can be comforted in knowing that many more great National Commanders will come in the future to fulfill their legacy.

As I look at my supportive and contributing National Officers I can see the near future of the DAV and it is very impressive. They are truly remarkable individuals who care about our organization and are steadfastly loyal to our mission of service.

I have met thousands of members across this nation and spoken about the needs of disabled veterans to school children, concerned citizens and members of the Administration and Congress.

I have seen pride in the faces of those who hear our story and I have seen concern when I discuss the issues facing today's disabled veterans. I am confident that our citizens will strongly oppose any serious legislative threats to the well-being of disabled veterans and will support the needs of our nation's veterans. (Applause)

An example is the recent emergency legislation to cover a critical shortfall in VA healthcare, a shortfall of some $1.5 billion for 2005. Had Congress and the Administration listened to us in the first place there would have been no need for such emergency legislation. (Applause)

But once the VA admitted it did not have enough funding to meet the healthcare needs of veterans it was the public groundswell that convinced many that VA healthcare funding should be a national priority. (Applause)

The people of America are with us but they need the knowledge to continue to help us. It falls to us to take the lead and to ensure that the American people know of the plans proposed by the Administration and our elected leaders in Washington to shortchange veterans healthcare services and benefits.

Our outstanding professional national legislative staff is the best of the best (Applause) and they provide us with both support and timely information we need to protect our interests in Congress. (Applause)

They provide us with the tools we need to ensure that veterans will always remain a national priority. (Applause) But it is up to us, the members of our organization, to inform the American public and continue our legacy into the future.

Membership in the DAV Commander's Action Network is a big first step to ensure that our benefits and healthcare remain in tact and whole. After all, these are the benefits provided by a nation of grateful citizens for our service and sacrifice.

Lawmakers should not be allowed to revise, reform and reinvent the system that has for decades served disabled veterans and their families. (Applause) Congress should restore, reaffirm and rely on the system that has cared for and comforted generations of disabled veterans. (Applause)

Our organization is blessed to have intelligent and insightful leadership at every level to meet the challenges that we have faced this past year and into the future.

National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson has been a close friend and supportive advisor. With his treasure of knowledge resulting from an outstanding career of service to veterans we are greatly blessed to have the finest leader of any veterans service organization in Art. (Applause)

His confidence, support and strength helped me through this year. His contributions cannot be understated. Art is one of our nation's great leaders and a fine man who is dedicated to our mission of building better lives for disabled veterans and their families. (Applause)

Supporting Art and me are your outstanding Executive Directors, Rick Patterson at National Headquarters in Cold Spring, Kentucky, and Dave Gorman at the National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C. (Applause)

They provided valuable guidance and foresight that enabled me to serve the needs of DAV more successfully. And thanks to their highly professional staffs our organization continues to carry out our mission of service and hope day-in and day-out. (Applause)

And for that I am truly grateful and proud to be a part of the DAV. (Applause) I want to especially thank our outstanding professional National Service Officers who each day ensure that our mission is fulfilled in its most meaningful way. (Applause)

They are truly outstanding young men and women who are devoting their lives to care for veterans. My appreciation goes to the Transition Service Officers who are working with our newest generation of veterans to ensure they receive the care and support they need.

The DAV continues to be the leader in VA's benefits delivery at discharge initiative for these new veterans. (Applause) The VA last January began consolidating the decision-making process of these claims to two regional processing offices: Salt Lake City and Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

In Salt Lake City the DAV represented more than 60 percent of the claims received by VA. DAV represented nearly 50 percent of all the cases decided by the Winston-Salem office. The numbers clearly show that the DAV is the leader in representing these brave veterans of the Iraq War and the War against Terrorism. (Applause)

In 88 offices throughout the United States and in Puerto Rico our corps of 260 National Service Officers with the assistance of 24 Transition Service Officers assigned to various military installations diligently provide representation to veterans and their families with claims for benefits.

Our NSOs also represented veterans and active-duty military personnel before medical and physical evaluation boards and many other official panels.

Between July the 1st, 2004, and June the 30th, 2005, our NSOs and TSOs represented more than a quarter of a million veterans and their families in claims for VA benefits, obtaining for them nearly $3 billion in new and retroactive benefits. (Applause)

My thanks also go out to our chapter and department commanders and adjutants, our dedicated chapter and department Service Officers, volunteers, Transportation Network drivers and Hospital Service Coordinators.

And I thank each member for what they do every day to help their fellow veterans. Without the support of our front-line members I could not have succeeded. (Applause)

We have so much to be proud of and we did it together -- the national staff, you, the leaders, and the 1.3 million other disabled veterans who make up this great organization, the DAV. (Applause)

Our dedicated DAV and Auxiliary volunteers continue to lead our nation. In the past year our more than 17,000 volunteers have donated nearly 2.4 million hours of service to disabled veterans, a record unmatched by any other veterans service organization. (Applause)

Our corps of volunteers continue to make our Transportation Network the envy of veterans service organizations. Our program continues to show tremendous growth as an indispensable resource for veterans.

Across the nation DAV Hospital Service Coordinators operate 183 active programs. They have recruited 9,657 volunteer drivers who last year logged 26.6 million miles, taking 731,000 veterans to and from VA medical centers. (Applause)

Many of these veterans rode in vans the DAV donated to VA medical facilities for use in the Transportation Network. DAV departments and chapters in coordination with the national organization have now donated 1,668 vans to VA medical centers nationwide at a cost of $34 million. (Applause)

Yes, our organization has achieved quite a lot this year. And all of us need to continue to work hard to ensure that our government treats veterans as we deserve. (Applause)

I have wonderful personal memories of this year of service. I shall always remember and deeply appreciate the support I received from each of you as I addressed the Joint Meeting of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee at the conclusion of our Mid-Winter Conference.

It was both a humbling and exciting experience. And I can tell you that the standing ovation from our members who attended the meeting renewed my strength of purpose and steeled my determination to communicate to lawmakers. (Applause)

They clearly heard the DAV's call for guaranteed funding for VA healthcare and a fair and equitable program of disability compensation for all disabled veterans, including military retirees. (Applause)

I was gratified when members of Congress later threw out the Administrations contentious proposal of enrollment fees and higher prescription drug charges. This was an important effort in support of disabled veterans. It proved to the Administration and elected leaders that our organization has significant clout.

And I can tell you without a doubt that we are the most effective veterans service organization in the world (Applause) and we've done it by staying with our central mission to build better lives for disabled veterans and their families. (Applause)

Another memory I have is when the President and I embraced during the Inaugural Ball early this year. In effect it was a gracious gesture to disabled veterans from the leader of our nation.

One of the most heartwarming events of my life, much less my year as National Commander, was visiting the wounded from Iraq and Afghanistan at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

One of the veterans I met was Brian Kolfage who, like me, is a triple amputee. Brian and I talked for quite a while and I could see both courage and pain in his eyes. His spirit was overwhelming as was his determination to lead a full life.

There were many others I visited along with their parents, wives and loved ones. In them I saw the future of our organization. Many of these young men and women have joined our ranks and someday perhaps Brian Kolfage or someone like him will become your National Commander. (Applause)

I am proud to tell you that your support has been needed by these soldiers and marines and that your DAV has been brilliantly successful in helping them.

I'd like to ask those who have served in Afghanistan and Iraq that are with us today to please stand if they can and be recognized by our grateful membership. (Applause)

I want to thank each of you for your wonderful support. It has been an honor to serve as your National Commander. As I perform my duties I know that I am representing each of you.

With that responsibility in mind I know we will never fail. And to each of my fellow National Officers goes my sincere thanks for all your support and all you've done to make this year a tremendous success. (Applause)

As an optimist who looks forward to the future I have had my year of service and I loved every minute of it. Now let's get on with the future. (Standing Ovation)

DELEGATE: Florida loves you, Jim. (Laughter)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER JACKSON: Commander Sursely, Jim, your leadership and your devotion to our great organization will certainly be long remembered. And I personally want to thank you.

But is this gentleman, Clofage -- is that what you call him? -- is he the long-short for the National Commander this year? (Laughter) If so I take that back. (Laughter)

But, sincerely Jim, you know it has been a great –- you know what I think about you and I think the other line officers you've been terrific and I'm sure that you will remain a part of this great organization when your tenure is up. Thanks again and let's give him another round of applause, please. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: It's not very often you get a kiss from a Marine. (Laughter) At this time I would like to recognize the governing body of our organization, the National Executive Committee. Gentlemen, please stand and be recognized. (Applause)

James Nicholson was sworn in as Secretary of Veterans Affairs on February 1st, 2005. As Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Mr. Nicholson is charged with ensuring that America's veterans receive the care, support, recognition and dignity they deserve for their service to our country.

He directs the federal government's second largest Cabinet Department, responsible for a nationwide system of healthcare services, benefits programs, and national cemeteries for America's veterans and dependents.

For the past three years, Mr. Nicholson served as U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican. He is a graduate of West Point and served eight years active duty as a paratrooper and Ranger-qualified Army officer.

In Vietnam he earned the Bronze Star Medal, the Combat Infantry Badge, the Meritorious Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Vietnamese Cross for Gallantry and two Air Medals. After 22 years in the Army Reserve, he retired with the rank of full colonel.

Secretary Nicholson holds a Master's Degree in Public Policy from Columbia University and a Law Degree from the University of Denver. A successful Colorado businessman, he was elected Chairman of the Republican National Committee in 1997 where he served for four years, through the elections of 2000.

So, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honor and a pleasure to introduce Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable R. James Nicholson. (Applause)

HONORABLE R. JAMES NICHOSON: Thank you, Jim. Thank you. Well, good morning everyone and thank you, National Commander and friend, Jim Sursely, for that introduction.

Chairman Bowers, Adjutant Wilson, other senior officers of the Disabled American Veterans, my fellow veterans and ladies and gentlemen, I am very, very happy to be here this morning and I want to thank you all for inviting me to come.

As we were getting off the plane yesterday evening, one of my security guys said, "you know," he said, "this is often called 'lost wages.'" (Laughter)

And I said, "Have you had an experience like that?" And he said, "Well, no, it hasn't affected me." He said, "The last time that I was here with your predecessor I won $14,000 on the $2 slot machine."

So this morning when we got up and I thought of this, when our host and the Convention Chairman was saying that this is a city that never sleeps I asked this security guy, "Darrell", I said, "Well, how did you do last night?"

He said, "Well, I won $1,400." So it's true, he didn't sleep I think and he didn't lose any wages. I also want to offer my salute to one of my former comrades-in-arms that is here with us and you heard from him yesterday, General Jim Anderson, that I served in the Army with that is doing a wonderful job now I think talking about leadership and the blend, and the need for the blend of competence and character.

Another good friend of mine is here and I think you're about to also pay homage to him, which is certainly due, and that is Colonel Oliver North, a guy that has done a lot for veterans. (Applause)

And let me also salute Lois Pope who is here with us. I know the work that she is doing for the creation of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial in Washington in her role as the president of the LIFE Foundation. I wish her well and thank her for that effort, also. (Applause)

You know, this is my first DAV Convention, the first that I've had the opportunity to be with you and address you at this momentous occasion so let me say a word or two more about myself.

I was born in a very small town in the heartland of our country, Northwestern Iowa, called Struble, Iowa. (Applause) And there's an Iowan out there. (Laughter)

And this town, there were 99 people there when I was growing up there. Now it's 68. (Laughter) But I had two of my classmates at West Point from the time we were plebes couldn't believe the stories I would tell about this town and they said that if we graduate from here four years hence, pray God, I commit now to go there and visit this place.

And by the grace of God we, all three, did graduate and they came. They saw that when I said there are two signs identifying this town and they both say "Resume Speed" (Laughter) that they were there, sure enough.

But my family unfortunately was very poor. My dad lost the family farm in the Depression and then took up drinking very seriously. And my mother and we seven kids were reduced to dire poverty.

We had to move around, occupying these unoccupied, vacated tenant houses on farms, used to be for hired men before they got machinery. And it was tough.

But my mother through her faith, faith in God and her faith in this country, held us together. And so here I am today, a member of the President's Cabinet, a former Ambassador to the Holy City.

I'm a very joyous husband of 38 years and a proud father. (Applause) I'm the father of a veteran who was called to active duty for the Gulf War, by the way, when he was a student at the University of Colorado.

I have had the opportunity to serve my country in the United States Army. I received a college education at about the only price that my family could afford to pay and that was at the U.S. Military Academy.

And there I learned the meaning of General Douglas McArthur's words to the Corps a year after I graduated of, "Duty, honor country." Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, and what you will be.

And they have dictated what I have tried to live up to which is the code of my alma mater. My experiences there shaped my abilities I think not only as a soldier but as a man. They made me want to serve my country and they now make me appreciate my country so much.

So today as Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs I again have this wonderful opportunity to serve, to give something back to our nation and to its most prized citizens, its veterans. (Applause)

I feel particularly lucky to lead this department of our government. It's the keeper of President Lincoln's promise to "care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan."

It is my honor to fulfill this charge as our nation's principal advocate for those who bear the honored title of "American veteran." And your organization's stated purpose, I note, has great resonance with President Lincoln's admonition which is building better lives for disabled veterans and their families.

So I'm here to salute you and to tell you how grateful I am for the longstanding relationship that exists between the VA and the DAV. And I know that we at the VA can only succeed if we work hand-in-hand in partnership with you and with other veterans service organizations.

The DAV has always been an advocate, not only for disabled American veterans but for the VA itself. You've always stood four-square in support of our mission. You do now and I thank you for that.

This year we, the VA, celebrate our 74th anniversary of the founding of the modern Veterans Administration. This makes us the younger brother in our relationship.

As you've been told several times already this morning, have been reminded, you were founded ten years before we. This is your 85th birthday and so happy birthday and congratulations to you.

Let me tell you a story about two brothers I once knew. They were spending the night at their grandparents' house. At bedtime the two boys knelt beside their beds to say their prayers.

And the youngest one began praying at the top of his lungs. "I pray for a new bicycle," he said. "I pray for a new X-box. I pray for a new DVD." And his older brother leaned over to him and nudged him gently and he said, "Why are you shouting? God isn't deaf." And the little brother answered, "No, but grandma is." (Laughter)

Well, we at the VA are not deaf, either. We know your concerns. We know that you're worried about the status of our budget for Fiscal Year 2006 and beyond.

We know that you and your members are concerned about timely access to health care and the growing workload at our facilities. And we know that you want the disparities in disability claims reduced and our national cemeteries to be maintained as national shrines.

We hear you. We agree and we are taking action. Let's begin by discussing our healthcare system. I'm proud to say that today the VA is creating a healthcare system worthy of the men and women that we are privileged to serve.

Earlier this year in an in-depth investigation by the "Washington Monthly" the author wrote that ten years ago veterans' hospitals were in a deep crisis.

But then he wrote, "Today's warriors are returning to the nation's best care. Today's VA is producing the highest-quality care in the country. VA's turn-around points the way toward solving America's healthcare crisis."

I am proud to say that that article was called, "The Best Care Anywhere." And more recently, just last month -- and I know many of you saw this -- the "U.S. News and World Report" in their annual "Best Hospitals" issue wrote an article about the VA's transformation.

It was titled, "Military Might: Today's VA Hospitals are Models of Top-Notch Care." And it tells the story of Augustine Martinez, a Navy veteran whose case baffled doctors at Kaiser Permanente but who was quickly diagnosed and cured by VA's Palo Alto Medical Center. "I was fortunate I was a veteran" he said, "Otherwise, I don't think I would be here today."

Our healthcare mission is not just about where we provide care but how well we provide that care. We measure the kinds of things that matter: how easily veterans are able to access our care; how satisfied they are with the care we provide; and how well we're able to restore them to the highest level of functioning.

We've used these measurements to set rigorous standards for the care we provide, standards that enable us to demonstrate that the care we offer is truly outstanding.

And I can say that because I didn't have anything to do with making it that, but it is. And as I travel about, including here this morning a man came up to me to thank me for the care that he is getting at one of our hospitals.

We now lead the nation in 18 of 18 healthcare quality indicators for disease prevention and treatment that are directly comparable with the other healthcare organizations that have published data.

And that, therefore, is not just bragging, it's the opinion of the Rand Corporation, a non-profit research foundation which published those results in the "Annals of Internal Medicine."

Our computerized patient records system provides a single integrated application to healthcare providers at all of our hospitals, nursing homes, outpatient clinics, which number over 850 now, and readjustment counseling centers.

Through the CPRS we can update a patient's medical history, review any test results, submit orders and access patient health information from any VA medical center or clinic from anywhere in the United States.

No other integrated healthcare system in the world can make that claim. And we are working towards a greater role for veterans in a new kind of healthcare.

We've designed a computer Website called, "My Healthy Vet" that gives veterans enrolled with us access to their personal health records, online health assessment tools, and high-quality consumer health information.

"My Healthy Vet" is easy to find and easy to use. Just click on "myheath.va.gov" and you're there. You'll be taking an important first step. If you're enrolled for VA healthcare, this can be very, very helpful to you and helpful in taking an active part in controlling your healthcare strategies, which we welcome.

Let me thank you, members of the DAV, for your continued support of our healthcare system and especially for those of you who having served our nation once in uniform now serve us again as volunteers.

Some take part in the DAV's Volunteer Transportation Network, helping to transport veterans to our hospitals and clinics for their appointments. Others serve as instructors in the Winter Sports Clinic that the VA and DAV jointly sponsor every year to teach your fellow disabled veterans to ski and maybe more importantly, I think, to show others what is possible in their lives.

And still others are among the 130,000 men and women who take part in the largest centralized volunteer program in the federal government, helping patients in our hospitals, nursing homes, vet centers and clinics in their recovery and their rehabilitation.

Ed Hartman of the DAV has just completed his term as chairman of the VA's Voluntary Service Advisory Committee. I understand that Ed is not here today, that he and his wife Diane had a baby girl, but I am here to thank him for his service.

Of course, providing veterans with quality healthcare is not our sole purpose. From compensation and pensions to education, to home loan mortgage guarantees and homeless programs, vocational training programs, benefits delivery figures prominently in our mission.

You all know what a good news and bad news joke is. My wife is an artist and she tells a story about one of her fellow painters whose husband received a visitor while she was out.

The good news, he told her when she returned, was that the visitor asked him if the value of her paintings was likely to go up after she died. And she he said, yes the visitor bought every one of them. The bad news was that the visitor was her doctor. (Laughter)

Now, I know there are concerns within the DAV about the disparities in compensation and pension awards between facilities. And I want you to know that I share that concern. And I do not minimize the importance of those disparities.

In this case that's the bad news. But we are taking swift and decisive steps to address the problem and I will not be satisfied with any answer that does not completely restore more confidence in our system.

The good news is that we made more than 1.4 million decisions on disability claims last year, while our inventory of claims has gone down in the past three years by nearly 100,000.

And the average processing time for claims was reduced by nearly one-third while the quality of our rating decisions has significantly improved. The system is not yet perfect and it does not yet satisfy me but we are making progress.

Finally, there is the third leg of our service to you, our national cemetery system. For 1,800 veterans who pass away every day we are conducting the most ambitious schedule of cemetery openings since the Civil War.

Five new cemeteries will soon be added to our 120 existing cemeteries. Six others are in the planning stages. And by 2009 we will have nearly doubled our cemetery capacity.

I mentioned younger brothers and older brothers before. Last year our national cemetery system earned the highest consumer satisfaction ranking ever achieved by a public organization in America, a 95 out of a possible 100.

So I'm going to brag again a little bit because when they got that rating my big brother Jack was the Undersecretary for Memorial Affairs. I am very proud of what he did there and I'm very proud of all of our cemetery employees who made our cemeteries do so well and make them into the national shrines they are. (Applause)

We have made great strides in many areas in our department and I expect that together with DAV we will continue to make progress in the months and the years ahead.

But everything that we've done so far will matter little if we do not meet the newest challenge the VA faces, to ensure that veterans returning home from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom receive the level of care they have earned through their service and their sacrifice. (Applause)

To date we have provided healthcare to more than 100,000 of their comrades and coordinated the transfer of many seriously wounded veterans from military treatment facilities to VA medical centers throughout the nation.

We have opened an office of seamless transition, bringing together healthcare and benefits experts within VA to foster and coordinate the transition of these men and women from active duty to civilian life.

We now have active duty Marine and Army officers helping to staff our Seamless Transition Office to better effect the handoff at a very delicate time for our veterans.

We have established four poly-trauma centers which provide coordinated health and rehabilitation services to active duty service members and veterans who have experienced severe injuries as a result of their service.

And we are extending our support and our services to the families of veterans in these centers by including them in the recovery process and by working with local supporters to provide family members with housing and assistance to help them cope in distant cities near the hospitals.

We also need to be certain that the young men and women who put their lives on hold to go to war are given every opportunity to join or rejoin the American workforce once they return.

Approximately 40 percent — 40 percent -- of the 212,000 service men and women who separated from active duty in 2004 were OIF/OEF veterans. And it is unacceptable that the almost 1 in 5 of these recently separated veterans who are in the age cohort of 20 to 24 years are unemployed. (Applause)

We're working on this. The VA is developing a strategic partnership with governors, national employer associations and our sister agencies and is preparing to launch a national initiative to assist recently separated veterans to obtain suitable jobs and to begin or to restart their civilian careers.

This initiative is called "Fulfilling the Commitment: Coming Home to Work." We will strive to see that every recently separated veteran who can and who wants to work will find a job. And they deserve no less. (Applause)

I have been to Iraq since I became Secretary and I have seen firsthand these heroes in action. I have visited them at Walter Reed and Bethesda many times and in our poly-trauma centers.

And I have seen these young people fighting the lifelong battle that all DAV members must fight: the battle to restore their bodies and their minds to the maximum level of functioning possible and to have a positive attitude to go along with it.

I am inspired by their struggle as I am inspired by your example. I will not let these heroes down. We are grateful to the DAV for your support as we help these new heroes recover, restore and rebuild their lives. (Applause)

Will we have the funds to accomplish the many missions we've asked to undertake? We must have them. Last month the President submitted to Congress an Amendment to the Administration's Fiscal 06 budget.

He asked for almost $2 billion more on top of his already record-setting request and this is on the heels of a billion and a half that has been approved for Fiscal '05.

With these additional funds access to our system will remain undiminished, especially for low-income veterans, those with service-connected disabilities, special needs, or who have recently returned from the combat theater.

I appreciate the support we have received in this from you and from our supporters in Congress. Let me close with this. I am proud and privileged to lead the department that is the keeper of America's long-standing promise to do the very best we can for those who served and sacrificed for us.

We are as committed to our oldest veterans from the trenches of World War II as we are to our youngest heroes from the streets of Baghdad. I know that while wars have beginnings and ends, the battle to properly care for those who fought them never ends.

In these dangerous times I ask that your thoughts and prayers be with our troops in the field today, our brave young comrades now fighting terrorism throughout the world, fighting to suppress those people who, as the Pope used to say, "Are killing in the name of God."

God bless them and may God bless the Disabled American Veterans and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for those gracious remarks. When I first met Lois Pope a few years ago I knew she was going to play a very big part in what the DAV is all about. She is a woman of conviction and a woman of grace and compassion.

Lois not only adds a new dimension to the DAV's mission of service and hope, she also has brought about a new level of recognition for the achievements and contribution of America's disabled veterans through American Veterans' Disabled for Life Memorial and the Disabled Veterans LIFE Memorial Foundation.

It is my very great pleasure to introduce Lois Pope, co-founder and chairman of the Disabled Veterans LIFE Memorial Foundation. (Applause)

MRS. LOIS POPE: Good morning. Good morning distinguished guests and good morning unsung heroes of the 84th National Convention. (Applause)

Art Wilson, myself and all of our wonderful staff at the Disabled Veterans LIFE Memorial Foundation are working to create the one and only memorial in Washington, D.C., dedicated to your sacrifices in defense of our freedom. (Applause) Yes. (Applause)

I thank Art for his vision. He is a man of valor and an unsung hero, just as your Commander, James Sursely, and all disabled veterans everywhere are unsung heroes. And this memorial will assure that you will be unsung no more. (Applause)

It will respect and honor your sacrifices forever and will be a vehicle for teaching this and future generations that war is not just about bullets and bombs and death and destruction.

It will be a teaching vehicle for this and future generations that war is about human beings, unsung, all of you, like all of you, who are willing to give the utmost of human sacrifices in defense of our freedom and democracy.

Our nation's debt to the heroic men and valiant women disabled in the service of our country can never be repaid. You -- you, have earned our nation's undying gratitude and the American Veterans Disabled for LIFE Memorial will honor your sacrifices forever. (Applause)

So, ladies and gentlemen, let me say, "unsung heroes." You say, "Unsung no more." Unsung heroes.

(Response of "Unsung no more.")

MRS. POPE: Unsung heroes.

(Responses of "Unsung no more.")

MRS. POPE: Unsung heroes.

(Response of "Unsung no more.")

MRS. POPE: Thank you and God bless all of you. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you very much, Lois. It is my honor once again to share the platform with our DAV Auxiliary National Commander Gertrude Tidwell.

During my term as your National Commander I have had the pleasure and privilege of seeing her exemplify the love, leadership and dedication that have so ably guided the Auxiliary through the past year.

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

Commander Tidwell and I have shared many travels and experiences during our terms. And I can tell you without reservation that this wonderful woman who has dedicated herself to helping the families of disabled veterans magnificently represented the Auxiliary.

Here to deliver her report to the National Convention is my friend and truly an exceptional woman, DAV Auxiliary National Commander Gertrude Tidwell. (Applause)

DAV AUXILIARY COMMANDER GERTRUDE TIDWELL: Thank you, Commander, for that so glowing introduction. It has been a wonderful opportunity to serve with you during the past year.

Your kind consideration and experienced leadership have helped me make this one of my best years ever. Your good looks didn't hurt the cause any, either, Commander. (Applause)

On behalf of the DAV Auxiliary I want to also extend greetings to all National Officers, Past National Commanders, distinguished guests, delegates and members of the Disabled American Veterans and the Auxiliary attending our 84th National Convention here in exciting Las Vegas. (Applause)

I chose "Love isn't love until you give it away" as my theme for this year. I am happy to tell you Auxiliary members have spread a lot of love among disabled veterans and their families this year.

Spreading love and helping build better lives for disabled veterans and their families is also a goal of a special group of dedicated and hardworking women who assist me to guide our organization so expertly and productively during the past year.

Please hold your applause until I have introduced them all: National Senior Vice Commander Judy Steinhouse, North Dakota; National First Junior Vice Commander Donna Tanner, Massachusetts; National Second Junior Vice Commander Kathryn Wiley Washington; National Third Junior Vice Commander Kay Egan, Florida; National Fourth Junior Vice Commander Donna Stinnett, California; National Chaplain Melba Matlack, New Jersey; National Judge Advocate and Past National Commander Shelia Allred, North Carolina; National Adjutant and Past National Commander Maria Tedrow, Ohio; National Assistant Adjutant Judy Hezlep, Ohio. (Applause)

At this point I would like to take a moment to remember Past National Commander Janet Bennett who passed away on August the third.

(Moment of silence)

DAV AUXILIARY COMMANDER TIDWELL: Also on the dais are National Auxiliary Convention Chairman Helen Parcelle and Ethel Bussey, Commander of the Auxiliary State Department of Georgia.

Thank you, ladies. (Applause) Also seated in front of me are the Auxiliary National Executive Committee members. Please stand and be recognized. Thank you. (Applause)

As I visited Auxiliary units nationwide during the past year, I witnessed the tremendous dedication and tireless assistance our members bring to serving disabled veterans and their families. It made me so proud to be your National Commander.

The disabled American veterans suffer the pain of our loved ones. We do all in our power to nurture them and to make a meaningful improvement in their lives through our work on their behalf.

With the growing number of disabled veterans returning from the wars of Afghanistan and Iraq, our members are more determined than ever to continue our mission of service alongside the DAV members. (Applause)

It is the right thing to do and the Auxiliary is the right organization to do it. (Applause) We have shown those who need us that we will work together to wield formidable legislative strength.

I can assure you the Auxiliary will use that strength alongside the DAV to protect, improve, and advocate for benefits, services and programs for our families in need. (Applause)

Legislation is our primary Auxiliary goal and our members are quick to respond to our dedicated DAV legislative team in Washington through telephone calls, letters, e-mails and personal visits to our elected leaders to continue to urge their support of legislation benefiting veterans and their families. (Applause)

One of my most memorable moments as Auxiliary National Commander came when I was invited to join Commander Sursely during his powerful address to the Joint Veterans Affairs Committee in Washington, D.C.

Sitting there with other DAV leaders I had no doubt what a powerful source our great organization truly is for disabled veterans and their families. (Applause)

But even as I listened to his presentation and watched and listened as many of the Joint Veterans Affairs Committee agreed with Commander Sursely, I knew our quest for veterans benefits was not over.

We have much more to do to assure decent quality of life for disabled veterans and their families. I also know the only way to make it happen is to stand strong alongside DAV members. (Applause)

To maintain our strength and effectiveness we must continue our efforts to grow as an organization. We have had a successful membership year but we can and must do better in the future.

To promote our growth and strength, the Auxiliary undertook and accomplished an historic event during the course of my year as your commander.

I was tremendously proud to announce that as of February the 15th, 2005, the Auxiliary ratified its constitution to include males meeting eligibility requirements the opportunity to become Auxiliary members.

For the first time in our organization's history we could now welcome: sons, grandsons, husbands, fathers, brothers, and many others into the Auxiliary. (Applause) This is a new opportunity for Auxiliary growth such as we've never known before.

I can assure you the Auxiliary will use this opportunity to strengthen our membership to better serve disabled veterans and their families as never before. (Applause)

Auxiliary members continue to be a vital volunteer force at VA hospitals and medical facilities nationwide. They provide care and comfort to hospitalized veterans directly and indirectly through a host of volunteer positions.

Through their efforts volunteers strive to improve the quality of care in bettering the lives and spirits of our hospitalized veterans. Volunteers know the meaning of love. They gave immeasurable amounts of love to hospital veterans every day of the year.

Many Transportation Network drivers, also Auxiliary members, they drive DAV vans donated to the VA mile after mile to ensure sick and disabled veterans get to and from VA medical facilities for needed care.

I have encouraged and witnessed the great Auxiliary Service Support Program has on the Auxiliary members who have no where else to go. Contributors who support the Auxiliary Service Support Program give their life and assistance to members who truly need our help and need it right away.

Your continued support means Auxiliary members will be able to receive needed assistance for years to come. It is a wonderful cause, certainly worthy of our love and support. (Applause)

Instilling respect for veterans and a better understanding of patriotism within our communities is a worthy cause. It is a cause the Auxiliary supports through the Americanism program.

The Americanism program is an effective outreach tool, especially suitable for educating countless school children and youth programs annually. These programs and activities and so much more makes the Auxiliary a truly great organization.

It also makes us an important partner alongside the DAV as we work together to build better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families.

I am fortunate to have witnessed Auxiliary members making real and meaningful differences in the lives of disabled veterans and their families. And where I could not venture due to illness our members represented our organization notably.

Such was the case when I was unable due to health and other commitments to attend the Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Colorado this year. The Auxiliary was there to sponsor and volunteer in this event that can only be described as Miracles on a Mountainside.

I was proud to know the Auxiliary was there to support seriously disabled veterans skiing and participating in other programs that challenge and encourage their rehabilitation and self-esteem.

To positively affect the lives of hundreds of seriously disabled veterans each year by supporting the Winter Sports Clinic is heartwarming. To know that many of them are recently disabled military men and women who are no older than the grandchildren of many of us in this room is awe-inspiring.

It is also awe-inspiring to know the well being of young veterans disabled in places like Iraq and Afghanistan while serving their country depend in large measure on what we accomplish here to serve them in the future.

Our work is not done. We will have much more to achieve and such to maintain. But know this, the DAV and the DAV Auxiliary, we will do it together, working side by side. (Applause)

Working side by side so long as we're ever needed because "love isn't love until you give it away" and there are many out there who still need our love. (Standing Ovation)

I have a presentation to make to Commander Sursely. It says, "Presented to James E. Sursely, National Commander, in appreciation for distinguished service given to Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary." It's signed by National Adjutant Maria M. Tedrow and National Commander Gertrude Tidwell. Jim. (Applause) Thank you, Jim. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Gertrude, for a tremendous year as Auxiliary National Commander and we're certainly proud to have you and all the Auxiliary by our side every day. (Applause)

Late last year Fox Television host Oliver North and producer-director Steven Tierney of "War Stories with Oliver North" came to the DAV with an idea about a program showing the medical advances that help amputees.

They sought amputees from previous wars to talk about their rehabilitation and living life without limbs. But as they worked on their report they found a bigger story -- the story of thousands of amputees and millions of disabled veterans. It was the story of the DAV.

In telling the story Oliver and Steven told ours. And in appreciation the DAV created its first Bugle Award, recognizing their contribution of the media on behalf of our nation's veterans.

The contributions made by Oliver North and Steven Tierney and all of those associated with the program related the stories of the courage and sacrifice of our nation's veterans.

I'd like to take a moment to recognize in our audience today a very important part of the "War Stories" program, Executive Producer Pamela Brown. Would you please stand and be recognized. (Applause)

DELEGATE: She's not here.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Okay. The reverence and respect with which these individuals view veterans is evident in the program seen by millions of Americans. Oliver and Steven did their best to honor our veterans -- and they do it every week, all year long. In doing so they chose to tell our nation the DAV story.

(Whereupon, a video was presented.)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Oliver and Steven display extraordinary commitment to produce weekly documentaries telling the history of our nation's veterans.

This new Bugle Award recognizes their outstanding reporting and programming on vital public issues relating to veterans as well as telling stories that honor our nation's disabled veterans and their families.

Their exemplary reporting on behalf of disabled veterans has given our citizens insight into the lives of disabled veterans and understanding that service is a lifelong commitment.

The determined, talented, and caring presentation about disabled veterans on "War Stories with Oliver North" has greatly aided and comforted the brave men and women who have placed their lives in harm's way in defense of freedom and democracy.

Ladies and gentlemen, the recipients of the first DAV Bugle Awards –- Oliver North and Steven Tierney. (Standing Ovation)

MR. STEVEN TIERNEY: Thank you very much for the award, it's beautiful. I just want to say that when I started researching this show I wasn't sure really what direction I wanted to go in so one of the first things I did was I went to the DAV Gala at the Mandarin Hotel in New York. And I didn't know what to expect.

I didn't have a lot of knowledge on the subject. But when I got there the pride and the camaraderie and the strength in that room just overwhelmed me.

And I knew that if I could find some way of translating what I saw and what I felt in that room to the TV screen I could make a really good show that would do justice to these men who have sacrificed so much for this country.

So I just want to say that I'd like to thank some of the men from the DAV who gave me a little bit of guidance, pointed the direction when I needed it. That's Arthur Wilson, David Gorman who you actually saw in that clip, Tom Wilborn and Gary Weaver.

And as far as Fox News goes, Oliver and I get a lot of support. I'm from a staff of about ten people but Oliver and I get a lot of support from Fox Chairman Roger Ailes and Senior Vice President Bill Shine who give us the resources to make shows like this.

And Pamela Brown unfortunately wasn't able to come tonight. She had to go to Alaska to do a thing in global warming. (Laughter) And I envy her. But her skill and guidance in making "War Stories" is invaluable to all of us, not just me.

And most of all I'd like to thank Ollie, the man behind me, because without his knowledge -- he has an extensive and passionate knowledge of military history.

And you know we get in these friendly arguments about what happened and what didn't happen. (Laughter) And he dots the "i's" and he crosses the "t's" but the show comes out, the viewer mail very rarely criticizes our facts and that's usually due to him.

So, I just want to say in closing that as a citizen of the United States I have never been in the military but through this show I've met so many veterans that I just want to offer you my deepest respect and gratitude for what you have sacrificed for this country.

The people I've met just doing this episode were amazing. Bobby Barrera at the end was one of the interview subjects and there are others here I hope.

But you've all changed my way of thinking about the military and the veterans and the way they should be treated and I'll treasure this award and thank you very much. (Applause) Thank you.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you. Thank you, Steven.

COLONEL OLIVER NORTH: I'm not going to kiss you, either, Commander Sursely. (Laughter) Please know that for all of us at Fox News that we are particularly grateful.

I want you to know that Steve Tierney's dad fought in the Philippines and was a veteran of the recapture of the Philippines so he does have a passion. (Applause) And thankfully all of those who work on this have that same thing.

We are all, all of us, inspired by the stories that veterans have allowed us to document, whether it's on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan or those who are veterans of wars past.

Our job is the best in the whole business. All we do for a living is hang around with heroes. Unfortunately our modern definition of the word has been stretched to include all manner of people who do not warrant the title.

The athlete who just set a new sports record, the fellow who has just decided that he is now an adventurer to climb Mount Everest in solo isn't a hero.

They may be brave but they're not heroes because real heroes are, as you know, selfless. Real heroes are people who wittingly put themselves into harm's way for the benefit of another.

And through self-sacrifice and fortitude and action whether they succeed or fail heroes provide a moral and ethical framework for all of us. You know what I mean because this is a room full of heroes. (Applause)

Each one of you, as members of the DAV as I, each one of you in the Auxiliary, each one of you know the meaning of self-sacrifice and pain and suffering, all the consequence of serving our country.

You are living proof that our lives are not defined by what happens to us but by how we respond to what is happening. You are proof that we are not defined by life by what it brings to us but by how we respond with determination to what has happened to us in life.

Every day you show others that you may not ever know that we're not here to simply endure the future, we're here to change it for the good. We're not simply helpless creatures in some desperately uneven contest, we're all sons and daughters of Adam blessed with unique gifts and talents designed for doing good.

And what the DAV does is help people use those gifts and talents who might otherwise never have the chance. And you have proven as well that we're not here to complain about the steepness of the climb but to reach out and help others on a course that is often difficult and sometimes downright perilous.

Your courage and perseverance and your faith in the face of fear and loss are an inspiration to a whole new generation that need those virtues in equal measure as yours.

It is thanks to you and to those who serve today that we have hope that our nation will remain "the home of the brave and the land of the free." Thank you very much. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, gentlemen. The DAV's role as a benefactor for disabled veterans and their families is clearly visible in its Transportation Network.

Many of you will recall that in June of 2003 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 vans to the VA to provide transportation for sick and disabled veterans at medical facilities in 42 states. (Applause)

While not a record-setter, this year DAV's donation of 119 new Ford vans is substantial and represents an investment of more than $2.5 million. (Applause) The combined total of all vans donated since 1987 to VA medical centers nationwide now stands at 1,668 with a value of more than $34 million. (Applause)

Joining us today from Ford Motor Company with some important news is Mr. Dennis Cirbes. Prior to his retirement last year Dennis was Vice President of Labor Affairs at Ford Motor Company.

While on active duty with Ford Mr. Cirbes managed labor policy and negotiations covering the company's approximately 235,000 hourly employees worldwide.

Mr. Cirbes joined Ford in 1972 and during his career 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. Dennis. (Applause)

MR. DENNIS CIRBES: Thank you. And thank you, Commander Sursely, for that great introduction. I didn't realize I had accomplished that much in the 33 years I was with Ford so it's nice to be reminded every once in a while.

I would also like to thank Gerald Ogle for his history lesson on Las Vegas. I always thought that the King of Rock and Roll coined the term "Viva Las Vegas." (Laughter)

I didn't realize it had been around for 100 years so you learn something every day I guess. It's a pleasure to be here today as we kick off the 84th DAV National Convention. I am honored to represent Ford Motor Company at this year's event.

Having served with the 101st Airborne in Vietnam in 1970, I can personally tell you that I know the importance of this organization's work and I'm proud to be here marking such an important occasion with my fellow United States veterans. (Applause)

For 83 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 Second National Convention of the Veterans of World War.

Today Bill Ford, our Chairman and CEO, continues to believe it is important to support organizations like the DAV whose work and initiatives help to build better communities for all of us in America.

At Ford we are continuing to improve 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.

Over the years Ford has been honored to help provide mobility and to serve veterans' transportation needs in every state in the U.S. of A. It is a way for Ford Motor Company to assist the veterans who have served our country.

Likewise, since 2001, you have shown your appreciation to us by purchasing thousands of vehicles through the Ford Partnership Recognition Program. To date DAV members and their families have purchased more than 9,700 vehicles. That's a phenomenal number and we appreciate it and salute you for it. Thank you. (Applause)

And today I am here to reaffirm Ford's continued support of the DAV through a donation of an additional eight new E340 passenger vans for the use of hauling veterans to hospitals and treatments throughout the country.

Commander Sursely 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)

(Whereupon, Mr. Cirbes presented the ceremonial key to Commander Sursely and Adjutant Wilson.)

MR. CIRBES: And before you go back to your seats I would also like to announce today that Ford is providing $50,000 to the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Fund. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Cirbes presented a ceremonial check to Commander Sursely and Adjutant Wilson.)

MR. CIRBES: This gift honors the spirit of Jesse Brown, a man known for his dedication, leadership and his compassion. 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 James Sursely, Auxiliary National Commander Gertrude Tidwell. (Applause)

(Whereupon, gifts were presented to National Commander Sursely and Auxiliary National Commander Tidwell.)

MR. CIRBES: They are getting a replica of a Ford GT. (Laughter) And although Jay Leno was one of the first people to buy a Ford GT, I would really like to see Gertrude behind the wheel of one of them. (Applause) I think she could handle that 500-plus horsepower without any trouble at all. (Laughter)

But this is Ford's way of showing our appreciation for the hard work, dedication, that both James and Gertrude have experienced and shown us over the past year. Thank you so much and you have truly made a difference in the lives of many veterans.

Now the DAV has always stood up 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 since of the word.

And a special thanks to those of you that drive Ford Motor Company products. Again, we appreciate your support. Enjoy the rest of the Convention and remember, "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas." (Laughter) Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Dennis, I want to say that we are deeply grateful and overwhelmed by Ford's compassion and kindness, today and always. These eight new vans -- provided without cost to the DAV -- continue more than 83 years of cooperation between Ford Motor Company and the DAV.

Since 1996 Ford has now donated -– yes, I said "donated" -– to the DAV a total of 116 vans worth approximately $2 million. (Applause) As a worldwide leader in automotive engineering and innovations Ford embodies the vision, benevolence and wisdom that proves the "bottom line" isn't always about dollars and cents.

Ford's commitment to our nation's sick and disabled veterans beautifully illustrates the blueprint for corporate citizens in America. On behalf of the more than 1.3 million members of the Disabled American Veterans and our Auxiliary please accept our heartfelt thanks for providing these beautiful vans to our Transportation Network. (Applause)

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

To say we are proud of our affiliation with Ford is a gross understatement. Thank you, Dennis, Sandy Ulsh, Sandra Nicholls, and all the great folks at Ford who help support the DAV's service 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 our highest and most prestigious award. And this year the award will be presented to John Devine. To learn a little more about our Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year, please join me in watching this film.

(Whereupon, the film was viewed.)

COMMANDER SURSELY: I want you to know that it is a very special day for me as well, too, because John and I have been friends for about six years.

We have had the opportunity to go antelope hunting together in Montana and numerous occasions at the National Winter Sports Clinic. So it is a great honor to present to you the 2005 Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year, John Devine. (Standing Ovation)

MR. JOHN DEVINE: That's something else. Jim, this Marine is not going to kiss you, either. (Laughter) I'm tempted. It's just beautiful. It was some video.

Jim Hall and your staff, you did a fantastic job on that and I can't believe how well it came out. I thank you for your hard work. I'd like to personally thank Sy Gitland. He's the fellow who nominated me for this position.

At one of our meetings in Chapter 76 Sy said, "I want to nominate you for Veteran of the Year." And I just, I kind of shook it off. "Okay, go ahead," because I didn't think I'd be standing up here today.

And Sy is a World War II vet, a fellow Brooklynite. And he landed on D-Day. (Applause) And I respect him greatly. Thank you, Sy. I'd also like to thank my other members and friends at DAV 76 and National Amputation Foundation.

They were very helpful to me over the years and my father, we met on Ryerson Street and went down there for some VA business and my father says, "You stick with these guys. They know the benefits and they'll help you." And they have.

And I learned the benefits, too, you know to a pretty good extent and now I'm able to help the new guys that are coming down. And I'd like to thank the DAV because I'm a beneficiary of these recreational programs.

I've been involved at the National Amputee Golf Association. Early on I got involved in that and I met a lot of veterans there. I have felt at home. It was good therapy for me.

I saw the National Commander's Trophy being awarded over the years. And I didn't know my day would be coming, too. And the DAV puts on a great show. They're going to have it next week in Bethpage, New York, and I'm volunteered up for that one, too. I'll be doing the leg work — pun intended. (Applause)

I'm also involved in the DAV Winter Sports Clinic which I refer to as the "Greatest Show on Earth." I got involved in that eight years ago and I really went out there to take my kids skiing.

I thought it would be a nice place to take them skiing in Crested Butte, Colorado, and I got hooked. And I'm now addicted to golf and skiing. I can't wait for September to come. Bowling season starts and it's going to get cold.

When it gets cold it's going to start snowing and I'm ready. And that guy in the video is having fun. There is no doubt about it. And I am having fun. I am enjoying my life.

And I can tell you that in April of 1968 it was not that way. I was not a happy camper. I was angry. I had a very poor self image. I was emotionally distraught. I was angry, in plenty of pain.

And I remember the first day I came home and it wasn't a joyous day. It wasn't the way I expected to come home. And it was Labor Day weekend of 1968.

And I thought I would come home to relax, watch some TV and eat some of my mother's fine cooking. Little did I know that my father invited half of Brooklyn to come to my house to visit me. (Laughter)

And he said, "Come on. You've got to come out in the yard." And at that time I had a cast on my left leg up to my thigh. My right leg, of course, was amputated.

And I said, "What are you nuts? I'm not going outside. I don't want to see anybody. Get these people out of here. Please, dad." So it was a good Irish party and no one was going home and they were hanging out. (Laughter)

My new room was the TV room downstairs and I was sitting there looking at my collection of trophies from all my sports and looking at my leg gone and everybody feeling no pain coming in there telling me, "Hey, you're going to do great. You're going to do this." And oh, I just want to go back to that hospital. Let me out of here. I was not having a good weekend.

During that night my mother sat down on the bed. And it was very easy in those days for me to cry. You just had to look at me crooked and I started crying. And my mother sat where my leg would have been.

I said, "Mom, you'd be sitting on my leg right now if I had it." She said, "Well, you don't." And we started crying. I mean real crying. And I said, "That's it, Mom, no more tears." I told her that I'd beat this thing and do good. And I did.

Things got good. I had kids and I wanted to live and be an example to them. I didn't want to be one of those stereotypical Vietnam veterans that I detest.

I want to be a leader. I want to show them how to do it right. And that's basically how I live my life. So, the reason I'm telling you all this is because everybody here is faced with a challenge.

You don't have to be a disabled veteran to be face with challenges. We're people, human beings. And an important thing that helped me is I didn't listen to the word "no." I saw something I want, I would go after it.

But I had a little voice in my head that would tell me, "No" and it would deny me and it was frustrating and it was a struggle. I could tell you it like was freaky.

I could not go out in public without my prosthesis on. It was like being afraid of an elevator, like the doors would open and you wouldn't get on it. And I denied myself stuff.

And I was able to beat that demon down and enjoy life. And it happened progressively over the years. And things are going good and I had a lot of help along the way and I would like to thank some of those people that helped me.

Peggy, my beautiful sister, you were there the whole time. Even though you had a pretty big part in that video and hogged a lot of the time, I still love you dearly. (Laughter)

My cousin, Tom Devine, you're like my brother. Every time I have a crisis I call him up. And Tom goes way back. We lived across the street from each other. You taught me how to swim.

He gave me his baseball glove. You may not remember this, Tom, but I loved that baseball glove. A kid and his baseball glove, I slept with it. He taught me how to swim.

And I'm telling you I was a little kid. I was like five years old at the most. People would say, "You can't bring him out that far." He was like, "Why not?" We'd go out swimming in the creeks of Brooklyn.

We'd go to Coney Island. We'd go on the Thunderbolt. They'd say, "That kid is too small. He can't come on the Thunderbolt." For those guys to say no to a buck, you've got to be tiny not to get on those roller coasters because they want every dollar they can get. (Laughter)

So I would have to wait on the side of the ride for Tom to take the ride and come and get me. Now, my mother never knew he did that because you don't leave a kid on the side of Coney Island on a ride while you take the ride, especially like a five-year old. But, Tom, I love you dearly. He's out here taking pictures someplace. (Applause)

Tom -- I've got a lot of Tom's in my life, my Godson, Senior Chief Tom Conte, and I'm very proud of you. I see you there, baby. I admire your career in the Navy. You did everything in the military I wanted to do but history stopped me. And I'm with you all the way.

That other Tom here, a voice from the past, and up until yesterday the last time I saw Corporal Tom Heyder was on Charlie Ridge when the shells were bursting in air. And Tom and I met for the first time yesterday in thirty-something years and thank you for coming here, Tom. I appreciate it. (Applause)

Last year I met Fred Crowley up in Aspen. He's like the unofficial mayor of Aspen. He's a stand-up guy, a can-do Marine helping everybody any way he can. Fred, I respect you for coming down here. Thank you very much.

Bob Black, I'll meet you in Utah. We ski all the time together. Gail, Peggy's friend, my friend, thank you for coming. Eddie, my brother-in-law, you're a good man. And let's see, I think I got everybody, right? Did I miss anybody? Oh, yes. Oh, yes, I missed somebody.

I get my strength from seeing all you folks do what you do. And a few years ago I met a man that I think of constantly now because I use him as a role model -- I know you don't like hearing that word -- and he's there.

He is a legend in the Rockies. He joined the Marines, did his time in peacetime and it's just the way history works out. He would have been a great warrior if the time had come, I know it.

He served the Utah State Troopers for several years, injured in the line of duty, lost his eyesight. He shot a lot of people down. Bill Watters is a skiing legend in Utah and I met him at the Winter Sports Clinic. And, Bill, I love you. (Applause)

At the ski clinic -- which I can't tell you how much I like the Disabled Veterans Ski Clinic. It is great. When I went to Crested Butte, Colorado, for the first, Snowmass for the first time I was just starting to get the skiing down, this monoskiing.

And I got a new instructor and I said, "Don't you think I should be tethered until I get the feel of this mountain?" He said, "No." You know, okay. And he said, "I'll watch you and then I'll tell you where to go."

So we're going down to the lift and he says, "Go right. Go right." And I go right and I'm going to some strange lift. There is nobody there. It's like empty. The other one has 100 people at it.

He says, "We're going to take you up to the top." I go, "The top? I'm just starting out." "Yes, you've got it. You can do it." So we're riding up to the top on the lift and I go, "How did they stick me with this psych? Oh, my God, what am I going to do?" (Laughter)

But Bob Lindley, I respect you for coming down here and I appreciate the time and effort. Every year he's there training skiers and thank you very much. (Applause)

I just want to say, this is not the end of John Devine. I'm just going to keep on going on. Like I say, I can't wait for September. Bowling season starts. I'm in two leagues. I can't wait to go skiing.

What's new for me? I am now going to become a ski instructor because last year in Utah I -- (Applause) Thank you. Last year in Utah I had the opportunity of being a role model I guess you would call it for a young lady who had cancer.

That was one of the most touching experiences that I had in my life watching this smile on this young lady's face. And that's all it took to motivate me.

And I'd like to introduce my family to you. First of all I'd like my wife Caroline to come up here for a second. (Applause)

MRS. CAROLINE DEVINE: I'm just very proud of this man. That's all I --

MR. DEVINE: I didn't tell you to talk. (Laughter)

MRS. DEVINE: All right, no.

MR. DEVINE: That's all right. I would just like to say behind every good man there is a good woman and here she is. (Applause) She sees the other side of me.

She sees me growling, cursing, punching the walls, generally getting ticked off at whatever the reason that sets me off. And on September 6 of this year we'll have 25 years of marriage under our belts and I want to publicly thank her. (Applause)

And we have been blessed. No two parents could be more joyful than us at God's grace of granting us two beautiful daughters, my daughters Kimberly and Susan. (Applause)

I'd like to just leave a challenge for everybody. Go for that little thing that is saying no in your head. Suppress it. Go for it. Do it. You're not too old. You're not too young or whatever.

I didn't start the ski clinic until eight years ago so just do that and I'll be happy. I'd like to thank the DAV and God bless America and Semper Fi. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER SURSELY: John, thank you again, buddy.

DELEGATE: Go ahead and kiss him. (Laughter)

COMMANDER SURSELY: I'm sure that you will join me in extending our thanks and appreciation to John Devine for his example and service to disabled American veterans and their families.

John, thank you very much. (Applause) Boy, I'm getting a lot of kisses from Marines today. (Laughter) I don't know whether that's good or bad. (Laughter)

At this time I would like to introduce Auxiliary National Adjutant and Past National Commander Maria Tedrow for a special presentation. Maria. (Applause)

AUXILIARY NATIONAL ADJUTANT MARIA M. TEDROW: Good morning. You know everybody is saying, "What stays in Vegas or what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas." Well, I'm here but nothing is happening. (Laughter)

Commander Sursely, thank you for your introduction. Good morning National Officers, Past National Commanders, distinguished guests, delegates and members of the Disabled American Veterans and Auxiliary at this, our 84th National Convention.

This is a truly special time for the DAV Auxiliary, The presentation of a DAV Auxiliary Past National Commander's Outstanding Auxiliary Member of the Year Award.

The DAV Auxiliary Past National Commander's Outstanding Auxiliary Member of the Year Award was established to recognize the contributions and dedication of an outstanding Auxiliary member whose efforts enhance the goals of the Auxiliary and the DAV and for the service she lends to her community.

This year it is with sadness that I state that we have lost two Past National Commanders, Loneita Shoemaker of Arkansas and just last week Janet Bennett of Nevada. However, at this time we are here to salute a member who has been outstanding.

Ethel Bussey of DAV Auxiliary Unit 10 in Augusta, Georgia, is all of this and much more. She is eligible for Auxiliary membership through her late husband, Henry J. Bussey, a disabled World War II and Korean War veteran who served a total of 36 years in the military.

And just to show how much she loves veterans, when she remarried several years ago she married Harvey A. Mears, Sr., also a disabled veteran who served in World War II and the Korean War.

Ethel has spent most of her life helping and nurturing others. Her many activities and thousands of volunteer hours of service are a testament to her love and to her concern.

She currently serves as commander of the State Department of Georgia and a VA Voluntary Service Deputy Representative at the VA medical center in Augusta. She is also very active in Unit 10 where she has served several terms as unit commander.

Her Unit activities include shipping Christmas boxes to U.S. military men and women serving in Iraq, helping with all the chapter Forget-me-not drives, helping distribute Christmas stockings to veterans at the Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home, and the Veterans Administration Hospital in Augusta, and much more.

She especially enjoys working with junior Auxiliary members and involves them in many unit activities. Working with young people comes naturally to Ethel.

She is Number 9 in a family of 11 children who grew up on a farm with their mother and father in South Carolina. In that big, loving family Ethel was molded into a loving, caring and responsible person.

In high school Ethel maintained an A average which helped her obtain a loan from the National Beta Club. She used the loan to launch her training as an executive secretary, eventually carving out a career in secretarial and administrative work as a Civil Service employee.

Her work included eleven years at Fort Gordon, Georgia, where she earned a Commander's Commendation and administrative secretary at the Augusta VA Medical Center where she worked until retirement.

Ethel employs professional expertise and talents in arts and crafts to help others. And most recently she helped junior Auxiliary members collect toys and gifts for a six-year old cancer patient at St. Jude's Hospital.

She also organizes junior members to visit and assist elderly neighbors and to collect items for the Fischer House at Fort Gordon. Several years ago Ethel opened her heart and home to an 82-year old veteran with lung cancer and his 71-year old wife to save the couple the four-hour trip they would be forced to make frequently to and from the VA medical center.

For no charge she cared for the veteran and accompanied him to his treatments at the medical center until his death eleven months later.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is all of these wonderful works and much more that makes it such an honor to present to you Ethel Bussey, the DAV Auxiliary Past National Commander's Outstanding Auxiliary Member of the Year. (Standing Ovation)

Ethel, on behalf of the Past National Commanders of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary it is indeed an honor to present to you the Outstanding Auxiliary Member of the Year Award for 2005. Congratulations.

MRS. ETHEL BUSSEY: Thank you. (Applause) Good morning. National Commander Gertrude, National DAV Commander James Sursely, National Adjutant Maria, Past National Commanders, national line officers, members and guests, I was advised that I could say a few words this morning if I wanted to but I couldn't talk any longer than an hour. (Laughter) So I worked very hard, narrowed my speech down to one page, (Laughter) so it shouldn't take longer than about 55 minutes. (Laughter)

I thank all of you for this award. Without all of us working together no award or no accomplishment could be. So we all work to achieve anything that is possible.

I want to thank the Past National Commanders for selecting me for this award. I want to thank my sponsor who is a Past Department Commander of Georgia, Beulah Paulson for submitting my name.

And I also say thanks to my family who have stood beside me, encouraged me and been my mentors for anything that I endeavored to do.

When I began my career as a Civil Service employee I worked at Fort Gordon, Georgia. My assignment during that time became secretary to the commanding officer of the United States Southeastern Signal School at Fort Gordon.

And upon my departure from Fort Gordon I was presented with the Commandant's Commendation. And I held that with high esteem because at that time I was the second civilian to receive that award within the past 23 years.

I have held that as the high award but now this one shall take its place as higher than it. (Applause) I will take this award back to Georgia and I will share it with all of them as well as anyone else that would like to be included.

And this year we in Georgia plan to continue helping any veteran, any families, anyone we can, by hopping along all over Georgia and from place to place to help our disabled veterans.

You know, it never hurts to help someone. And when you help someone else it helps you. I thank all of you and I pray that we'll all have a wonderful Convention, have a safe trip home, and we are grateful for this DAV/DAVA Convention here in Las Vegas. Thank you all so very much. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Mrs. Bussey, and congratulations to you. Each year the DAV presents the prestigious George H. Seal Awards to honor the remarkable volunteers who serve disabled veterans and their families through the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Program.

The awards are conferred in memory of George H. Seal, a DAV Director of Membership and Voluntary Services and a leading organizer and administrator of the DAV/VAVS program from 1952 until his death in 1977.

Ladies and gentlemen, this year's George H. Seal Award winners are Troy Bowling of Lexington, Kentucky and Ruth Bier of Austin, Texas. (Applause)

The commitment and dedication of Troy Bowling is truly amazing. He has served our hospital volunteers in many ways over many years and always displayed the kindness and compassion so common among all of our volunteers.

Troy has donated more than 56,000 hours volunteering to VA medical centers. That's equivalent to 27 years of consecutive 40-hour weeks. (Applause) Absolutely.

He has spent the last 40 years contributing as a volunteer in the DAV Service Office at the Lexington, Kentucky, Medical Center. Most recently he has compiled volunteer data, processed new volunteers and encouraged other veterans to volunteer.

Troy has an enviable record of service to disabled American veterans. Everyone who meets him comes away impressed with his interest, compassion and his dedication to helping veterans.

His lifetime of service began as a United States Marine Corps machine gunner in the Pacific. Landing in the first wave on Iwo Jima, his unit suffered terrible shell fire, killing most of the men in his unit.

Unconscious, he was left for dead. When Troy awoke he found that the survivors of his unit had moved on and he joined another company. With this new company he was involved in an assault on an enemy bunker.

Troy threw gas grenades through the bunker potholes to flush out the enemy who came out shooting and Troy was wounded in the chest and leg. Again, he was left for dead.

A Marine combat photographer later discovered the wounded Troy among the dead and got a medical team to take him to an evacuation center. Troy faced years of recovery and during that time the volunteers serving other veterans impressed him.

It was the DAV volunteers who came to their aid. So when Troy recovered he became a DAV volunteer to help others and still does to this day.

Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2005 DAV member recipient of the George H. seal Memorial Trophy, Mr. Troy Bowling. (Standing Ovation)

The inscription on the award reads: "George H. Seal Memorial Award Winner 2005, DAV, Mr. Troy Bowling, Lexington VA Medical Center, Kentucky." Troy, will you share remarks with us, please.

MR. TROY BOWLING: Good morning everyone. I understand we're running short of time so I will put it into high gear and say a double-time march. (Laughter)

Mr. Commander, Adjutant Wilson, all the national, state, chapter members, officers, and guests, first I wish to thank Mr. Greg Anderson, Chief of Voluntary Service, Lexington VA Medical Center, for nominating me for this prestigious award and to the members of the National DAV Committee who chose me as a winner.

I am honored to even be considered much less be awarded the George Seal Trophy. I have been asked many times why I have given a lifetime of volunteers.

I simply say I lay on the black sands of Iwo Jima bleeding profusely from a bullet in the left chest, two corpsmen got to me quickly, patched me up and stopped the bleeding.

As I lay there I looked to the heavens and said, "Lord, get me out of this hell hole and I will give the rest of my life to mankind as best that I can." (Applause)

It so happened while I was in the VA hospital I met up with a National Service Officer. After he assisted me I simply asked, "How can I return the favor?" He told me, "Get involved in the DAV. We will find plenty for you to do."

I did this and became an Assistant State Service Officer and then a State Service Officer for 38 years so the National Service Officers and I have quite something in common.

The past 13 years I have been working with the Chief of the Volunteer Service Office, Lexington, Kentucky, doing the many different types of work that goes with that office.

Volunteering has saved my life. If you lay down you will die. Staying busy keeps the mind thinking and working bodies working. I am still here as proof of that.

One more piece of advice to our young vets, those young vets who are here today, show your appreciation in your working for us. But there are those out there who got their heads in the sand and are not doing anything to help.

And it's up to you to get out there and get those fellows, get their heads out of the sand and tell them to help our cause. I have not regretted one minute of my 51 years of voluntary service.

In closing I wish to wish you a great Convention. May God bless America, our military, and especially those in battle and those that have given the country for their all. As we say in the Marine Corps, Semper Fi, always faithful. Thank you. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you and congratulations, Mr. Bowling. The 2005 George H. Seal Award for the Outstanding DAV Auxiliary member goes to Ruth Bier of Austin, Texas.

Ruth has donated nearly 36,000 hours which amounts to more than 17 years as a full-time volunteer. She performs a variety of volunteer services at the Central Texas Veterans Healthcare System Outpatient Clinic in Austin, Texas.

She handles the day-to-day activities and services for volunteers and patients and coordinates the DAV Transportation Network. Ruth began volunteering at military hospitals while her husband was stationed in Germany.

When they returned to the United States Ruth served with a first aid unit traveling to military bases. She joined the DAV Voluntary Services Program in 1971 and has been volunteering with the DAV ever since.

Unfortunately, Ruth is unable to be with us today to accept her award but I know that she is delighted and sends her thanks to all of you. (Applause)

At the 2003 Mid-Winter Conference our National Executive Committee approved renaming our youth volunteer scholarship program in honor of late Secretary and former DAV Executive Director Jesse Brown.

This year the DAV selected 12 outstanding young volunteers to receive cash awards under the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program. The Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program honors outstanding young volunteers who are active participants in the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Programs.

These scholarships are awarded to deserving young men and women who have donated their time and compassion to sick and disabled veterans in their communities.

Each of this year's winners reflects the spirit and dedication of the scholarship's namesake, Jesse Brown, who deeply believed in accomplishment before success. Our scholarship winners have certainly accomplished much in the role as volunteers.

The first place scholarship of $15,000 was awarded to Andrew B. Layton of Battle Creek, Michigan, who contributed more than 182 hours of service at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Battle Creek, Michigan. (Applause)

Andrew is an author, television producer, and historian who is dedicated to telling the story of veterans before they are forever lost to history. He is also an exceptional volunteer at the VA Medical Center where he meets many of the subjects for his historical accounts.

He spent many hours researching, writing and interviewing aviators for his book, "Wolverines in the Sky" which profiles the military stories of 56 Michigan pilots who distinguished themselves as aviators.

Andrew became the lead youth producer for video productions on veterans, each taking about 20 hours to prepare. The first one was about Medal of Honor recipient Duane Dewey. That interview led to many others.

Associated with the Library of Congress Veterans History Project, Andrew helped other youth assistants in interviewing, scanning photos, and producing videos using computer technology. Some of his video productions have been telecast on local television.

Andrew has created a history where none existed before, and he did it all before he was 17 years old. Ladies and gentlemen, the 2005 Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship recipient, Andrew Layton. (Standing Ovation)

MR. ANDREW B. LAYTON: Well, first of all, let me thank you all for the incredible honor of this award and for the opportunity to be here with you today in Las Vegas.

Earlier in this week when we were preparing for our trip out here I thought back to the day in April when I was first informed that I had been chosen to be here to receive this scholarship today.

The gentleman who called me kept saying, "Congratulations, you won" and so on. And he kept talking about this free trip to Las Vegas and $15,000 and all this stuff.

And first I thought it was a prank call because I didn't even know that I had been submitted for this award or anything. But it was the Volunteer Coordinators at our local VA center who nominated me for it and I'm grateful to them.

But since then I've done quite a bit of research online about Mr. Brown and his contributions to our country and I have to say that receiving this honor in his name is quite humbling.

A few days ago I was even able to find a copy of his 2000 speech to this very convention in Reno and he kept talking about all the people who had supported him during his lifetime, "cheering him on" as he put it. And I think in a small way I can maybe relate to him.

There have been a lot of people over the past few years who I have gotten to know through my involvement with veterans, specifically at the VA center, and among those are Margaret Trunik Nancy Babcock, Todd Greenman, and Belinda Murray who make up the Volunteer Services Department at our VA center in Battle Creek -- and of course my mom and dad, Joe and Amy Layton, and my brother Dan who couldn't be here today.

And certainly none of this would have taken place if it had not been for the many veterans who have graciously taken the time to talk to me about their experiences.

I think it's a great thing that through the Veterans History Project and the Library of Congress and some of their initiatives that they have taken that we can record and preserve these interviews with our nation's veterans so that when we in this room are all gone members of future generations will be able to sit down and listen to a World War II veteran tell what it was like, what it really felt like, to spend nearly a year in a Nazi prison camp, wondering at the age of 19 if he would ever walk again because his legs had been shattered by shrapnel when his B-17 went down and listen to him as if he was sitting there right in the room with him.

That's the kind of history lesson you could never get from a textbook and I think it's a worthy cause and we try to preserve these stories while we can.

But for me volunteering with veterans has been an all-around great experience. I've gained more knowledge than I could ever have imagined, not only about our country and our nation's past conflicts but also about the computer technology and methods of preservation that we use to record these interviews.

When I started out as an interviewer three summers ago at the VA center I can guarantee that I never thought that I would be here today to receive this award.

So once again thank you for this great honor and this opportunity to be here today. I have to say I'm a little speechless over this honor but at a time like this what can you say but thank you, Lord. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Andrew and congratulations to you. The young men and women who received this year's scholarship exhibit outstanding compassion and a devotion to serve veterans as volunteers at VA medical centers and facilities.

The quality of their character, the reverence in which they view veterans, make them excellent volunteers. They give their best to help our veterans.

For the record I would like to mention the other scholarship winners. The second place scholarship of $10,000 went to Ann Marie Sobocinski of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Two third place awards of $7,500 went to Felicia Ashley Bracey of Richmond, Virginia and Philip Nodhturft, III, of Temple Terrace, Florida.

The $5,000 scholarship winners are: Marissa Mignon Jones of Crystal Springs, Mississippi; Linda Saleh of Massillon, Ohio; Neil Rangwani of Bedford, Massachusetts; Shazim Uppal of Hockessin, Delaware; Brody J. Pav of Largo, Florida; Jared T. Bryant of Topeka, Kansas; Karissa L. Wrock of Dearborn Heights, Michigan; and Jennifer Snow of Eagle Point, Oregon. (Applause)

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

They are certainly rewarded for their services to disabled veterans, not only by the scholarships but also by the experience of volunteering.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Ladies and gentlemen, if you will please rise I will ask Chaplain Stump to lead us in a closing prayer.

CHAPLAIN STUMP: Commander, as we close I want to say that as the pastor of this great organization, you have done wonders for the Marine Corps. (Laughter)

I can remember when if you got kissed by a Marine a different instrument was used. (Laughter) But you have brought us a long way and thank you for that. (Laughter)

Let's recess for lunch in prayer. Father, we thank You for all that has transpired here. We thank You for Your Spirit that has just permeated this meeting.

We thank You for all of those who received these so-deserved rewards. We thank You for their service and we look forward to even greater things as You move them on for the benefit of all.

As we recess now to lunch we ask that You use these refreshing moments to refresh us. Thank you for that which we are about to receive. Return us here again as we assemble to get about Your business. For God's glory we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Chaplain. The Convention stands in recess until 1:00 this afternoon.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 12:05 o'clock p.m. August 14, 2005.)

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION

August 14, 2005

The First Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans 84TH National Convention reconvened in the Events Center of Bally's Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada, Sunday afternoon, August 14, 2005, and was called to order at 1:15 o'clock p.m. by National Commander James E. Sursely.

COMMANDER SURSELY: The Convention will come to order. In opening the first business session of the 84th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans, it is fitting and proper that we render respect due the flag. Hand salute, two. Reverend Stump, will you lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN STUMP: Praise the Lord of Hosts for the Lord is good. His faithful love endures forever. Our Father, we are thankful, Lord, for this time of recess. We are anxious to get back about Your business.

We invoke Your presence. We thank You for that which has been accomplished and we look forward to recognizing and awarding those who deserve that and to go about Your business. Lead us. Lead our Commander. Lead our Adjutant. For God's glory we ask it. Amen.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Chaplain. 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 state their name, chapter number and the state they represents.

Comrades, the Rules are a continuing part of our Bylaws. They are part and parcel of Article 3, and remain in effect continually. They are subject to amendment as provided in the Bylaws.

The Chair entertains a motion to adopt the Rules of the Convention.

MR. KENNETH G. MUSSELMANN: Commander, Mike 2.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 2.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Musselmann, Past National Commander, California. I have two amendments to the Rules that I would like to offer at this time.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Please.

MR. MUSSELMANN: If it's okay with you, Commander, I'll take each one separately.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Okay.

MR. MUSSELMANN: The first one is Article 3, Section 3.10, Rule 1, to amend the article by removing "Roberts Rules of Order, Revised" and substitute "Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised" so that the amended rule will read as follows:

Roberts' Rules of Order, Newly Revised, will govern except as herein specifically stated.

At this time, Comrade Commander, I make a motion to adopt this amendment.

COMMANDER SURSELY: You heard the motion. Do we have a second?

MR. GEORGE H. STEESE JR.: Mike 2.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 2.

MR. STEESE: George Steese, Chapter 1 California, seconds.

COMMANDER SURSELY: We have a motion and a second, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

MR. MUSSELMANN: The second amendment is Article 3, Section 3.10, Rule 21d, and in the fourth line, in the fourth-to-the-last line omit the word "may" and substitute the word "shall" and omit the last three lines and substitute with the words "and voted upon on the day of adjournment" so the amended rule will read as follows:

Committee on Constitution and Bylaws. This Committee shall give consideration to those resolutions which pertain to the proposed amendments to the National Constitution and National Bylaws.

It shall give advice to the National Headquarters on the official ritual and also consider all matters relative to DAV Auxiliaries and other subordinate units of the Disabled American Veterans insofar as they may affect proposed amendments to the National Constitution and Bylaws.

All proposed amendments shall be read to the Convention no later than the second day prior to the scheduled day of adjournment of the Convention and voting thereon shall begin the following business day, except proposals referred to the Committee by other Convention Committees too late for reading on that date or resolutions originating in the Committee. Such amendments shall be read and voted upon on the day of adjournment.

Comrade Commander, I make a motion to adopt this amendment to the rules.

COMMANDER SURSELY: We have a motion. Do I hear a second?

MR. STEESE: Mike 2.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 2.

MR. STEESE: George Steese, Chapter 1 California, seconds.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, George. We have a motion and a second. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

Okay, I have skipped over a very important part of the program so we're going to have to back up. We're going to have to skip over that rules change, both of them, and go back to calling on the Credentials Committee for its first report.

MS. MARY J. BENCIVENGA: Comrade Commander, officers, and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Credentials was called to order this morning in Skyview 1 at the Bally's Hotel for its first business session on 8/14/2005 by the advisors, Michael J. Walsh, Michael E. Dobmeier and Anthony Baskerville.

The first order of business was the election of the Credentials Committee Chairman. Mary Bencivenga was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, Mary Bencivenga was elected chairman.

The next order of business was the nomination and the election of a secretary. Sloan H. Hoopes was nominated and elected as secretary. Roll call showed 1,271 delegates and 47 alternates present.

This is a partial report for the informational purposes only and reflects the registration at the close of registration at 4:00 p.m. on August 13th, 2005.

At the present time we have 507 chapters, 46 departments, 31 National Officers, 12 Past National Officers or Commanders for a total of 1,271 delegates and 47 alternates for a total vote of 1,064. This completes the partial report of the Credentials Committee, Commander.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mary, thank you for that report. Shall we start over, Ken? (Laughter) Comrades, the Rules are a continuing part of our Bylaws. They are part and parcel of Article 3 and remain in effect continually.

They are subject to amendment as provided in the Bylaws. The Chair entertains a motion to adopt the Rules of the Convention.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Commander, Mike 2.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 2.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Ken Musselmann, Past National Commander, California. A point of order, Commander, is this because I didn't come up there and give you a kiss this morning? (Laughter)

But, anyway, Commander, I have two changes to the Rules of the Convention I'd like to offer at this time and if it's okay with you I'll do them separately.

COMMANDER SURSELY: That would be great.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Thank you. (Laughter) Changes to Article 3, Section 3.10, Rule 1, remove "Roberts Rules of Order, Revised" and substitute "Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised," so that the amended Rule will read as follows:

Roberts' Rules of Order, Newly Revised, will govern except as herein after specifically stated.

Commander, at this time I offer a motion to accept the rule change.

COMMANDER SURSELY: We have a motion. Do I hear a second?

MR. STEESE: Mike 2.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 2, go ahead, George.

MR. STEESE: George Steese, Chapter 1 California, seconds.

COMMANDER SURSELY: We have a motion and a second. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Thank you, Commander. Change to Article 3, Section 3.10, Rule 21d, in the fourth-to-the-last line omit the word "may" and substitute the word "shall" and omit the last three lines and substitute with the words "and voted upon on the day of adjournment" so that the amended Rule will read as follows:

Committee on Constitution and Bylaws. This Committee shall give consideration to those resolutions which pertain to the proposed amendments to the National Constitution and National Bylaws.

It shall give advice to the National Headquarters on the official ritual and also consider all matters relative to DAV Auxiliaries and other subordinate units of the Disabled American Veterans insofar as they may affect proposed amendments to the National Constitution and Bylaws.

All proposed amendments shall be read to the Convention no later than the second day prior to the scheduled day of adjournment of the Convention and voting thereon shall begin the following business day, except proposals referred to that Committee by other Convention Committees too late for reading on that date or resolutions originating in the Committee. Such amendments shall be read and voted upon on the day of adjournment.

Comrade Commander, I offer a motion to accept this amendment to Rule 21d.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Ken. We have a motion. Do I hear a second?

MR. STEESE: Mike 2.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 2.

MR. STEESE: George Steese, Past National Commander, California, seconds.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, George. We have a motion and a second. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

I will 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 disabilities.

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

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

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

6. Enhanced outreach to ensure that all disabled veterans receive all benefits 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 dependents 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 our first duty as an organization is to assist the service-connected disabled, their surviving spouses and dependents, we shall within the limits of our resources assist others in filing, perfecting and prosecuting their claims for benefits.

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

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Art. The Chair will entertain a motion for the adoption of the DAV Statement of Policy.

MR. WILLIAM T. CAYWOOD: Mike 1.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 1.

MR. CAYWOOD: Bill Caywood, from 60, Indiana, I make the motion to adopt the Statement of Policy.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Okay, we have a motion. Do I hear a second?

MR. DENNIS JOYNER: Mike 2.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 2.

MR. JOYNER: Dennis Joyner, delegate, Chapter 104 Florida, seconds that.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Dennis. We have a motion and a second. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

MR. JOYNER: Commander, I would like to request a point of personal privilege.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Yes, sir.

MR. JOYNER: I'm Dennis Joyner, Past National Commander and delegate from Chapter 104 in Florida. I would like to take this opportunity to make a motion to adopt the National Commander's report that was so eloquently given this morning at the Opening Session.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Dennis. We have a motion to accept the report. Do we have a second?

MR. STEESE: Mike 2.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 2.

MR. STEESE: George Steese, Past National Commander, seconds that.

COMMANDER SURSELY: George, thank you. We have a motion and a second. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. We are now going to have the introduction of the National Executive Committee.

MR. ROB LEWIS: Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to introduce the National Executive Committee. Please hold your applause until I have introduced all of the members.

John F. Regan, First District of Massachusetts; John J. Skyler, Second District of New York; Stephen C. Moffitt, Third District of Rhode Island; Richard E. Manners, Fourth District of New Jersey; Kirk Lindsey, Fifth District of Pennsylvania; Robert V. Richard, Sr., Sixth District of District of Columbia; Richard "Dick" Giese, Seventh District of Florida; Harold J. Hicks, Eighth District of Alabama; Bobby G. Williams, Ninth District of North Carolina; Morris Penermon, Tenth District of Michigan; William L. Moseley, Eleventh District of Ohio, Norman J. Resner, Twelfth District of Illinois; William T. Caywood, Thirteenth District of Indiana; Richard C. Amos, Fourteenth District of South Dakota; Lyle J. Dean, Fifteenth District of Iowa; Dennis W. Weber, Sixteenth District of California; Billy F. Jones, Sr., Seventeenth District of New Mexico; William D. Brzezinski, Eighteenth District of Nevada; Jimmey D. Mayo, Nineteenth District of Alaska; L. Duke Hendershot, Twentieth District of Texas; and David Spurgin, Twenty-First District of Arkansas. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: We're going to take one step backwards again and what we did before was we adopted amendments to the Rules, but we did not adopt the Rules to the Convention so we need to entertain a motion to adopt the Rules to the Convention.

MR. STEESE: Mike 2.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 2.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Ken Musselmann, Past National Commander, California, I make the motion to adopt the Rules of the Convention.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Ken. Do we have a second?

MR. STEESE: Mike 2.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 2.

MR. STEESE: George Steese, Past National Commander California, seconds.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, George. We have a motion and a second to adopt the Rules. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize my National Chief of Staff, Ed Barnshaw; Officer of the Day John Haynes; and Sergeant-at-Arms Al Sorrentino. Stand up and be recognized. (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 professional staff is our National Adjutant Art Wilson.

Art is a leader who demonstrates vision, initiative and dedication to our mission. Art's loyalty and steadfast commitment to service have not only greatly enhanced our organization but more importantly the lives of millions of disabled 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 will quickly tell you the DAV is the preeminent veterans service organization and it is the result of Art's leadership. For more than 39 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 Program -– Art moved up through the ranks of our NSO corps to supervisory positions, then on to the National Appeals Office at the Board of Veterans' Appeals in Washington.

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

His 12 years in that position allowed Art to craft our National Service corps into a professional, efficient, knowledgeable group of men and women with a total commitment of service to our 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, here to present his report to the National Convention is my friend and your friend, our National Adjutant Art Wilson. (Standing Ovation)

ADJUTANT WILSON: Thank you, Commander. Good morning, everyone. It's always a pleasure to be a part of our annual gathering –- so many friends, colleagues and fellow DAV members and their families.

Every year we come as one spirit of togetherness to accomplish the important business of our organization and have some fun as well. It's just such a great experience.

And serving you as your National Adjutant continues to be one of the greatest honors a person could have. Thank you for allowing me to serve all of you. (Applause)

I think that the best part of it is being able to witness first-hand the impact our mission of service and hope has on the lives of disabled veterans and their families all across America.

In the video you'll see in a moment we'll share with you some of our best moments of this past year as we continue to fulfill our mission. And thanks to the steadfast support, commitment and exceptional leadership of National Commander Jim Sursely this has been a truly extraordinary year. (Applause)

Thank you, Commander, for all that you do for the DAV. It has been a personal honor for me and the entire DAV staff to have you leading the way. (Applause)

I know it has been a very busy year for you, Commander, and I hope it will be a year that you and Jeannie will look back on with a well-deserved sense of pride and accomplishment. Thank you and your line officers for everything you've done to help make this past year a huge success. (Applause)

Let me also commend you, Commander, on your deep personal commitment to our newest generation of disabled veterans. That immediate and genuine connection between you and those brave men and women injured in Iraq and Afghanistan is a poignant reminder of what the DAV Is all about.

As you met and talked with them, I could see in their eyes how much more at ease your presence made them feel. And thanks to your compassion and courageous example they now have a point of reference as they go about the business of rebuilding their own lives. Thank you, Commander, for reminding us of who we are and why we're here. (Applause)

Now, please enjoy this short film highlighting a year to remember. This film was produced by our National Communications Department and offers you a mini-review of the life and times of the DAV during the past twelve months, with a few light-hearted moments as well.

(Whereupon, a film was viewed.)

ADJUTANT WILSON: As you just saw, it's been another successful year for the DAV. And you can be very proud of your role in our successes.

One who would be so very proud to be with us here today passed away earlier this month. There wasn't time to include him in our year in review, but I want to recognize retired National Service Officer Bill Leach.

Bill faithfully devoted 47 years of his life to building better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families. It was a remarkable achievement for a man who literally grew up in the DAV. You see, Bill's father was also a National Service Officer and Supervisor in the same St. Louis office.

Their work on behalf of veterans and their families over two generations is a stunning tribute to both men. Like many other leaders who passed away during the last year, Bill's service to our nation's disabled veterans was his highest calling.

Bill knew he was a part of a magnificent team of men and women dedicated to serving our nation's disabled veterans and their families –- people just like you.

Because everything we do is a team effort, it is your hard work that makes it happen for all of us. The success of the last year is your success story, so go ahead and enjoy it. (Applause)

You know, we've been successful because throughout our history veterans have been able to count on our being there for them in their time of need. It's been our mission for 85 years and it will continue to be our mission for as long as veterans need us.

We, more than anyone else, understand why there needs to be a DAV, especially now with so many of our fellow Americans returning from Iraq, Afghanistan, and all over the world bearing the wounds an scars of war. Yes, war is an ugly business, made even more so when it affects someone you know.

And, sadly, this war has struck too close to home as some of us have lost loved ones or have had family and friends return home wounded and disabled. Our hearts go out to them, and we are reminded in very stark terms about why the DAV continues to be just as necessary today as when we were founded.

We all know the story about our beginnings, the story of a combat-disabled World War I Infantry captain, Judge Robert Marx, and his tireless drive to unite groups of disabled veterans from the far-flung corners of America.

And believe me, ours is indeed a story of success, from our earliest days right on up to today. But as we all know, success doesn't just happen. It takes a lot of hard work.

It took a great deal of hard work for Judge Marx and his comrades to establish the deep roots that would allow the DAV to become, and remain, a powerhouse in veterans affairs. (Applause)

It took a lot of hard work, but our founders fielded a nationwide claims filing assistance effort that would evolve into today's National Service Program.

And that led to the creation of what is now the National Service Foundation that was set up to help fund and protect the Claims Assistance Program.

What those World War I veterans found when they returned home was a country that was ill-equipped to deal with their unique needs. The nation's economy was reeling.

And even after years of war, our government still did not have a coherent plan for caring for injured and disabled veterans. So our founders were determined to make a difference, to make a future for themselves and other disabled veterans.

They worked tirelessly to address the problems disabled veterans faced and came quickly to the conclusion that a new approach was needed. Their response was truly radical –- a complete overhaul of veterans programs, but with one simple principal always uppermost in their minds: to do what's right for veterans.

And in time, through the efforts of the DAV and others, a single federal agency was created to oversee a comprehensive system of health care, disability and pension benefits, and rehabilitation and job training programs.

That agency is now the Department of Veterans Affairs which is celebrating it's 75th anniversary this year. But consolidating any confusing array of government programs under a single government agency wasn't a cure-all. Disabled veterans still had a struggle on their hands in the post-war years.

The Bonus Army encampments in our nation's capital during the Great Depression are an enduring reminder of how hard veterans have had to work to overcome the effects of neglect and even ill-treatment at the hands of our government.

This great organization was formed as our country struggled to deal with the painful effects of World War I. And while a great deal has changed in the 85 years since we were founded, this much has remained the same: those who come home from war wounded and sick need the care and attention of a grateful nation.

Today our nation is once again confronted with the impact of war as American men and women face combat in Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries across the globe.

And we continue our struggle to ensure that the government does right by veterans -- and to do what's right without getting sidetracked by politics. (Applause)

Medical care, disability compensation, and other veterans benefits are not a Republican issue -- they're not a Democrat issue -- they're an American issue. (Applause)

Doing the right thing and taking care of sick and disabled veterans ought to be seen as a fundamental American value, not just another government give-away program that drains the federal treasury. (Applause)

Give-away, my foot. (Applause) Veterans have earned those benefits by their service and sacrifice on behalf of the entire nation and the freedom that all Americans enjoy. (Applause)

But there are those who don't seem to believe in honoring the nation's obligation to sick and disabled veterans. They want to choke the life out of the veterans healthcare system.

They seek to discredit disability compensation, systematically dismantle the VA, or sharply limit the kinds of benefits provided and who should receive them.

So, yes, it's a struggle we still face today, but it's a struggle that you and I know we can and must win. (Applause) The stakes are too high for us to fail, not just for ourselves but for those veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan who will need the VA healthcare benefits system for decades to come.

They're depending on us and we're not going to let them down. (Applause) That's a legacy passed on by Judge Marx and those who followed, from World War I clear on through to today and into tomorrow. (Applause)

That's why we have continued to enjoy a preeminent place in veterans affairs. (Applause) We've been successful because we have always set a clear direction and goals for the future. And at the very heart of it all are our core values of service, quality, integrity and leadership.

These are the values that continue to guide us in all that we do. Service is at the very heart of who we are and what we do. It is the bedrock of our mission to build better lives for disabled veterans and their families. (Applause)

We will continue to provide the highest possible quality representation and advocacy services to veterans, their families and survivors. (Applause) We will maintain the highest ethical and moral integrity as a charitable service organization accountable to those we serve as well as to those who support us. (Applause)

Because the DAV relies on the goodwill and generosity of the American public, there can be no tolerance for any lapses in good stewardship. (Applause)

And we will continue to provide unparalleled leadership in veterans affairs to guarantee our future as the nation's foremost veterans service organization. (Applause) So when we look toward the future, we must also look inside ourselves for how each of us can contribute to our continued success.

And every one of us has a very important role to play in assuring that we will continue to fulfill our mission of service and hope, from recruiting new members to speak with a strong, assertive voice in Washington to supporting our grassroots efforts to protect our rights and the programs and services we have earned through our service and sacrifice, from increasing active member participation in new and exciting volunteer programs, right in your own communities, to making sure that the public has a greater appreciation of the continued support of disabled veterans. (Applause)

The goals we've laid out for our organization will guarantee that we will fulfill our mission of service and hope for disabled veterans and their families well into the future. And our success in meeting those goals will ultimately be your success. (Applause)

So let's roll up our sleeves and get to work for the future. Today's and tomorrow's sick and disabled veterans are counting on us. And we're going to be there for them. They can count on it. (Applause)

And another thing they can count on is the compassionate and enthusiastic service that our Chapter and Department Service Officers provide every day. (Applause)

I'd like all of our Chapter and Department Service Officers as well as our Transition Service Officers to rise so we can thank you for everything you do to help meet the needs of our nation's sick and disabled veterans and their families. (Applause) Thank you. (Applause)

And you can bet American's disabled veterans and their families will be able to count on the men and women who have chosen to make a lifelong career of providing the very best advocacy and service for their fellow disabled veterans, our professional National Service Officers.

I'd like all our NSOs, both active and retired, to please rise and be recognized for your service. (Applause) Thank you. (Applause) Of course, none of what we've been able to do in the past and what we need to accomplish in the future is possible without a strong, active and committed membership.

And that's you and all DAV members throughout our country whose dedication and support are absolutely crucial to our success. Thank you all very much. (Applause)

Before I close I want to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my staff: Rick Patterson, our Chief Financial Officer who manages our National Headquarters staff in Cold Spring; (Applause)

Susan Loth, from the Fundraising Department and her staff; (Applause) Greg Jackson and his staff in the Human Resources Department; (Applause) Gary Weaver and his fine crew in the Communications Department; (Applause)

Mike Walsh and everyone in the Membership Department; (Applause) Greg Nichols and the Information Technology team; (Applause) Inspector General Bob Gushee (Applause) and General Counsel Chris Clay; (Applause)

Nancy O'Brien who administers our charitable programs; (Applause) and Comptroller Anita Blum and all the folks who do such a fine job handling our financial matters. (Applause)

And my thanks to Dave Gorman at our Washington Headquarters and his team: Randy Reese and the staff of the National Service Department and the entire National Service Officer Corps; (Applause)

Joe Violante and the team in our National Legislative Department; (Applause) and Ed Hartman and the National Voluntary Services staff. (Applause)

A very sincere thanks to our support staffs all around the country, including National Headquarters and National Service and Legislative Headquarters. (Applause)

In addition, I wish to offer my personal thanks and gratitude to two very special individuals without whom I would surely remain in a state of turmoil: that's Administrative Assistant Sandy Buchanan and Executive Secretary Sally Miller. (Applause) Thank you, ladies, for a job well done. (Applause)

And 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 day to make sure this fine organization keeps running smoothly.

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

Gertrude Tidwell, National Commander, and 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)

And I especially want to express my gratitude to all of you and all of our DAV members all across the country for allowing me the privilege of serving this great organization and to serve each of you. (Applause)

Finally, a salute to the men and women of our armed forces. Whether at war overseas or defending the home front they continue the battle to preserve our freedom -- for the right of all people to live in a world free of terror.

Thank you very much and may God bless you all. (Applause) Thank you, Commander, this concludes my report. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER SURSLEY: Thank you, Art. The Chair will entertain a motion to accept the National Adjutant's report. Mike 3.

MR. ARMANDO C. ALBARRAN: Armando Albarran, Chapter 5, Texas, I make a motion we accept Adjutant Wilson's report.

COMMANDER SURSELY: I have a motion. May I have a second? Mike 2.

MR. STEESE: George Steese, Chapter 1, California, seconds.

COMMANDER SURSELY: We have a motion and a second. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. At this time I'd like to introduce National Membership Director Michael Walsh for his report and presentation of Membership Recruitment Awards. Mike. (Applause)

MR. MICHAEL WALSH: Commander Sursely, National Officers, Adjutant Wilson, Executive Directors Patterson and Gorman, delegates to the 84th National Convention and all members of DAV, thank you, thank you for making the Disabled American Veterans stronger, bigger and better than ever.

As the late great Jerry Garcia of the rock band, The Grateful Dead once sang, "What a long strange trip it's been." Many things went into making this past year one that continued our amazing growth and stability and increasing member's active participation in DAV.

All of this comes together to make DAV even better at building better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families. I encourage each of you to obtain a copy of the formal membership report from the information table located in the Grand Salon. That will provide you with more detailed information about the successes of the past year.

At the close of the membership year on June 30, 2005, we again attained the highest membership totals ever. Who could have thought that you could do it again for the fourth consecutive year? Yes, now I know, you knew you could do it. And we are all better off for it.

DAV finished the year with 1,300,727 members. Of that we have over 987,000 fully-paid life members. We are so close to reaching our goal of one million fully-paid life members. I am confident that we will reach that benchmark early in this membership year.

But enough of that. Let's get to the real purpose of today's program, the recognition of those members of the DAV who have earned special thanks for their success in recruiting. Commander Sursely, please allow me to assist you in these presentations.

Let's start with the Division Awards. The divisions are based on the total member population and the standings within the division is based on the percentage of life members attained.

In Division 1, those departments with more than 35,000 total members, the Department of California led by Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster finished the year with 2,112 life members over goal or 102.76 percent. You would think that California would run out of eligible members by now, but they continue to win this honor year after year. (Applause)

In Division 11, those departments with 18,000 to 34,999 total members, the Department of Minnesota and Commander Hank Sadler literally edged out Kentucky to win the division. They finished at 104.64 percent of goal or 757 fully-paid members over goal.

For Division III, those with 10,000 to 17,999 total members, the Department of Arkansas finished at 103.36 percent or 405 members over goal.

If I'm not mistaken, this is the Department's first time winning the award. Congratulations to Department Commander Roy Schultz who accepts the award. (Applause)

Division IV, those with 5,000 to 9,999 members, I believe we have another first timer to the big stage with Charlie Stephens and the Department of Kansas who finished at 104.89 percent or 373 life members over goal. (Applause)

And last but not least in Division V, those with fewer than 5,000 members, we welcome back the Department of North Dakota and Commander Doug Patanaude who completed the year at 102.92 percent of goal with 118 members. (Applause)

Within each division I like to recognize the outstanding individual recruiter who added to their department's success: in Division I, Mary Tristan of North Carolina who recruited 277 total members; (Applause)

In Division II, David Reeves of Oklahoma who recruited 159; (Applause) in Division III, Calvin Cabarrus of West Virginia recruited 109; (Applause) in Division IV, Jay Vierra of Kansas added 331 members; (Applause)

In Division V Greg Seurer of North Dakota recruited 147. (Applause) Each of these individuals will receive a specially-designed plaque noting their achievement. Thank you. (Applause)

Others who have shown to have success by recruiting 100 or more members are: James Balmer of Kentucky; Kerry Baker of Wisconsin; Joshua Sniegowski of Wisconsin; Ray Raulerson of Florida; Maurice Jackson of Wisconsin; Prosper Sodano of New York; Johnny DeLaughter of Texas; Robert Sinclair of Massachusetts; Michael Lautermilch of Wisconsin; Marc Audette of Minnesota; Donald Horton of Masasachusetts; Peter Philippi of Minnesota; Ebony Walker of Wisconsin; Al Hindes of Michigan; James Schultz of Minnesota; Andrew Smith of Arkansas; and, finally, Peter Collins of Maine. (Applause) There are many others who recruited successfully and you all have my thanks and that of the DAV.

As you might expect, recruiting can be difficult. Well, for most of us. But there are those who find it easy to talk about the great things the DAV does every day. As a result, it can become easy to recruit new members.

Even after several years of successful recruiting and coming in a close second in last year's Recruiter of the Year, this year our Recruiter of the Year award comes back to Coy Hennis of North Carolina who was responsible for 345 new members.

Coy is that rare individual who can recruit anywhere. He has done it in airports, restaurants, and just walking down the street in North Carolina. I would be willing to bet that he has even recruited a member or two since he left North Carolina to attend this Convention. (Applause)

Each year we present the Jonathon M. Wainwright Award to the department who secures the most members from the start of the membership year on July 1 to the close of the year on June 30. This year 11,844 members joined the Department of California. (Applause)

Our final award is presented to the department who completes the membership year with the highest percent increase in life members over goal. The Judge Robert Marx Award goes to the Department of Kansas who finished the year at 104.69 percent of goal. Accepting on their behalf is Charlie Stephens. (Applause)

As I close, I just want to say what a pleasure it was to serve you and the DAV during the past year. Your success continues the great tradition of successful DAV commanders and I also wish to express my appreciation for the vision and leadership provided by our National Adjutant Arthur Wilson.

Executive Directors Rick Patterson and Dave Gorman have also provided the Membership Department and me with dedication, guidance and direction. And, finally, thanks to recently appointed Deputy National Membership Director Tony Baskerville and the employees back at National Headquarters for their tireless efforts.

Thank you for your attention this afternoon and for your continuous support. Now let's get out there and see who that one millionth member will be. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Mike. I'll entertain a motion to accept Mr. Walsh's report.

MR. ALBARRAN: Mike 3.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 3.

MR. ALBARRAN: Armando Albarran, Chapter 5, Texas, makes a motion to accept the report.

COMMANDER SURSELY: I have a motion. May I have a second.

MR. STEESE: Mike 2.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 2.

MR. STEESE: George Steese, Chapter 1, California, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER SURSELY: I have a motion and a second. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. I'd like to call on Board of Directors Treasurer Bobby Williams for a report.

MR. BOBBY G. WILLIAMS: National Commander Sursely, fellow members, the National Executive Committee, DAV members and guests, it is my honor and privilege to present a report on the financial affairs of our Organization for the six-month period ending June 30, 2005.

The DAV's gross contributions from direct-mail fundraising through that date was $57.1 million, with support and revenue from all sources of $88.8 million. By year's end we expect to mail 60.7 million pieces of fundraising mail and generate $106.9 million in gross contributions.

Under the Department Fundraising Program, distributions to Departments in December 2004 and June 2005 totaled $3.6 million. Since the program began in 1994, $44.1 million has been distributed to Departments for their service programs.

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

Through June 2005, DAV had total expenditures of $77.2 million, of which $55.6 million was for service programs, an increase of 2.5% over the first six months in 2004. Over the same period expenditures for fundraising and administration declined by 7.1 percent.

As of June 30, 2005, the value of the General Fund long-term investment portfolio grew to $250.3 million, an increase of 6.5% over the same period in 2004.

The financial stability of the Life Membership Fund has been an ongoing source of concern to the Board, but based upon action taken in 2003 by our predecessors, the National Finance Committee, we can report that at June 30, 2005 the Life Membership Fund reserve was $59.7 million.

At a projected earnings rate on investments of 6.66%, we estimate that the fund would be depleted by the year 2014 with 610 thousand members remaining.

I would like to thank National Adjutant Art Wilson and his staff for all their hard work, which makes this report possible. (Applause) Let me thank you, Commander Sursely, 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.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Do I hear a second to that motion?

MR. STEESE: Mike 2.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 2.

MR. STEESE: George Steese, Chapter 1, California, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER SURSELY: We have a motion and a second. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. Thank you, Bobby, for that very informative report.

Disabled American Veterans

Financial Statements for the
Year Ended December 31, 2004 and
Independent Auditors' Report

Deloitte.

Deloitte & Touche LLP
250 East Fifth Street
Suite 1900
P.O. Box 5340
Cincinnati, OH 45201-5340
USA

Tel: +1 513 784 7100
www.deloitte.com

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, 2004, 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 consideration of internal control over financial reporting as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Company's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, 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, 2004 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 7, 2005

Member of
Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 2004

ASSETS		LIABILITIES AND UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	
ASSETS:		LIABILITIES:	
Cash—interest bearing	$ 1,427,982	Accounts payable	$ 2,555,378
Receivables	860,948	Accrued expenses:	
Solicitation materials	3,372,949	Salaries and related taxes and withholdings	1,873,134
Prepaid expenses	3,040,368	Medical	420,000
Investments	269,181,780	Pension	10,417,152
Property and equipment—net	12,301,853	Postretirement benefits	38,647,878
Life Membership:		Deferred dues and service fees collected	
Cash—interest bearing	4,216,784	in advance	3,119,501
Investments	53,204,700	Other	2,092,588
		Life Membership:	
		Accounts payable	386,085
		Reserve for future distribution of life membership dues	57,035,399
		Total liabilities	116,547,115
		UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	231,060,249
TOTAL	$347,607,364	TOTAL	$347,607,364

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004

SUPPORT AND REVENUE:	
Support:	
Contributions received primarily from direct mail solicitations	$ 105,230,306
Contributed services and facilities, primarily services	32,840,375
Bequests	4,829,357
Total support	142,900,038
Revenue:	
Membership dues and fees	6,415,857
Income from investments—net	6,565,581
Realized investment gain	3,468,498
List royalties	480,282
Miscellaneous	126,527
Total revenue	17,056,745
Total support and revenue	159,956,783
EXPENSES:	
Program Services:	
National Service Program	37,430,929
Legislative Service Program	1,230,077
Voluntary Service Program	32,650,979
State Services, Disaster Relief and Memorials	5,467,655
Publications and Other Communications	4,421,984
Membership Program	10,407,220
Public Awareness Outreach	21,144,289
Total program services	112,753,133
Supporting Services:	
Fund Raising Costs	32,956,601
Administrative and General	4,871,936
Total supporting services	37,828,537
Total expenses	150,581,670
EXCESS OF SUPPORT AND REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	9,375,113
INCREASE IN UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	3,810,757
EXCESS OF SUPPORT AND REVENUE AND INCREASE IN UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS OVER EXPENSES	13,185,870
ADJUSTMENT TO MINIMUM PENSION LIABILITY	(3,031,443)
INCREASE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	10,154,427
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	220,905,822
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS—End of year	$ 231,060,249

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004

	National Service Program	Legislative Service Program	Voluntary Service Program	State Services Disaster Relief and Memorials	Publications and Other Communications	Membership Program	Public Awareness Outreach	Total Program Services	Fund Raising Costs	Administrative and General	Total Supporting Services	Total
Salaries	$ 18,828,450	$ 543,286	$ 397,211	$ -	$ 582,863	$ 1,168,050	$ 4,327	$ 21,524,187	$ 3,778,551	$ 3,103,312	$ 6,881,863	$ 28,406,050
Employee Benefits	8,485,162	218,950	164,717		254,333	526,724		9,649,886	1,816,617	1,412,320	3,228,937	12,878,823
Payroll Taxes	1,473,498	37,885	31,110		43,671	77,624	364	1,664,152	297,002	223,885	520,887	2,185,039
DAV transportaion network - volunteers			31,249,667					31,249,667				31,249,667
Winter Sports Clinic			386,263					386,263				386,263
Colorado Trust			51,025					51,025				51,025
Other Grants	16,487	10,000						26,487				26,487
Disaster Relief				671,862				671,862				671,862
State Service Program				4,761,135				4,761,135				4,761,135
Memorials				34,658				34,658				34,658
Scholarships			39,123					39,123				39,123
Expenses of national convention						469,880		469,880				469,880
Expenses of national commander and committees						506,530		506,530				506,530
Travel, training and relocation	2,519,971	60,109	143,156		132,549	75,832		2,931,617	23,398	185,130	208,528	3,140,145
Facilities	1,590,708							1,590,708				1,590,708
Postage and shipping	567,640	35,599	29,275		1,167,399	525,120	3,444	2,328,477	8,793,753	60,689	8,854,442	11,182,919
Equipment rental and maintenance	297,514		584		2,987	25,234		326,319	840,688	238,559	1,079,247	1,405,566
Supplies	823,240	121,925	101,172		348,932	581,267	7,084	1,983,620	759,658	382,438	1,142,096	3,125,716
Insurance	133,249	1,745	421		49,288	70,520		255,223	39,475	178,835	218,310	473,533
Telephone	98,417	1,635	2,911		5,593	14,543		123,099	29,522	47,514	77,036	200,135
Outside services	285,220	2,683	822		5,290	49,221	159	343,395	472,696	36,356	509,052	852,447
Project costs	2,368	157,818	51,497		354,554	32,087	16,950	615,274	32,193	2,735	34,928	650,202
Printing of magazine					1,270,585			1,270,585				1,270,585
Cost of soliciation mailings - materials									35,164,632		35,164,632	35,164,632
Heat, light, water and power	122,420							122,420	394,224	396	394,620	517,040
Security service	101,357							101,357	253,465		253,465	354,822
Depreciation of property and equipment	646,684	12,878	1,611		10,092	649,335		1,320,600	1,425,257	336,845	1,762,102	3,082,702
Legal Fees	88,075					21,203		109,278	4,202	131,314	135,516	244,794
Professional fees	178,093	25,564			123,975	169,702		497,334	264,094	465,151	729,245	1,226,579
Other expenses	34,425		414		12,452	6,808		54,099	2,692	375,812	378,504	432,603
Membership services						4,000,000		4,000,000				4,000,000
Allocations (to) from other departments	1,137,951				57,421	1,437,540	21,111,961	23,744,873	(21,435,518)	(2,309,355)	(23,744,873)	
Total, year ended December 31, 2004	$37,430,929	$1,230,077	$32,650,979	$ 5,467,655	$ 4,421,984	$10,407,220	$21,144,289	$112,753,133	$ 32,956,601	$ 4,871,936	$ 37,828,537	$150,581,670

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:	
Excess of support and revenue over expenses	$ 9,375,113
Adjustments to reconcile excess of support and revenue over expenses to net cash provided by operating activities:	
Depreciation	3,082,702
Loss on disposal of property and equipment	20,493
Realized investment gains	(3,468,498)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:	
Receivables	612,734
Solicitation materials	89,871
Prepaid expenses	1,255,500
Accounts payable	(531,892)
Accrued expenses	269,046
Deferred dues and service fees and other	127,923
Additions to the life membership fund	11,761,612
Distributions from the life membership fund	(11,678,310)
Net cash provided by operating activities	10,916,294
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:	
Payments for property and equipment	(2,875,413)
Proceeds from sales of property and equipment	14,988
Purchase of investments	(330,157,741)
Proceeds from the sale of investments	319,131,153
Net cash used in investing activities	(13,887,013)
NET DECREASE IN CASH	(2,970,719)
CASH—Beginning of year	8,615,485
CASH—End of year	$ 5,644,766

See notes to financial statements.

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 (depreciation) at December 31, 2004 are summarized below:

General	Cost	Market Value	Unrealized Appreciation (Depreciation)
Cash equivalents	$ 19,746,099	$ 19,746,099	
Corporate bonds	75,460,985	75,112,547	$ (348,438)
U.S. Treasury obligations	25,256,874	25,350,689	93,815
Common stocks	92,998,091	107,611,773	14,613,682
Common stock funds	32,425,474	40,307,899	7,882,425
Subtotal	$ 245,887,523	268,129,007	$ 22,241,484
Interest and dividends receivable		1,052,773	
Total		$ 269,181,780	
Life Membership			
Cash equivalents	$ 1,664,205	$ 1,664,205	
Corporate bonds	12,427,849	12,458,567	$ 30,718
U.S. Treasury obligations	2,865,997	2,810,856	(55,141)
Common stocks	27,623,225	30,315,502	2,692,277
Common stock funds	5,366,744	5,798,504	431,760
Subtotal	$ 49,948,020	53,047,634	$ 3,099,614
Interest and dividends receivable		157,066	
Total		$ 53,204,700	

Investment income is composed of interest and dividend income of $6,960,918, net of fees paid to trustees of $395,337.

Property and Equipment—Property and equipment are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation, and are composed of the following at December 31, 2004:

	Cost	Accumulated Depreciation	Net Book Value
Land and improvements	$ 1,148,101	$ 443,852	$ 704,249
Buildings and improvements	9,940,151	5,855,681	4,084,470
Machinery and other equipment	23,660,612	17,522,640	6,137,972
Construction in progress	1,375,162		1,375,162
Total	$ 36,124,026	$ 23,822,173	$ 12,301,853

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 2,394,789 hours accounted for in 2004 – 1,817,898 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 $31,249,667. 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 576,891 hours—valued at $9,916,756, 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 2004, DAV incurred joint costs of $46,915,470 for informational materials and activities that included fund-raising appeals. Of those costs, $21,111,961 was allocated to public awareness outreach (program services) and $25,803,509 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 2004 in the reserve for future distribution of membership dues:

Balance—January 1, 2004	$ 56,659,131
Additions:	
Membership dues received	6,300,850
Earnings on invested assets—net	1,312,459
Other income	148,303
National Organization Support	4,000,000
Gain on sale of investments	1,101,198
Total	12,862,810
Distribution of membership dues:	
National Headquarters	6,578,809
Local Chapters	2,566,581
State Departments	2,532,920
Total	11,678,310
Decrease in unrealized appreciation of investments	(808,232)
Balance—December 31, 2004	$ 57,035,399

Earnings on invested assets is comprised of interest and dividends of $1,405,684, net of fees paid of $93,225.

4. PENSION PLAN AND POSTRETIREMENT BENEFITS

DAV has a defined benefit pension (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 2004, 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 (other postretirement benefits) for its retired employees and their spouses. Substantially all of DAV's employees may become eligible for these benefits if they reach early retirement age and complete 20 years of service.

The measurement date for the plans is December 31. Summarized information for the plans is as follows:

	Pension	Other Postretirement Benefits
As of December 31, 2004:		
Accumulated benefit obligation	$ 66,278,650	
Projected benefit obligation	$ 79,707,383	
Accumulated postretirement benefit obligation (APBO)		$ 44,684,192
Fair value of plan assets	55,861,498	
Funded status	$ (23,845,885)	$ (44,684,192)
Amounts recognized in the statement of financial position consist of:		
Accrued benefit liability	$ (10,417,152)	$ (38,647,878)
Amount related to recognization of additional minimum liability	24,004,341	
Net amount recognized	$ 13,587,189	$ (38,647,878)
For the year ended December 31, 2004:		
Benefit expense	$ 4,441,979	$ 4,125,000
Employer contribution	$ 6,900,000	$ 1,443,422
Plan participants' contributions		$ 157,720
Benefits paid	$ (5,906,344)	$ (1,601,142)
Weighted-average rate assumptions used for the December 31 valuation:		
For year-end benefit obligation		
Discount rate	5.75 %	5.75 %
Expected return on plan assets	n/a	n/a
Rate of compensation increase	4.50 %	4.50 %
For annual benefit cost		
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 $24,004,341 at December 31, 2004. This liability represented the amount by which the accumulated benefit obligation, $(66,278,650) exceeded the sum of the fair market value of plan assets and prepaid amounts previously recorded. At December 31, 2003, a minimum liability was recognized with an offsetting reduction in net assets of $20,972,898, therefore, an additional $3,031,443 reduction in net assets was recognized in 2004.

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 13.5% in 2004 to 5.5% in 2013, after which the trend rate is expected to stabilize.

The DAV expects to contribute $6,900,000 to its pension plan and $1,942,960 to its other postretirement benefits plan in 2005.

The DAV's pension plan investment allocation at December 31, 2004 is as follows:

Asset Category	Percentage of Plan Assets at Year-End
Equity securities	36.0%
Fixed Income securities	34.4%
Cash and cash equivalents	29.6%
Total	100.0%

The primary objective of the investments is preservation of capital with an emphasis on long-term growth without undue exposure to risk. The DAV amended the investment policy statement in October 2004, which states, the target weight for fixed income securities (inclusive of cash requirements) is 40% of the combined investments. Approximately .5%-3% of the combined investments should be in Money Market or other liquid funds (cash requirements). The remaining 60% of the assets are targeted for equity securities, which have a relatively strong financial condition. The investment portfolio manager was in the process of completing this new allocation at December 31, 2004.

In selecting the expected rate of return on plan assets, the DAV considers historical rates of return for the type of investments the plan holds, as well as future market expectations. These expectations are then applied to the target asset allocation to come up with a weighted average of expected returns for the plan's portfolio of assets.

The following pension plan benefit payments, which reflect expected future service, as appropriate, are expected to be paid:

Fiscal Year Ending	**Benefit Payments**
2005	$5,627,000
2006	6,193,000
2007	9,708,000
2008	5,788,000
2009	8,051,000
2010-2014	31,431,000

Effective January 1, 2004, a plan amendment to the other postretirement benefit plan implemented mandatory mail order for maintenance drugs and increased co-payments for prescriptions and eye exams. This amendment resulted in an expected $1,725,000 gain on the unrecognized transition obligation to be amortized to income over the next nine years.

In 2004, the DAV elected early adoption of FASB FSP No. 106-2, *Accounting and Disclosure Requirements Related to the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003*. The DAV has concluded that the prescription drug benefits available under their plan to some or all participants for some or all future years are "actuarially equivalent" to Medicare Part D. Thus they qualify for the subsidy under the Act. This expected subsidy offset the employer's share of the cost of the underlying postretirement prescription drug coverage on which the subsidy is based.

This subsidy reduced the APBO by $4,302,000 relating to benefits attributed to past service. The subsidy reduced service cost, interest cost and amortization of actuarial experience gain by $211,000, $258,000, and $46,000, respectively for the year ended December 31, 2004. The overall effect on the net periodic postretirement benefit cost is $515,000.

The following other postretirement benefit payments and subsidy receipts, which reflect expected future service, as appropriate, are expected to be paid and received:

Fiscal Year Ending	Gross Benefit Payments	Gross Subsidy Receipts	Net Benefit Payments
2005	$1,942,960	$ 0	$1,942,960
2006	2,120,249	(158,474)	1,961,775
2007	2,326,117	(176,535)	2,149,582
2008	2,508,167	(197,301)	2,310,866
2009	2,647,812	(217,030)	2,430,782
2010-2014	15,641,516	(1,441,497)	14,200,019

DAV also maintains a defined contribution Salary Savings and Investment Plan for its employees. For qualified participating employees, DAV contributes a percentage of the employees' base salary. DAV's contributions in 2004 were $1,378,011 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 (the "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, 2004, net assets of the Foundation were $30,966,134. During 2004, DAV provided the Foundation with the use of DAV personnel, facilities and equipment. For the personnel services, DAV charged the Foundation $170,060. Facilities and equipment are provided by DAV at no charge. Additionally, in 2004, DAV contributed $51,025 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, 2004, the Foundation owed $135,869 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 (the "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 2004, DAV provided the Trust with the use of DAV personnel, facilities and equipment. For the personnel services, DAV charged the Trust $43,568. 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, 2004, the Trust owed $48,741 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 2004, the DAV donated $34,658 to the DVLMF.

* * * * * *

Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary National Headquarters

Financial Statements for the Year Ended December 31, 2004 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, 2004 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 2003 financial statements and, in our report dated April 27, 2004, 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 consideration of internal control over financial reporting as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Auxiliary's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, 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, 2004 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, 2005

Member of
Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 2004 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 2003

ASSETS	2004	2003
GENERAL ASSETS:		
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 821,465	$ 565,872
Investments at fair market value	5,601,016	5,517,709
Accrued interest receivable	30,529	26,514
Materials and supplies	125,337	107,698
Prepaid expenses	37,700	4,366
Other assets	13,825	17,124
Accounts receivable from the DAV	11,024	10,831
SERVICE PROGRAM ASSETS—		
Cash and cash equivalents	365,343	346,098
DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAM ASSETS—		
Cash and cash equivalents	9,299	9,299
EDUCATION LOAN PROGRAM ASSETS:		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,085,610	1,075,742
Notes receivable (less allowance of $5,875 in 2004 and 2003)	191,149	178,524
LIFE MEMBERSHIP ASSETS:		
Accrued interest receivable	47,108	56,320
Investments at fair market value	6,449,474	7,315,165
TOTAL	$14,788,879	$15,231,262

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	2004	2003
LIABILITIES:		
Accounts payable—DAV National Headquarters	$ 26,533	$ 21,084
Contributions distributable to state departments	150,330	147,609
Accrued vacation and sick leave pay	5,067	3,465
Deferred membership fees	609,018	620,757
Other	21,334	9,263
Life Membership:		
Cash overdraft	525,306	716,559
Reserve for future distribution of life membership dues	5,971,276	6,654,926
Total liabilities	7,308,864	8,173,663
NET ASSETS:		
Unrestricted—General	5,828,614	5,447,936
Temporarily restricted—Service Program	365,343	346,098
Temporarily restricted—Disaster Relief Program	9,299	9,299
Permanently restricted—Education Loan Program	1,276,759	1,254,266
Total net assets	7,480,015	7,057,599
TOTAL	$14,788,879	$15,231,262

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 2003

	2004					
	Unrestricted General	Temporarily Restricted Service Program	Temporarily Restricted – Disaster Relief Program	Permanently Restricted – Education Loan Program	Total	2003 Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:						
Membership fees and mandates	$ 330,357	$ 15,719	$ -	$ 6,547	$ 352,623	$ 413,336
Life membership dues	890,036				890,036	885,304
Contributions	264,129	6,048		8,856	279,033	285,657
Contributed facilities	25,300				25,300	25,300
Sale of membership items—less related direct costs of $53,229	(13,947)				(13,947)	(2,552)
Conference and meetings	15,640				15,640	16,390
National Convention	22,710				22,710	17,416
Interest income	120,883	3,426		7,090	131,399	177,797
Net assets released from restrictions	5,538	(5,538)				
Other	12,631	(410)			12,221	9,961
Total revenues	1,673,277	19,245	-	22,493	1,715,015	1,828,609
EXPENSES:						
Salaries and wages	387,926				387,926	400,124
Employee benefits	134,139				134,139	139,988
Distributions to state departments	148,446				148,446	139,424
Fundraising expenses	115,683				115,683	299,880
Payroll taxes	27,915				27,915	28,220
Conferences and meetings	68,066				68,066	69,512
Expenses of national convention	85,852				85,852	80,398
Printing, stationary and office supplies	48,694				48,694	67,274
Expenses of national commander and officers	13,823				13,823	20,808
Contributed facilities	25,300				25,300	25,300
Postage	60,593				60,593	55,453
Travel	40,194				40,194	37,782
Professional Fees	22,000				22,000	18,700
Service program benefits	5,538				5,538	2,828
VAVS, memberships and other awards	13,138				13,138	7,062
Other	76,687				76,687	104,839
Total expenses	1,273,994	-	-	-	1,273,994	1,497,592
EXCESS OF SUPPORT AND REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	399,283	19,245		22,493	441,021	331,017
CHANGE IN UNREALIZED DEPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	(18,605)				(18,605)	(9,096)
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	380,678	19,245		22,493	422,416	321,921
NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	5,447,936	346,098	9,299	1,254,266	7,057,599	6,735,678
NET ASSETS—End of year	$ 5,828,614	$ 365,343	$ 9,299	$ 1,276,759	$ 7,480,015	$ 7,057,599

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004
WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 2003

	2004	2003
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Change in net assets	$ 422,416	$ 321,921
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to cash used in operating activities:		
Permanently restricted contributions and interest income	(22,493)	(26,569)
Change in unrealized depreciation in investments	18,605	9,096
Change in assets and liabilities:		
Accrued interest receivable	5,197	20,391
Materials and supplies	(17,639)	11,971
Prepaid expenses, other assets and accounts receivable	(30,228)	35,586
Accounts payable	5,449	(364,708)
Contributions distributable to state departments	2,721	12,146
Deferred membership fees	(11,739)	21,927
Reserve for future distribution of life membership dues	(683,650)	(281,741)
Other liabilities	13,673	(5,307)
Total adjustments	(720,104)	(567,208)
Net cash used in operating activities	(297,688)	(245,287)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Increase in general fund investments	(101,912)	(1,657,087)
Decrease (increase) in Life Membership investments	865,691	(534,185)
Education loans	(40,500)	(38,000)
Collections from repayment of education loans	27,875	28,975
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	751,154	(2,200,297)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES—		
Permanently restricted education fund contributions and interest income	22,493	26,569
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	475,959	(2,419,015)
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS:		
Beginning of year	1,280,452	3,699,467
End of year	$ 1,756,411	$1,280,452

See notes to financial statements.

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004

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 2003 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, 2004 are summarized below:

	Cost	Market Value	Unrealized Net Gain/ (Loss)
Money market investments	$ 2,190,875	$ 2,190,875	
Corporate bonds	6,315,462	6,242,051	$ (73,411)
U.S. Treasury obligations	1,056,457	1,067,516	11,059
Mutual funds	2,806,845	2,550,048	(256,797)
Total	$12,369,639	$12,050,490	$(319,149)

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.

3. FREEDOM FOUNDATION

The DAV Auxiliary has designated $12,136 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 2004 in the reserve for future distribution of dues:

Balance—January 1, 2004	$6,654,926
Additions:	
Membership dues received	259,387
Earnings on invested assets	286,502
Change in unrealized appreciation of investments	316,986
Total	862,875
Deductions:	
Dues to National Headquarters	890,036
Dues to Local units	66,220
Dues to State Departments	111,958
Loss on sale of investments	463,142
Investment fee	13,423
Other expenses	1,746
Total	1,546,525
Balance—December 31, 2004	$5,971,276

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 $2,000 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 2004, DAV charged the DAV Auxiliary $134,139 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 2004, 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 2004, and is included as revenue and expense on the accompanying statement of activities.

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

* * * * * *

COMMANDER SURSELY: At this time I'd like to entertain a motion that the list of delegates and alternates selected by the 21 National Districts and the National Blind Veterans Chapter to serve on Convention Committees be admitted into the record of the proceedings of this Convention.

MR. FRANK D. WILLIAMS: Frank Williams, Chapter 13 of Ohio makes that motion.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Do I hear a second?

MR. STEESE: Mike 2.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 2.

MR. STEESE: George Steese, Chapter 1, California, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER SURSELY: I have a motion and a second. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

2005 NATIONAL CONVENTION
Las Vegas, NV

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

DISTRICT		NAME (DELEGATE && ALTERNATE)	CHAPTER NO. && STATE
01			
		Thomas J. Daley	MASSACHUSETTS 049
	(Alt)	John F. Regan	MASSACHUSETTS 013
02			
		Dennis L. Krulder	NEW YORK 125
	(Alt)	Timothy B Sapp	NEW YORK 034
03			
		Richard W. Schatz	RHODE ISLAND 012
	(Alt)	Junious B. Owens USAF Re	NEW HAMPSHIRE 013
04			
		Daniel T. Flynn	NEW JERSEY 020
	(Alt)	Anthony C Giantonio	DELAWARE 001
05			
		Harding Byrd	PENNSYLVANIA 015
	(Alt)	Raymond A. Thomas	PENNSYLVANIA 076
06			
		German Bravo-Perez	PUERTO RICO 001
	(Alt)	Wilbert B. Forbes	MARYLAND 017
07			
		David L. Tannenbaum	FLORIDA 004
	(Alt)	John F. Mc Coy	FLORIDA 067
08			
		Donald L. Samuels	TENNESSEE 003
	(Alt)	Carl L. Bailey	ALABAMA 045
09			
		Wallace E. Tyson	NORTH CAROLINA 046
	(Alt)	James T. Hatley	NORTH CAROLINA 012
10			
		Morris Penermon	MICHIGAN 001
	(Alt)	Harold E. De Forest	MICHIGAN 129
11			
		Robert H. Bertschy	OHIO 047
	(Alt)	Donald J. Bates USAF Re	OHIO 049
12			
		Mark D. Strange	ILLINOIS 055
	(Alt)	Don E. Salzbrun	WISCONSIN 003
13			
		James S. Huff	KENTUCKY 004
	(Alt)	James M. Quesinberry	KENTUCKY 125
14			
		Kevin R. Grantier	MONTANA 003
	(Alt)	Claud L. Adkins	SOUTH DAKOTA 003
15			
		Kristine S. Childers	NEBRASKA 007
	(Alt)	George R. Manes	MISSOURI 002
16			
		Kenneth G. Musselmann	CALIFORNIA 019
	(Alt)	Marvin N. Varias	CALIFORNIA 007
17			
		Floyd Watson Jr.	WYOMING 002
	(Alt)	Emilio Medina	WYOMING 009
18			
		Floyd W. Buell	NEVADA 012
	(Alt)	Darrell Carey Sr.	ARIZONA 008
19			
		Jerald A Royse Sr.	WASHINGTON 046
	(Alt)	Ernest E Hume	WASHINGTON 041
20			
		Teresa P Johniken	TEXAS 084
	(Alt)	Roland A. Paquette	TEXAS 020
21			
		Jonathan M. Trimble	ARKANSAS 001
	(Alt)	Fred Alan White Jr.	OKLAHOMA 007

ADVISORS: Kenneth G. Musselmann - Barry A. Jesinoski

2005 NATIONAL CONVENTION
Las Vegas, NV

COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

DISTRICT		NAME (DELEGATE && ALTERNATE)	CHAPTER NO. && STATE
01			
		Frank J. Drogo	MASSACHUSETTS 029
	(Alt)	Joseph A. Costa	MASSACHUSETTS 056
02			
		Anthony Fusco	NEW YORK 143
	(Alt)	Charles R. Musante	NEW YORK 028
03			
		Albert V Leclerc	RHODE ISLAND 012
	(Alt)	Louis T. Folcarelli	RHODE ISLAND 001
04			
		Mary J. Bencivenga	NEW JERSEY 024
	(Alt)	Keith R. Bradley	NEW JERSEY 020
05			
		Jessica Kugler	PENNSYLVANIA 085
	(Alt)	Robert L. Dubay	PENNSYLVANIA 008
06			
		Sloan H. Hoopes	VIRGINIA 003
	(Alt)	Mary H. Beamer	VIRGINIA 002
07			
		Edward Barnshaw	FLORIDA 018
	(Alt)	Robert J. Auchu	FLORIDA 078
08			
		William M. Newby	TENNESSEE 086
	(Alt)	Gordon L. Kinter	TENNESSEE 004
09			
		George E. Balch	NORTH CAROLINA 017
	(Alt)	Wess L. Spencer	NORTH CAROLINA 009
10			
		Russell Spalding	MICHIGAN 020
	(Alt)	Gerald N. Cool	MICHIGAN 020
11			
		David C. Uetterling	OHIO 036
	(Alt)	Leslie A. James	OHIO 116
12			
		Rene C. Couture	ILLINOIS 042
13			
		Benjamin Flores	INDIANA 017
	(Alt)	Lee S. Ewing	KENTUCKY 089
14			
		Richard Mc Laughlin	MONTANA 003
	(Alt)	Bernard R. Rogers	SOUTH DAKOTA 003
15			
		Howard I. Braman	NEBRASKA 035
	(Alt)	Charles Lovings Jr.	KANSAS 004
16			
		Larry D. Fredrickson USAF Re	CALIFORNIA 012
	(Alt)	Richard A. Brink Ret.	CALIFORNIA 035
17			
		Charles E. Orona	NEW MEXICO 033
	(Alt)	Alfred B. Sena	NEW MEXICO 033
18			
		Mike Godich Jr.	HAWAII 001
	(Alt)	Samuel B. Moyer	HAWAII 001
19			
		Dwayne W. Adams	OREGON 001
	(Alt)	Bert D Erwin	WASHINGTON 047
20			
		John E. Hill	TEXAS 020
	(Alt)	Dennis O Garriott	TEXAS 061
21			
		Bennie L. Miles	OKLAHOMA 056
	(Alt)	Allen Huddleston USA Ret	OKLAHOMA 060

ADVISORS: Michael J. Walsh - Michael E. Dobmeier - Anthony Baskerville

2005 NATIONAL CONVENTION
Las Vegas, NV

COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT

DISTRICT		NAME (DELEGATE && ALTERNATE)	CHAPTER NO. && STATE
01			
		Owen W. Emery Jr.	MASSACHUSETTS 005
	(Alt)	Roger H. Hamel	MASSACHUSETTS 068
02			
		Keith A. Robinson	NEW YORK 015
	(Alt)	Theodore Barbuto	NEW YORK 030
03			
		Carol A. Jackson	VERMONT 009
	(Alt)	Frederick J. Moore Jr.	MAINE 006
04			
		Jenny E. DeRaffele-Sibley	NEW JERSEY 032
	(Alt)	Paul D. Cobb	NEW JERSEY 067
05			
		Kirby C. Lindsey	PENNSYLVANIA 075
	(Alt)	Timothy J. Dunn	PENNSYLVANIA 111
06			
		Michael C. Corbett	MARYLAND 004
	(Alt)	Stephen C. Doll	WEST VIRGINIA 045
07			
		Albert M. Sorrentino	FLORIDA 032
	(Alt)	Joseph L. Murray	FLORIDA 028
08			
		Charles D. Richmond	ALABAMA 004
	(Alt)	Gilbert L. Henslee	MISSISSIPPI 005
09			
		David W. Irby	NORTH CAROLINA 061
	(Alt)	Richard D. Mann	NORTH CAROLINA 089
10			
		James D. Boozer	MICHIGAN 020
	(Alt)	Beth M. Gonzales	MICHIGAN 114
11			
		Paul F. Snider Jr.	OHIO 027
	(Alt)	Robert E. Howes	OHIO 072
12			
		Ebony L Walker	WISCONSIN 019
13			
		Eric D. McGinnis	INDIANA 003
	(Alt)	Thomas E. Gordon	KENTUCKY 156
14			
		Delbert J. Foster Jr.	SOUTH DAKOTA 001
	(Alt)	Roy M. Fillion	NORTH DAKOTA 002
15			
		Terence W. Rigby	IOWA 002
	(Alt)	Ronald G. Lechner	NEBRASKA 007
16			
		Frederick Powers Jr.	CALIFORNIA 020
	(Alt)	Ruben R. Trejo	CALIFORNIA 039
17			
		Terry D. Schow	UTAH 004
	(Alt)	Douglas K. Wells Jr.	UTAH 006
18			
		Robert S. Di Girolamo	ARIZONA 001
	(Alt)	Jose P. Garcia	NEVADA 013
19			
		Earsel J Green	WASHINGTON 005
	(Alt)	Robert E Caruthers	WASHINGTON 009
20			
		Michael J Legg	TEXAS 005
	(Alt)	Lawrence Wayne Moorman	TEXAS 195
21			
		Russell T. Dority	ARKANSAS 005
	(Alt)	Charles E. Wright	ARKANSAS 042

ADVISORS: Frank L. Cummings - Garry J. Augustine - Brian E. Lawrence

2005 NATIONAL CONVENTION
Las Vegas, NV

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

DISTRICT		NAME (DELEGATE && ALTERNATE)	CHAPTER NO. && STATE
01			
		Donald R. Burning	MASSACHUSETTS 004
	(Alt)	Richard P. Langevin	MASSACHUSETTS 004
02			
		Anthony L. Mirando	NEW YORK 145
	(Alt)	Joseph Alvino	NEW YORK 145
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)	David F. Ross	PENNSYLVANIA 076
06			
		Eliud S. Rodriguez	PUERTO RICO 016
	(Alt)	Rita E Aberegg	VIRGINIA 015
07			
		Roger H. Sullivan	FLORIDA 087
	(Alt)	Salvatore Stanzione Jr.	FLORIDA 149
08			
		Harold J. Hicks	ALABAMA 051
	(Alt)	Charles J. Lobdell Jr.	ALABAMA 009
09			
		Richard Williams Sr.	GEORGIA 010
	(Alt)	Moses A. Mc Intosh Jr.	GEORGIA 018
10			
		Lowell G. Mc Keehan	MICHIGAN 114
	(Alt)	Joseph M. Connelly	MICHIGAN 114
11			
		Joseph W. Johnston	OHIO 063
	(Alt)	David L. Bilinovich	OHIO 116
12			
		Allen J. Anderson	WISCONSIN 026
	(Alt)	Dennis W. Thompson	ILLINOIS 103
13			
		Andrew N. Zawistowski	INDIANA 017
	(Alt)	Carlos Arambula	INDIANA 017
14			
		Jerome G. Krejci	NORTH DAKOTA 002
	(Alt)	Wayne E. Mooney	MONTANA 017
15			
		Mark Cyr	MISSOURI 002
	(Alt)	Joseph A. Mulcahy	IOWA 001
16			
		John M. Parker	CALIFORNIA 154
17			
		Charles E. Orona	NEW MEXICO 033
	(Alt)	Alfred B. Sena	NEW MEXICO 033
18			
		James C. Bennett Sr.	NEVADA 013
	(Alt)	Phillip E Urioste	ARIZONA 008
19			
		Bruce O. Young	OREGON 001
	(Alt)	Fay A Lyon	WASHINGTON 046
20			
		Jay E. Johnson	TEXAS 128
	(Alt)	Arthur C. Walker	TEXAS 017
21			
		Andrew T. Smith	ARKANSAS 010
	(Alt)	Daryl L. Testone	ARKANSAS 007
BLIND VETS			
		Floyd O. Britting	BLIND VETERANS 001
	(Alt)	Joseph A. Carosella	BLIND VETERANS 001

ADVISORS: Bobby Williams - Richard E. Patterson

2005 NATIONAL CONVENTION
Las Vegas, NV

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

DISTRICT		NAME (DELEGATE && ALTERNATE)	CHAPTER NO. && STATE
01			
		James H. Tanner	MASSACHUSETTS 010
	(Alt)	Richard A. Trott Sr.	MASSACHUSETTS 096
02			
		Chester Wisnesky Jr.	NEW YORK 182
	(Alt)	Nicola L. Luciani	NEW YORK 018
03			
		Jeffrey A. Reed	VERMONT 015
	(Alt)	Roger A. Bourgery	VERMONT 003
04			
		Alfred Faticoni	CONNECTICUT 008
	(Alt)	Hasty P. Foreman	CONNECTICUT 018
05			
		Joseph Rozniakowski	PENNSYLVANIA 113
	(Alt)	Filippi P. Micocci USAF Re	PENNSYLVANIA 085
06			
		Tori S. Joyner	DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA 001
	(Alt)	A. L. Torres-Rodriguez	PUERTO RICO 005
07			
		Mary L. Redding	FLORIDA 016
	(Alt)	James P. Whitney	FLORIDA 150
08			
		Lorie A Caldwell	MISSISSIPPI 005
	(Alt)	Hilmer P. Hermann Jr.	LOUISIANA 033
09			
		Tim E. Hammons	GEORGIA 006
	(Alt)	Nathan H. Godwin Jr.	GEORGIA 070
10			
		Carl W. Poest	MICHIGAN 014
	(Alt)	Daniel S. Mulcahey	MICHIGAN 066
11			
		Charles E. Lambert	OHIO 015
	(Alt)	Howard D. Brandt	OHIO 071
12			
		Joshua J. Sniegowski	WISCONSIN 017
	(Alt)	Gordon L. Kitson	ILLINOIS 016
13			
		R. Gregory Belak	KENTUCKY 089
	(Alt)	Chester H. Lykins	INDIANA 052
14			
		Warren J. Tobin	NORTH DAKOTA 031
	(Alt)	Roger L. Andal	SOUTH DAKOTA 001
15			
		Paul W. Janecek	IOWA 002
	(Alt)	Howard R. Johnson Jr.	MISSOURI 002
16			
		Roderick G. Ramier	CALIFORNIA 011
	(Alt)	Judy C. Orosco	CALIFORNIA 017
17			
		Derek W Kanuho	UTAH 006
	(Alt)	Daniel J. Rioux	UTAH 014
18			
		William A. Wiedbusch	ARIZONA 008
	(Alt)	Jane B. Overy	NEVADA 012
19			
		Sarah J Royse	WASHINGTON 046
	(Alt)	Michael J Peplinski	WASHINGTON 047
20			
		James Woodward Jr.	TEXAS 017
	(Alt)	Edgar H. Meiser	TEXAS 047
21			
		Ray Burks	OKLAHOMA 056
	(Alt)	John E. Burress	OKLAHOMA 056

ADVISORS: Rick Surratt - Adrian Atizado

2005 NATIONAL CONVENTION
Las Vegas, NV

COMMITTEE ON HOSPITAL AND VOLUNTARY SERVICES

DISTRICT		NAME (DELEGATE && ALTERNATE)	CHAPTER NO. && STATE
01			
		George F. Fincel	MASSACHUSETTS 074
	(Alt)	Albert L. West	MASSACHUSETTS 074
02			
		Barry Berger	NEW YORK 154
	(Alt)	Thomas A. Ingram	NEW YORK 154
03			
		Francis J. Patten	VERMONT 003
	(Alt)	Robert A. Nicodemus	VERMONT 003
04			
		Stephen A. Duncan	NEW JERSEY 064
	(Alt)	Allen Gumpenberger	CONNECTICUT 005
05			
		Albert Lockhart El	PENNSYLVANIA 014
	(Alt)	Raymond A. Moody	PENNSYLVANIA 014
06			
		Carl E. Bethke	MARYLAND 033
	(Alt)	Calvin B. Cabarrus	WEST VIRGINIA 052
07			
		Salvator E. Uccello	FLORIDA 042
	(Alt)	Maryann Keckler	FLORIDA 067
08			
		Raybon L. Windham	MISSISSIPPI 011
	(Alt)	James D. Graves	ALABAMA 076
09			
		Clarence Brown	SOUTH CAROLINA 044
	(Alt)	Horace Adams	SOUTH CAROLINA 014
10			
		Dennis N. Emery	MICHIGAN 129
	(Alt)	Jimmy Poe	MICHIGAN 129
11			
		Raymond H. Hutchinson	OHIO 063
	(Alt)	Harlan F. Plummer	OHIO 071
12			
		Michael Hiley	ILLINOIS 016
	(Alt)	Curtis A. Leanna Jr.	WISCONSIN 003
13			
		Frank A. Mc Daniel	KENTUCKY 004
	(Alt)	James P. Balmer	KENTUCKY 155
14			
		Edmund N. Erdos III	MINNESOTA 002
	(Alt)	Fred A. Kjellerson	NORTH DAKOTA 004
15			
		James E. Price	KANSAS 011
	(Alt)	Marvin F. Chaney	MISSOURI 002
16			
		Delphine Metcalf-Foster	CALIFORNIA 021
	(Alt)	Suey M. Lee	CALIFORNIA 002
17			
		Jimmie Joe Snider	COLORADO 007
	(Alt)	Benito Gonzales	COLORADO 007
18			
		Patricia G Arcia	ARIZONA 020
	(Alt)	K. Renee Ball	ARIZONA 016
19			
		Linda S Mims	IDAHO 022
	(Alt)	Edward C. Mazza	OREGON 011
20			
		Kirk D. Bennett	TEXAS 029
	(Alt)	Freddie J. Anderson	TEXAS 017
21			
		Bobby R. Eddy	OKLAHOMA 057
	(Alt)	Billy E. Grimes Jr.	OKLAHOMA 007

ADVISORS: Delphine Metcalf-Foster - Joy J. Ilem - Edward E. Hartman

2005 NATIONAL CONVENTION
Las Vegas, NV

COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION AND VETERANS RIGHTS

DISTRICT		NAME (DELEGATE && ALTERNATE)	CHAPTER NO. && STATE
01			
		Raymond Richards	MASSACHUSETTS 006
	(Alt)	Robert C. Sinclair	MASSACHUSETTS 114
02			
		Samuel Danial	NEW YORK 030
	(Alt)	Howard Lam	NEW YORK 154
03			
		Beth A. Greenwood	RHODE ISLAND 017
	(Alt)	Terrance P. Leavitt	MAINE 022
04			
		Harry R. Newell	CONNECTICUT 047
	(Alt)	Francis S. Mazzei	CONNECTICUT 008
05			
		George I. Ford Sr.	PENNSYLVANIA 014
	(Alt)	Rafael A. Ramirez	PENNSYLVANIA 008
06			
		Jacob N. Stafford	WEST VIRGINIA 056
	(Alt)	Robert V. Richard Sr.	DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA 004
07			
		Richard E. Giese	FLORIDA 028
	(Alt)	John L. Haynes	FLORIDA 123
08			
		Christopher S. Cheney	MISSISSIPPI 011
	(Alt)	Hollis O. Bridges	ALABAMA 026
09			
		Ernest H. Stroud USAF Re	SOUTH CAROLINA 014
	(Alt)	Charles T. Pettigrew	SOUTH CAROLINA 013
10			
		Duane F. Getzmeyer	MICHIGAN 016
	(Alt)	Edward E. Reeves	MICHIGAN 130
11			
		David K. Farrell	OHIO 074
	(Alt)	William R. Caine	OHIO 116
12			
		Ted Buck	ILLINOIS 028
	(Alt)	Kerry L. Baker	WISCONSIN 009
13			
		Jerome C. Baker	INDIANA 003
	(Alt)	Donald G. Inns II	INDIANA 060
14			
		Keith E. Beach	MONTANA 019
	(Alt)	Elwood M. Krejci	SOUTH DAKOTA 001
15			
		Alfonso G. Martinez	NEBRASKA 018
	(Alt)	Clifford W. Dillard	KANSAS 004
16			
		Glen M. Halsey	CALIFORNIA 006
	(Alt)	Marlowe L. Benner	CALIFORNIA 059
17			
		Franklin D. Maughan	UTAH 004
	(Alt)	Norbert W. Wenthold	COLORADO 002
18			
		Irving Finver	NEVADA 034
	(Alt)	Paul M. Petrash	ARIZONA 027
19			
		Charles W Chapin	IDAHO 022
	(Alt)	Gregory Georgoff	OREGON 001
20			
		Alberto Erazo-Flores	TEXAS 005
	(Alt)	A J. Jones	TEXAS 032
21			
		Timothy D. Hedgecock USA Ret	OKLAHOMA 056
	(Alt)	Kim D. Crissler MA	OKLAHOMA 007
BLIND VETS			
		Harold E. Humphrey	BLIND VETERANS 001
	(Alt)	Richard D. Holden	BLIND VETERANS 001

ADVISORS: Joseph A. Violante - Brian Austin

2005 NATIONAL CONVENTION
Las Vegas, NV

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATION OF NATIONAL OFFICERS

DISTRICT		NAME (DELEGATE && ALTERNATE)	CHAPTER NO. && STATE
01			
		John V. Hogan	MASSACHUSETTS 013
	(Alt)	James F. Follis	MASSACHUSETTS 085
02			
		Sidney Siller	NEW YORK 023
	(Alt)	John J. Skyler	NEW YORK 001
03			
		Peter S. Collins	MAINE 011
	(Alt)	Robert D. Wayss	NEW HAMPSHIRE 004
04			
		Salvatore LoSauro	NEW JERSEY 015
	(Alt)	Joseph P. Trulio	NEW JERSEY 018
05			
	(Alt)	Richard C. Boarts	PENNSYLVANIA 036
06			
		Jeffrey B. Martin	VIRGINIA 013
	(Alt)	Perry W. Johnson	VIRGINIA 057
07			
		Dennis A. Joyner	FLORIDA 104
	(Alt)	Kenneth D. Wolfe	FLORIDA 101
08			
		Ronald S. Campbell	TENNESSEE 070
	(Alt)	Gerald E. Humphries	MISSISSIPPI 011
09			
		Marian J. Truscello	SOUTH CAROLINA 051
	(Alt)	Michael J. Truscello	SOUTH CAROLINA 051
10			
		Thomas A. McMasters III	MICHIGAN 129
	(Alt)	Rolly D. Lee Sr.	MICHIGAN 105
11			
		Joseph R. Lenhart	OHIO 073
	(Alt)	David T. May	OHIO 050
12			
		Alfred C. Reynolds	ILLINOIS 017
	(Alt)	Thomas W. Rymer	WISCONSIN 045
13			
		Michael A. Whelihan	INDIANA 052
	(Alt)	Willie Williams	INDIANA 052
14			
	(Alt)	Joseph M. Litzinger	NORTH DAKOTA 002
15			
		Steven A. Henre USA Ret	KANSAS 001
	(Alt)	Lyle J. Dean	IOWA 010
16			
		Larry A. Polzin	CALIFORNIA 073
	(Alt)	George H. Steese Jr.	CALIFORNIA 001
17			
		Floyd Watson Jr.	WYOMING 002
	(Alt)	Franklin D. Maughan	UTAH 004
18			
		Shawn Poston	ARIZONA 020
	(Alt)	Gerald L. Ogle	NEVADA 012
19			
		Francis P. Reding	IDAHO 025
	(Alt)	Clayton E Love	ALASKA 004
20			
		Bruce W. Burgess	TEXAS 005
	(Alt)	Percy A. Spence III	TEXAS 017
21			
		Joe E. Bayones	OKLAHOMA 056
	(Alt)	Cougar Hammons	OKLAHOMA 007
BLIND VETS			
		Anthony Martino	BLIND VETERANS 001
	(Alt)	Joseph F. Wallace	BLIND VETERANS 001

ADVISORS: Gene A. Murphy - Richard E. Marbes

COMMANDER SURSELY: I will now ask Adjutant Wilson to read the names of the Convention Committee Advisors that I have appointed and who received the approval of the National Executive Committee at its most recent meeting.

ADJUTANT WILSON: The Committee advisors are: Credentials, Michael J. Walsh, Michael E. Dobmeier and Anthony L. Baskerville; General Resolutions and Membership, Rick Surratt and Adrian M. Atizado;

Legislation and Veterans Rights, Joseph A. Violante and Brian E. Austin; Constitution and Bylaws, Kenneth G. Musselmann and Barry A. Jesinoski; Finance and Dues, Bobby Williams and Richard E. Patterson;

Employment, Frank L. Cummings, Garry J. Augustine, and Brian E. Lawrence; Hospital and Voluntary Services, Delphine Metcalf-Foster, Joy J. Ilem and Edward E. Hartman; Nomination of National Officers, Gene A. Murphy and Richard E. Marbes.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Art. Ladies and gentlemen, that concludes today's agenda. Please rise and I will ask Chaplain Stump to lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN STUMP: Father, we thank You for these proceedings and we ask your hand of blessing to continue to be with all those who were rewarded with their rewards.

We thank You, Father, for each report that was made and the success and the outstanding work that is being done by our Adjutant, Commander, staff, and by our body, the DAV.

Bless our committees as they meet. May You guide each chairman as they go about their work. May we also reassemble here at the reception this evening to enjoy the friendship and the fellowship of one another. So we ask, Father, your blessing upon us as we continue through this day. For God's glory. Amen.

COMMANDER SURSELY: The Convention stands in recess until 9:30 tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 2:34 o'clock p.m. August 14, 2005.)

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION

August 15, 2005

The Second Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans 84th National Convention was convened in the Events Center of Bally's Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada, Monday morning, August 15, 2005, and was called to order at 9:30 o'clock a.m. by National Commander James E. Sursely.

COMMANDER SURSELY: The Convention will come to order. Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Pledge of Allegiance)

COMMANDER SURSLEY: Chaplain Stump will you please lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN STUMP: God's word to us this morning is this, as the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the Living God.

When shall I come and appear before You, O God. And Father, we realize that all men are held accountable for their actions. That is why it's such a joy to be a part of this great organization.

That's why it's such a joy to be here as we go about the business of this great organization, because we are held accountable to You. You tell us that we serve You by serving our brother, our comrades, disabled American veterans and their families.

Their well being is at the center of our hearts. We ask that You bless them wherever they are around this great globe this morning. Bless our men and women in uniform as they're already about their difficult day.

Bring them home safely, mission accomplished, and as rapidly as possible. Bless our Adjutant, our Commander, our line officers, as they go forth to serve You.

And may You reward even further those who are receiving their just reward and their just recognition for services well rendered. Bless us with Your presence for in God's glory we ask it. Amen.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Chaplain. I will now call on the Credentials Committee for a partial report. Mary.

MS. BENCIVENGA: Good morning, National Commander, National Officers, National Adjutant, staff, delegates and guests. The Credentials Committee met this morning in the Skyview Number 1 at the Bally's Hotel.

Roll call showed 1,461 delegates and 53 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 August 14th, 2005.

At the present time we have 544 chapters, 47 departments, 32 National Officers, 12 Past National Officers or Commanders, correction, for a total of 1,461 delegates and 53 alternates for a total vote of 10,566. This completes the partial report for the Credentials Committee, Commander.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Mary. The stories of our nation's sacrifices run through every fiber of America. We saw that five years ago when we created the inspiring video, "Baseball, Real American Heroes" which highlighted our DAV Day at the Ballpark program.

This year our organization began a new program in partnership with the teams of the National Football League. We'll be producing special cards for football players to autograph and give to fans. We will work with teams as they salute our nation's veterans.

And we have created another outstanding video program to showcase the service and sacrifice of those who became the "GI's of the Gridiron." Please join with me to get a first glimpse of a really special program.

(Whereupon, the video "GIs of the Gridiron" was viewed.)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you. I know you all enjoyed this program of courage and sacrifice as much as I did. This video will be provided to each National Football League team.

It has already been presented to the NFL Players Association, the NFL Alumni Association, the Pro Football Hall of Fame, the Joe Foss Institute, and the National Foundation for Women Legislators who plan to show it at a special rally next month in Phoenix.

Once this program gets around I think people will have a greater understanding that all Americans are charged with the defense of liberty, and some make great sacrifices for freedom. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: It is my pleasure to now introduce Congressman Jon Porter from the Third District of the State of Nevada which adjoins the Las Vegas area. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm DAV welcome to Congressman Jon Porter. (Applause)

MR. JON PORTER: Thank you very much. Good morning everyone. Welcome to Las Vegas. And what happens in Las Vegas —

(Responses of "Stays in Las Vegas.")

MR. PORTER: Remember that when you go home. It is really an honor for me to be here today. You truly are heroes and I know that we heard it this morning on the film and you hear it frequently, but from the bottom of my heart I am truly, truly humbled and honored to be here this morning.

To all the families of the disabled veterans, you all deserve medals also for your patience, your encouragement. You truly are heroes of the family. To our National Commander Jim, I appreciate you being here.

I understand Jim said he has been coming out here about three times a year since 1971. Now, we do have a lot of stories that will stay in Las Vegas. (Laughter)

Art, thank you for being here. As National Adjutant we appreciate you being such a big part of the disabled veterans, but know that we appreciate all of you being here in Las Vegas.

I know that today we also have Jose Garcia, the Nevada commander. Jose, I know you're here someplace, right? Welcome and thank you for everything that you've done. (Applause)

You know, I understand that conventions have been held in Las Vegas since about 1947. Now my dad was on the Aleutian Islands in 1947 so I know he wasn't able to join you. But know as a community we do support veterans.

We have one of the fastest growing veterans populations in the world, certainly in the country, one of the fastest senior populations, just one of the fastest growing populations, about 8,000 or 9,000 people a month moving to the Nevada area. Imagine that.

We, you know earlier as I had a chance to meet some of the dignitaries there was a gentleman here that you folks from Boston may not like a whole lot and that's Larry Barnett.

Larry tells me he has visited close to 50 hospitals a year, DAV hospitals a year, since the late '70s. You know, that is an example of what your organization is all about.

You've reached out to individuals all over the country to provide their services to try to add a little pleasure, put a little spark in a veteran's heart.

I have had the opportunity many times to visit Bethesda and Walter Reed and spend a little bit of time with some of the men and women in uniform who have been injured.

And you know, I used to walk in the room and I would say, "I'm a member of Congress from Nevada." And they would say, "Well, that's nice" and we would chat a little bit about their family and kids and about their loss.

But one day a young man said, "Have you ever been to Las Vegas?" (Laughter) And his eyes lit up. This is a young man that had just come back from Baghdad and was injured really, really bad, had lost a couple of limbs.

And he said, "You know what, Congressman, I want to come to Las Vegas sometime. I want to visit Las Vegas. I want to share in your community." So I tell you what I do now.

I say, I'm a member of Congress from the state of Las Vegas (Laughter) because I'm finding as I visit your colleagues around the world it does bring a little sparkle because I believe we truly are the entertainment capital but also the hospitality capital of the world.

And right here at Bally's I know they are absolutely one of the best. You know, as we spend a little bit of time here these few days in Las Vegas, I know that although you're here two or three days your memories are full of a very special time with your friends and your colleagues.

But I also know that your memories are lasting, your memories of your service to our country. Every day you wake up and you're reminded in some shape or form of your honor, your dignity, your pride and your service to our country which has allowed for us to have this convention here in Las Vegas.

It allows Las Vegas to be what it is. It allows my son and daughter and your family and friends to prosper and enjoy this great country. But know that as a member of Congress from the state of Las Vegas, from the great community of Nevada, we are so proud of you and want you to know that that memory that you carry every day we share with you.

You set an example; your pride, unsurpassed; your patriotism, unsurpassed; your honor, your dignity, unsurpassed. You are truly America's heroes.

We're fighting today an unconventional war and your colleagues and numbers are expanding every day. You have new members of DAV joining the ranks every day.

They, too, share that pride, that dignity, that sense of hope for our country and for the world. But know we honor you. We are so proud of you and we are so glad you decided to join us here in Las Vegas for your convention.

Please come back. Please share in our community and know that every man, woman and child in this great city of Nevada appreciates all that you've done and wish you nothing but the best. May God bless you all, your families and this great country, and again thank you for being with us today. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Congressman Porter. Gerri Schroeder, Staff Assistant to Representative Shelley Berkley from the First District of Nevada, which includes the city of Las Vegas, has also joined us today on behalf of Representative Berkley.

Representative Berkley, a strong veterans' advocate, sits on the House Veterans Affairs Committee. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm welcome to Gerri Schroeder. (Applause)

MS. GERRI SCHROEDER: Good morning, everybody. It is indeed my honor to be here on behalf of Congresswoman Shelley Berkley. I also wanted to just say a quick hello to our delegation over there, lots of good friends of ours.

And I wanted to thank the DAV for allowing me to take a couple minutes of your time to address you on behalf of the Congresswoman. Thank you very much. (Applause) The Congresswoman had asked me to read a letter to you of welcome. It says:

Dear Friends, As the representative for Nevada's First Congressional District and a member of the United States House of Representatives' Veterans Affairs Committee I am honored to welcome everyone attending the 84th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans.

Our veterans are American heroes and as a nation we owe them a debt of gratitude that includes keeping the commitments we made to provide healthcare and other VA benefits.

I believe we should honor the commitments we have made to those who have fought for our country and I will continue to work in Congress to improve care and benefits for our veterans across the nation.

The Disabled American Veterans have been a voice for our nation's veterans for nearly a century. To America and the world the letters D-A-V symbolize volunteerism and community service.

It was the bravery, sacrifice and valor of the veterans of World War I who started this organization to advocate for veterans' rights.

Today your membership is dedicated to preserving veterans' rights, advocating a strong national defense, promoting patriotism, and offering community service.

I commend you for your dedication to our nation's disabled veterans and their families and I applaud you for your hard work and urge you to continue your noble efforts.

We have so much to offer here in Southern Nevada, the entertainment capital of the world. I hope you have a chance to enjoy as much of it as possible while you are here.

Keep up your good work and best wishes for a successful convention. Sincerely, Shelley Berkley, Member of Congress.

Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Ms. Schroeder. As Executive Director of DAV Washington Headquarters Dave Gorman is responsible for the day-to-day performance of our Service, Legislative and Volunteer programs.

Dave is not attending this year's Convention because his wife Paula is expecting the birth of their first child at any time now. Dave's report to the Convention will be submitted for the record.

(The following written annual report was submitted by Mr. David W. Gorman, Executive Director, DAV Washington Headquarters:)

Annual Report of
David W. Gorman
Executive Director, Washington Headquarters
to the 84th National Convention
of the
Disabled American Veterans
Las Vegas, Nevada
August 15, 2005

National Commander Sursely, distinguished guests, and delegates to the 84th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans:

As Executive Director of the DAV's National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, it is truly an honor and a privilege to present this annual report to this National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans.

First, I want thank National Commander James E. Sursely for his inspired leadership and loyal dedication to the DAV and our mission to build better lives for this nation's disabled veterans and their families.

Over the past year Jim Sursely has been a powerful motivational force for the DAV, not only as our National Commander, but earning the respect of government officials in Washington D.C., and the admiration of countless people all across this great country of ours.

Jim has been a steadfast advocate for our cause, and all 2.3 million service-connected disabled veterans and their families owe him a great debt of gratitude for his efforts on their behalf. His achievements are a tribute to our commitment to service to this nation's veterans.

It has been an outstanding year, Commander, and please accept our profound thanks and appreciation for all that you have done in the cause of disabled veterans.

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

Art's wisdom, vision, dedication, and professional expertise have maintained DAV's outstanding financial position as the envy of other veterans service organizations. He has demonstrated time and again the unique ability to combine sound business practices with the unwavering commitment to our mission of compassion and service.

Under Art's leadership, we are in the best position in our history to continue the work needed on behalf of our nation's disabled veterans. He is the rock-solid foundation of our organization – the greatest source of strength that places the DAV ahead of all other veterans organizations in the world. His strength is the strength of the DAV.

None of our success would be possible without the terrific work carried out by National Headquarters Executive Director Rick Patterson and his great staff and our employees in Cold Spring, Kentucky.

Auxiliary National Commander Gertrude Tidwell and Auxiliary National Adjutant Maria Tedrow have given all of us such great support. I offer my deepest thanks to them as well. We would not be nearly as effective in our mission without the Auxiliary and all those members who work so diligently on our behalf.

At Washington Headquarters, our team—Service, Legislation, Voluntary Services, Communications; our professional and support staffs, alike—work in unison toward the same goal: fulfilling our important mission of service and hope for disabled veterans and their families.

I would like to recognize the outstanding achievement of those National Directors at the National Service and Legislative Headquarters. National Service Director Randy Reese directs our program of outstanding service to disabled veterans and their families. The scope and mission of his service is both massive and complex. Randy has done a remarkable job leading our corps of National Service Officers in the timely and successful completion of their mission.

National Legislative Director Joseph Violante has provided outstanding leadership in advancing the legislative goals of the DAV in a very difficult political environment. Joe and his staff have excelled in making the policy makers of our nation aware of the needs of disabled veterans and their families and advancing our issues and programs. National Director of Voluntary Services Edward Hartman has excelled in the further development of our voluntary programs. I am very proud of these outstanding professionals and their staffs, who have had such great success this past year.

I also want to acknowledge a valued member of our very fine team at Washington Headquarters, Executive Secretary Sally Miller, who is invaluable in keeping things running smoothly. My heartfelt thanks to Sally and the entire support staff for the tremendous job they do and their dedication to our mission.

Service

As we conduct this National Convention, nearly 2,000 young men and women have sacrificed their lives in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other nations in the war on terrorism.

Those who have given their lives form a cross-section of our society. At least 25 service women have died and 179 have been wounded in action. The average age of those sacrificing their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan is 28 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, and need DAV's vital support programs.

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. 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.

In 88 offices throughout the United States and in Puerto Rico, approximately 260 NSOs, with the assistance of 24 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). Some of the free services offered by NSOs and TSOs include 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 over $37 million in 2004, these direct hands-on services make up the largest item in our budget for program services. Between July 1, 2004, and June 30, 2005, our NSOs and TSOs represented over 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, who are veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, have just begun their initial training, which is a structured, 16-month on-the-job training program developed by our 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 a NSO. DAV's Structured and Continued Training Program is designed to provide continual up-to-date training on the multifaceted and ever-changing aspects of veterans' law.

As a result of such comprehensive training, DAV's NSOs are regarded as the most respected, highly trained advocates and skilled experts in developing and prosecuting veterans' claims. This distinction was further revealed and substantiated by a recent Knight Ridder investigation into the VA adjudicative processes.

DAV Structured and Continuing Training Program

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 Department staff at National Service and Legislative Headquarters monitor the program and the instructors. NSOs are required to take a pre-test and then successfully complete each of the 32 training modules before taking a final post-test. DAV administers computer-based testing through an internet service provider, 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 and a variety of information technology programs. The goal of DAV's National Service Program is to produce the most highly skilled and effective NSOs available for all veterans and their families.

National Appeals Office

The Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA or Board) 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. About 90 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 in the presentation and representation of their cases before the Board. DAV maintains the largest staff of any group doing this work, representing 35 percent of all cases decided by the BVA for the period between July 2004 and June 2005.

During this same period DAV's NAOs represented 9,121 appellants who received a decision by the Board, either by submitting a written legal brief on their behalf or assisting them in a formal hearing. From those cases decided by the Board, 1,038 issues of service connection were favorably resolved; 1,103 issues of increased ratings were allowed; 937 miscellaneous issues were granted; and, 11,437 issues were remanded to VA's Appeals Management Center for additional development. In total, during fiscal year 2004 78% of all claimants represented by DAV received favorable (or remanded) dispositions. These figures reflect the DAV's continued commitment in providing quality representation to our nation's wartime disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors.

Our National Appeals Staff has been involved in numerous special assignments outside of the office, such as providing personnel for DAV programs assisting wounded soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. The office is involved in training of National Service Officers attending orientation and instruction at the Board. The NAO staff is also involved with other events such as the annual DAV Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, DC.

Judicial Appeals Office

During 2004, the DAV continued to be the leading Veterans Service Organization representing veterans and their dependents before the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) and the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit (Federal Circuit). The DAV Judicial Appeals Office filed 209 appeals during 2004. Of the 125 DAV cases for which a disposition was reached by the CAVC during 2004, 113 were reversals or remands. DAV had an enviable 90.4 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 their decision. During 2004, the Judicial Appeals Office staff generated $315,555.64 in EAJA fees, all of which were donated to DAV's National Service Foundation. The office hopes to equal that figure in 2005 as $176,864.00 in EAJA fees have been generated since January.

The Judicial Appeals Office also works closely with the DAV National Service Director and his staff, who monitor proposed changes to VA regulations. Challenges to such regulatory amendments must be filed in the Federal Circuit. One such challenge brought in 2004 was *Disabled American Veterans v. Secretary of Veterans Affairs*, Nos. 04-7117, 7128 (Fed. Cir.). DAV argued this case before the Federal Circuit in early April. The issue presented by the case is whether the Board of Veterans Appeals may lawfully seek an "independent medical opinion" from a physician employed by VA. DAV asserts that a doctor working for VA would not be "independent" within the meaning of the law. A decision is expected within several months.

Military Affairs and Transition Service Program

When the enlisted soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines and military officers are making the all-important transition back into civilian life, the DAV is there and participates in several formal transition programs. Such programs include the Transition Assistance Programs (TAP), Disabled Transition Assistance Programs (DTAP), and Pre-Separation Programs. While some NSOs participate in these programs, the majority of these services are provided by DAV's specially trained Transition Service Officers (TSOs). DAV's TSOs are principally stationed on military installations and their primary mission is to provide benefits counseling, service medical records review and assist service members with filing initial claims for VA benefits. Our TSOs provide services to more than 80 military installations throughout our 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 2004, DAV TSOs conducted 1,982 formal briefing presentations for 92,422 transitioning service men and women. During that same time, our TSOs conducted 45,699 personal interviews, reviewed 35,172 service medical records, accepted 20,311 new powers of attorney and filed 21,469 claims for veterans' benefits of which 17,189 where original disability compensation claims.

The DAV continues to be the premier player in the VA's Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) initiative. In January 2005 the VA began consolidating the decision making of these claims to two regional processing offices. The two offices are Salt Lake City, UT and Winston-Salem, NC. In the Salt Lake City office, the VA has processed 3,083 claims since January of 2005, of which DAV represented 1,926. More than 60% of these cases were handled by DAV. In Winston-Salem, the VA has processed 2,373 cases for the same period, of which 1,157 where represented by DAV. Meaning DAV represented nearly 50% of all the BDD cases decided by the Winston-Salem VA office.

In addition, our NSOs provide representation before Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military Records. Counsel and representation was provided for 258 active duty service members during their transition through the military's Disability Evaluation System (DES), which primarily consists of Medical Evaluation Boards (MEBs) and formal hearings before Physical Evaluation Boards (PEBs).

On July 27, 2005, the DAV signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the National Guard Bureau Family Programs Office to facilitate the exchange of information to assist military families.

This partnership will allow the National Guard and the DAV to share information, materials, and resources, and work collaboratively to build a stronger network of volunteers to meet the needs of military families. The agreement calls for each of the 88 DAV National Service and Transition Service Offices to cooperate with state National Guard headquarters in working with the family services representatives to assist needy military families. Under the MOU, DAV Departments in each state will promote community support for military mobilizations and demobilizations. Local DAV Chapters will seek volunteers to help serve the National Guard State Family Programs Family Assistance Centers. Also DAV will encourage it's more than 17,000 volunteers to join other volunteers in support of families of service members.

DAV's outstanding and professional service programs are in place to assist all veterans and their dependants in obtaining state or federal benefits for service to our nation. We will also encourage the DAV Auxiliary to support the National Guard volunteer programs.

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 MSOs also offer private interview areas for confidential counseling and discussion with each claimant.

The DAV National Organization currently maintains 10 of these specially equipped MSOs on tour to make stops in communities across the country. The program started with 12 MSOs. 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 2004, our MSOs traveled nearly 120,000 miles, visiting 425 locations. Our NSOs, with the assistance of TSOs, DSOs, and CSOs, interviewed 15,280 veterans and other potential claimants.

During their outreach 5,166 new powers of attorney to provide representation to claimants were accepted and 13,990 applications for benefits were completed. In addition, 765 new DAV members were recruited.

Outreach

During the past year DAV entered a new era of outreach by having NSOs offer services at Air Shows throughout the Nation. DAV attended 11 Air Shows in 2004, which resulted in 780 interviews, 149 powers of attorney, 1,061 claims and 129 new DAV members. DAV again sponsored the *Panchito*, a restored World War II B-25J Mitchell Bomber, in all 11 Air Shows. Due to the success of the air shows, DAV elected to sponsor another B-25J Mitchell Bomber, *Special Delivery*, which also participated in 11 air shows.

Information Seminars continue to be used by DAV's NSOs as an avenue to reach veterans and their families. During the period of July 1, 2004, through June 30, 2005, DAV NSOs conducted 45 Information Seminars at various locations throughout the country. DAV mailed out over 163,732 notices to ensure that all veterans living in the local area were aware of the time and place of the Information Seminars. There were 1,764 attendees, with 637 interviews being conducted, 342 claims taken and 35 new members recruited. Information Seminars not only provide the opportunity for veterans to discuss 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.

Department Service Officers/Chapter Service Officers

The Department Service Officer/Chapter Service Officer (DSO/CSO) 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 2004, 36 Departments participated in the training and 1,078 DSOs/CSOs were certified.

Homeless Veterans

Another initiative that has received our support and assistance is the plight 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, and 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 $2.2 million in grants that have been provided through the DAV Charitable Service Trust.

Legislation

Improving the delivery of health care to veterans and upgrading the efficiency of the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system were again major areas of DAV's efforts this year. With the annual ordeal of urging adequate appropriations for medical care, DAV continued to push for full funding of VA medical care. Changing veterans medical care from a discretionary to a mandatory program would alleviate a number of problems. With funding at sufficient levels mandated by law rather than funding being subject to the politics of the annual appropriations process, service-connected veterans would be guaranteed the health care they need, and medical facility directors could better plan their programs with advance knowledge of what resources they will have available. Inadequate funding would no longer require the rationing of medical care or emergency funding legislation, and veterans would be able to obtain clinic appointments in a timely fashion.

At the end of the 108th Congress in 2004 and the beginning of the new 109th Congress in January 2005, the political landscape changed notably in Washington. The House Leadership stripped Congressman Chris Smith of his chairmanship of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee because he was an honest advocate for what was right and would not bend to leadership pressure to quietly "go along with the program" to under fund veterans' medical care and support other actions detrimental to veterans. The House leadership replaced Congressman Smith with Congressman Steve Buyer (R-IN). Senator Arlen Specter's (R-PA) term as chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee expired, and he was replaced by Senator Larry Craig (R-ID). Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI) became the new Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. With its reorganization of the appropriations subcommittees, the congressional leadership included VA under a new subcommittee in both the House and Senate. In the House, VA's appropriation was placed under the Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies. In the Senate, the Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans' Affairs, and Related Agencies have jurisdiction over VA's appropriation.

With President Bush's second term came a new Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Our longtime advocate, Secretary Anthony J. Principi, was replaced by Secretary James Nicholson. Elsewhere, we lost some friends in key places.

Among our own ranks of the DAV, we lost one of our most special friends. Past National Commander Oliver Meadows died on April 26, 2005. Following a distinguished 20-year career as Staff Director of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Oliver served as our National Commander in 1977 and 1978. He remained a trusted advisor for the DAV national staff throughout the years, and the DAV legislative staff regularly sought his invaluable advice and counsel. We will miss that advice, and we will miss him.

Budget & Appropriations

Fiscal Year 2005

Each year, the budget debate centers on the amount of discretionary appropriations that should be provided for veterans' programs, predominantly veterans' medical care. As they began work to draft their fiscal year (FY) 2005 appropriations bill for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and other independent agencies in late July 2004, House appropriators expected to cut spending for all the agencies funded by the bill except VA. Because of its political importance, the amount of appropriations for veterans medical care was expected to make the bill one of the most controversial among the 13 annual appropriations bills.

The bill approved by the House Appropriations Committee on July 22, 2004, added $1.2 billion to the $27.4 billion the President requested in his budget. The Appropriations Committee voted down an amendment offered by Congressman Chet Edwards (D-TX) to add another $1.3 billion to bring funding more in line with our request in *The Independent Budget* of $30.3 billion in appropriations for medical care. In response to strong objections from the veterans community, the Committee rejected the President's recommendation to increase medical co-payments and impose a $250 annual enrollment fee for medical care. The House bill did, however, follow the President's recommendation to cut staffing in the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) by 540 fulltime employees (FTE). On September 21, 2004, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its bill, which provided funding slightly higher than the House bill with an additional $1.2 billion designated as emergency funding for medical care.

As we neared the beginning of FY 2005 on October 1, 2004, Congress had yet to agree on most of the spending bills, and it became apparent that temporary funding bills would be required to keep the Government running until Congress returned after the November election. On November 20, 2004, Congress passed an omnibus appropriations bill that consolidated several appropriations bills, and the President signed it on December 8, 2004. The appropriation for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) was $28.1 billion, an increase of $1.5 billion from FY 2004, but $1.7 billion less than we sought. The omnibus bill required an across-the-board reduction in spending, a "recision," which reduced the increase by $228 million. Another $125 million was to be transferred to VBA to cover the costs of hiring new claims processing staff. Nearly all of the remaining increase was wiped out by a pay increase for Federal employees above that funded in the budget.

Fiscal Year 2005 Supplemental Appropriation

With an influx of new veterans from the War in Iraq and the War against Terrorism needing medical services and with news reports from across our nation of shortfalls already in FY 2005 funding for veterans' medical care, Representative Darlene Hooley (D-OR) and other House Democrats wrote the President in February 2005 to urge him to support including $1.3 billion for veterans' medical care in the emergency supplemental appropriations for the war. In congressional testimony on February 16, 2005, VA Secretary Jim Nicholson denied that VA was deferring purchases and maintenance because of funding shortfalls. In his March 8, 2005, testimony in a joint hearing before the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committees, DAV National Commander James E. Sursely provided several examples of news stories about the effects of shortfalls on various VA medical centers. These stories began to appear in the first quarter of the fiscal year. In March, the House leadership blocked Representative Hooley's efforts to offer an amendment to the bill for the purpose of adding $1.2 billion for medical care. On April 5, 2005, Secretary Nicholson told Congress VA did not need additional money for veterans' medical care. On April 12, 2005, an effort by Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) to add $2 billion to the bill for veterans' medical care was defeated by a vote along party lines of 54 to 46.

On June 23, 2005, VA admitted that a $1 billion shortfall in medical care funding for FY 2005 had required it to divert construction money and dip into reserve funds to cover the shortage. On June 29, 2005, the Senate voted to add $1.5 billion to the FY 2005 medical care appropriation. The House passed its supplemental funding bill the following day. Based on the Administration's initial estimate of the extra funding needed, the House bill would provide only $975 million. The Administration subsequently revised its estimate and informed Congress that $300 million more would as required to cover the shortfall. As of this writing, the Senate is still considering alternatives for the best legislative vehicle for the supplemental funding, and the Senate and House must both agree to the same amount before the legislation can be sent to the President to be signed into law.

Fiscal Year 2006

The budget cycle for FY 2006 began with the President's submission of this budget to Congress on February 7, 2005. The President's FY 2006 budget for VA requests $70.8 billion in total budget authority. This total consists of $37.4 billion for mandatory spending for the benefit programs and $33.4 billion for discretionary funding. The mandatory funding would include $478.3 million to cover a 2.3 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in disability compensation. The medical care budget authority of $30.7 billion would include $27.8 billion in discretionary appropriations with the remainder to be obtained from co-payments, enrollment fees, and other collections. Another $2.7 billion in discretionary funding would cover general operating expenses (GOE), some construction costs, and medical research.

The $27.8 billion in appropriations for veterans' medical care amounts to only a 0.4%—or less than one-half of one percent—increase over the FY 2005 appropriation in nominal, or constant, dollars, and therefore would be a reduction below the FY 2005 appropriation of $27.7 billion adjusted for inflation. *The Independent Budget* estimated that VA needed at least $31.2 billion in appropriations for veterans' medical care in FY 2006.

To bridge some of the gap between the resources needed and the appropriations requested, the Administration's budget would shift some of the costs of VA medical care from the Government onto veterans themselves. It would impose a $250 annual enrollment fee and increase pharmacy co-payments for so-called "lower priority veterans" (Priority Group 7 & 8 veterans) seeking medical care. According to the Administration's budget, imposing these fees has two goals: (1) to generate non-appropriated revenues in the form of money collected from veterans and thereby partially offset reductions in appropriations, and (2) save money by driving a projected 213,000 veterans away from the VA medical care system in FY 2006. To further partially reduce the gap between resources needed and appropriations requested, the Administration merely declared that it will achieve $590 million in savings through new management efficiencies.

Assuming Congress agrees to impose the enrollment fee and increased co-payments on disabled veterans, assuming the projected savings from the scheme to drive veterans away from the system, and assuming all of the savings from the attainment of new efficiencies, the total budget authority would still fall far short of what is needed to maintain services. The total budget authority for medical care would still be so inadequate that it would require draconian reductions in essential medical services to veterans. The Administration's budget would reduce VA medical care staffing in FY 2006 by 3,712 fulltime employees below FY 2005 levels.

Also, the Administration's budget proposes a sharp curtailment of long-term care to disabled veterans. The Administration's budget requested that Congress change the law to relieve VA from congressionally mandated levels of VA long-term care. The Administration's budget would provide VA nursing care to 27% fewer veterans in FY 2006 than in FY 1998, the year used for comparison because the law employed 1998 capacity as a statutory minimum level of VA nursing care capacity. The Administration's budget will cover the costs of nursing care in state institutions for 61% fewer veterans in FY 2006 than in FY 2005.

The Administration's budget would also make personnel reductions in VBA, with 76 fewer employees than VBA has authorized for FY 2005 and 539 fewer employees than VBA had in FY 2003. The budget includes no funding to continue several information technology initiatives designed to improve efficiency in benefits administration.

In connection with its requests for funding, the President's budget 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 2006 contains very little in the way of recommendations to improve veterans' programs. The President's budget includes only one recommendation for beneficial legislation, and that is the typical recommendation that Congress enact a COLA for compensation and related benefits under that account.

Earlier this year, we testified in three separate congressional hearings to state the DAV's position on the President's FY 2006 budget recommendations and to present our own alternative budget recommendations as set forth in *The Independent Budget*. We appeared before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee on February 15, 2005, and before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee on February 16, 2005. We testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and Veterans' Affairs, and Related Agencies on April 7, 2005. 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 inadequacy of the budget request for medical care. In his testimony before the joint session of the two Veterans' Affairs Committees, National Commander Sursely reminded legislators that a VA official had recently conceded that VA needs a 13 to 14 percent increase in medical care funding each year just to stay even with rising costs. The National Commander noted that the President's FY 2006 budget requested an increase of less than one-half of one percent. He urged Congress to provide $31.2 billion for medical care, $3.4 billion more than the President's request. He also informed the members of the Committees of DAV's strong opposition to enrollment fees and higher co-payments.

At the time of the National Commander's testimony, House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Steve Buyer had already recommended to the House Budget Committee that the budget should include enrollment fees on a sliding scale from $230 to $500 based on income. Other Republican members of the Committee distanced themselves from the recommendation. Democratic members wrote separately to the Budget Committee to express their opposition to any enrollment fee or increase in co-payments.

In the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, the majority and minority also submitted their recommendations separately to the Budget Committee. The majority did not expressly object to the imposition of an annual enrollment, but specifically stated that it did not endorse an increase in co-payments. The minority rejected both an enrollment fee and increased co-payments.

As part of the annual budget process, the two chambers of Congress adopt budget resolutions as a revenue and spending plan for the upcoming fiscal year. If both chambers agree on the same plan, the concurrent budget resolution then sets general spending levels for Federal departments and agencies. The House and Senate agreed upon and adopted the concurrent budget resolution for FY 2006 on April 28, 2005. The resolution did not include plans for an annual medical care enrollment fee or increased co-payments. Though it included instructions for cuts in mandatory spending for most Federal programs, none was directed at veterans' programs. The measure recommended only about $400 million above the President's budget for veterans' medical care. Attempts to add more money for medical care failed.

On May 26, 2005, the House passed its appropriation bill funding VA. The bill would provide $28.4 billion for veterans' medical care programs, which would amount to just over $600 million in increased appropriations. This amount is $2.7 billion below our recommendation in *The Independent Budget.* An amendment offered by Congressman David Obey (D-WI) to add $2.6 billion for VA programs was defeated by a vote largely along party lines. Another amendment offered by Congressman Charlie Melancon (D-LA) would have added $53 million for veterans medical care and claims processing. The Speaker of the House voted against the amendment to break a tie, and the amendment failed by a vote of 214 to 213.

On July 14, 2005, the Administration amended its FY 2006 budget request for VA medical care and asked Congress to provide $1.677 billion above the original request.

Medical Care

Mandatory Funding

Our campaign for legislation to change the manner in which Congress funds veterans' medical care, from discretionary appropriations to mandatory spending, continued full force through the end of 2004 and the end of the 108th Congress. The Senate bill to make funding mandatory, S. 50, had 29 cosponsors. The House bill, H.R. 2318, had 188. Though we succeeded in creating awareness among legislators of the need enact mandatory funding legislation, we continued to run up against strong opposition from appropriators and those opposed to mandating spending levels for veterans' medical care.

Several measures have been introduced in the 109th Congress that would shift funding for VA medical care from a discretionary to a mandatory account. Representative Lane Evans, (D-IL) introduced H.R. 515, the Assured Funding for Veterans Health Care Act. The bill would require the Secretary of the Treasury to make mandatory appropriations for VA medical care based on a funding formula. For fiscal year 2007, the amount of funds available to VA for veterans' medical care would equal 130% of the total obligations made by VA for such programs in FY 2005. The amounts in following years would be based on the number of veterans enrolled for VA health care on a given date and adjusted annually for medical inflation. This bill has 112 cosponsors. Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD) introduced a companion bill, S. 331, which has 19 cosponsors. Two additional measures include provisions for mandatory funding for veterans health care as well: S. 13, introduced by Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI) and S. 963, introduced by Senator John Thune (R-SD).

The DAV and the eight other major veterans organizations of The Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform continue to combine and coordinate their efforts to obtain this legislation. We continue to gain support, and the current failures of the discretionary budget process have made the need for mandatory funding all the more evident.

Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES)

VA continues its project to reconfigure, and relocate, where necessary, its medical care facilities according to current geographic, demographic, and structural needs. Designated the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services, and known as CARES, VA initiated this comprehensive and systematic update of national medical care infrastructure in 2001.

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.

Upon the VA Secretary's acceptance of the Commission's recommendations in May of last year, implementation of the plan began. The CARES plan includes 30 high-priority construction projects that make up the initial phase of implementation, but the plan identifies more than 100 construction projects overall. In early January 2005, VA awarded a contract to the firm PricewaterhouseCoopers to complete studies at 18 sites across the country, and implementation is ongoing.

Other Medical Care Issues and Legislation

On July 22, 2004, we testified before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on the state of collaboration between the Department of Defense (DoD) and VA in medical research and amputee care for veterans, and on potential reforms in VA's blind rehabilitation services. We acknowledged that Walter Reed Army Medical Center provides amputees technologically advanced prosthesis and the facilities initiatives to upgrade its Amputee Center and expand research on prosthetic care, limb development, and rehabilitation. We expressed concerns as to whether Congress has provided VA the necessary resources to provide the same excellent care and prosthetic services. We included recommendations for ensuring VA maintains the highest quality programs for amputees. We observed that, despite its history of excellence, VA's Blind Rehabilitation Service, had several deficiencies and offered specific recommendations to address them.

On November 30, 2004, Congressman Chris Smith's bill, H.R. 3936, was enacted as Public Law. 108-442, the Veterans Health Programs Improvement Act of 2004. Among its many provisions, the Act authorized establishment of new VA research and education centers for developing new treatments for veterans with complex multi-trauma combat injuries. It created a new pilot program to use innovative technologies for recruitment of nurses, eliminated co-payments for veterans receiving VA hospice care, authorized 16 leases for community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs), and added permanent authority for VA's sexual trauma counseling program.

Benefits

On October 13, 2004, Congress cleared H.R. 4175, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2004, for the President's signature. The President signed the Act into law on October 25, 2004. This legislation, Public Law 108–363, increased disability compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), and the clothing allowance by 2.7 percent based on the increase in the cost of living as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

On October 9, 2004, the House and Senate agreed to the conference report for H.R. 4200, the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005. The President signed the Act on October 28, 2004, and it became Public Law 108–375. This legislation made another incremental step on the "concurrent receipt" issue. For military retired veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 100 percent, it removed provisions for a gradual phase-out of the offset between military retired pay and compensation, authorizing full payment of both benefits beginning in January 2005. This bill also eliminated the Social Security offset against an annuity under the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP). Another provision directed DoD to conduct a study of the service-connected disability benefits available to veterans and directed the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study of other government disability benefit programs in which employees perform tasks with risks analogous to those performed by members of the Armed Forces.

The Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004, S. 2486, was enacted as Public Law 108–454 on December 10, 2004. This bill consolidated various provisions of other bills into one comprehensive act. The bill made several improvements to apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs for veterans and extended from 10 to 20 years the period for educational assistance to surviving spouses of members who die on active duty. It strengthened reemployment laws for veterans. It made a number of improvements to the home loan program. The Act added new protections against misuse of funds of an incompetent veteran by a fiduciary. Some of the other miscellaneous improvements to the benefits programs in this legislation were:

- **increased by $250 the monthly amount of dependency and indemnity compensation in the case of a surviving spouse with one or more children below the age of 18, to be payable until all such children have attained such age;**
- **provided that a radiation-exposed veteran who receives payments under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act of 1990 shall not be deprived of the payment of any veterans' disability compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation to which such person is entitled, but there shall be deducted from such compensation the amount of any payment made under such Act;**
- **excluded life insurance proceeds from consideration as income for veterans' pension purposes;**
- **provided expressly that a disability incurred through VA treatment or vocational rehabilitation will be treated as a service-connected disability for purposes of eligibility to special adapted housing and the automobile grant;**
- **added bone, brain, colon, lung, and ovarian cancers to the list of diseases subject to presumptive service connection in the case of a veteran exposed to ionizing radiation.**

This Act also amended the law to authorize the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to be at any location in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area rather than in the District of Columbia.

On May 11, 2005, the President signed into law H.R. 1268, an emergency defense supplemental appropriations measure, enacted as Public Law 109–13. Included in this legislation were a temporary increase in coverage under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) from $250,000 to $400,000. As noted below, both the Senate and House have bills pending that would make these increases permanent. This legislation also added provisions to require that a member insured under the SGLI program will be automatically issued a traumatic injury protection rider. The rider will provide a payment of up to $100,000 if the member, while so insured, sustains a traumatic injury that results in: (1) a loss of sight, limbs, speech, or hearing; (2) certain burns; or (3) a coma or the inability to carry out certain daily living activities. The provision requires the member serving on active or reserve duty to pay a premium for this traumatic injury insurance.

Hearings on Benefit Bills and Oversight

On April 20, 2005, we testified before the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs regarding the functioning of VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program. We cited shortcomings in the program as found by the VR&E Task Force that was created by the VA Secretary to study the program. We also recounted deficiencies noted by *The Independent Budget* and provided recommendations for more adequate resources and program improvements.

On May 5, 2005, we testified in an oversight hearing before the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee regarding the functioning and performance of VA's appellate operations. We pointed out that the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims overturns or remands 61 percent of the BVA decisions the Court reviews, which reflects a high error rate in those BVA decisions appealed to the Court. We observed that the number of appeals from regional office decisions is on the rise, and that processing timeliness of appeals is slipping. We similarly noted higher than projected workloads and decreasing timeliness at VBA's Appeals Management Center, a special unit created to complete actions ordered by BVA remands. We recommended increased personnel to handle these higher workloads.

On May 26, 2005, we provided the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee with our views on the functioning of VA's claims and appeals processes. We observed that some of the same deficiencies that have persisted for years continue to plague VBA today and cause the work to back up thereby delaying the delivery of benefits to disabled veterans who often urgently need them to purchase the necessities of life.

Because of inadequate staffing levels, adjudicators must rush their work. With insufficient time for adjudicators to thoroughly develop and review the record, error rates are high. Consequently, many claims decisions must be reworked to correct errors. Substantial time is required for processing of appeals. When workload inventories begin to show large backlogs, the emphasis is on production, and quality is compromised even more, making the situation worse in the long term. We recommended that VBA be provided more employees, that training be improved, and that management be held accountable for quality first. We repeated our observation that BVA and the Appeals Management Center were also strained with caseloads and processing times increasing to the detriment of veterans needing benefits. Here again, we recommended an increase in staffing levels.

To address H.R. 3200, the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Act; traumatic injury insurance provisions in Public Law 109–13; and H.R. 1618, the Wounded Warrior Servicemembers' Group Disability Insurance Act of 2005, we testified in the House on June 16, 2005, before the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs. Regarding provisions in H.R. 3200 to replace the temporary increase for SGLI and VGLI in Public Law 109–13 with a permanent increase, we noted we had no mandate from our membership but had no objection to enactment of this beneficial legislation. We objected to the concept in Public Law 109–13 and in H.R. 1618 whereby servicemembers pay to insure themselves against disability incurred in military service.

On June 23, 2005, we testified on several bills in a hearing before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. We stated our support for S. 1234, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Act of 2005. We supported enactment of S. 1259, a bill that would ensure the DAV and other organizations are granted access to military facilities for the purpose of counseling and aiding service members transitioning into civilian life. We applauded S. 1271, which would liberalize provisions for presumptive service connection for diseases related to detention as a prisoner of war.

On June 29, 2005, we were once again before the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity for testimony in an oversight hearing regarding the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and the Disabled Transition Assistance (DTAP) program. We recommended that attendance at these sessions be made mandatory to avoid members being pressured by their superiors not to attend. We offered suggestions for improving the availability of TAP/DTAP sessions for members of the Reserves and National Guard.

Pending Legislation

Medical Care

H.R. 922, the Veterans Mental Health Services Enhancement Act of 2005: would add psychiatrists and other mental health specialists in posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at VA facilities, require a nationwide outreach program for veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom who are or may be suffering from PTSD, and would require other measures to improve services for veterans suffering from PTSD.

H.R. 1588, the Comprehensive Assistance for Veterans Exposed to Traumatic Stressors Act of 2005: would require DoD and VA to take a number of cooperative steps to improve means for prevention, early intervention, and treatment of PTSD and substance abuse.

Concurrent Receipt of Retired Pay and Compensation

Legislators have introduced several bills to end the remaining prohibition against concurrent receipt of military longevity retired pay and disability compensation. They are:

H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2005

H.R. 2076, the Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2005

H.R. 2368, the Immediate and Full Repeal of the Disabled Veterans Tax Act of 2005

S. 558, the Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2005

S. 845, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit retired servicemembers who have a service-connected disability to receive disability compensation and either retired pay or Combat-Related Special Compensation and to eliminate the phase-in period with respect to such concurrent receipt.

House Minority Leadership Bill

The New GI Bill of Rights for the 21st Century Act, H.R. 2131, is a bill introduced by the Democratic leadership of the House, with 169 cosponsors, that contains multiple provisions to improve benefits for servicemembers, veterans, and dependents. The bill includes provisions for such matters as concurrent receipt of military retired pay and disability compensation, removal of the offset between SBP and DIC, improvement of educational programs, increased funding for veterans' medical care, and prohibition of increases in medical co-payments and imposition of enrollment fees.

Other

H.R. 1951, the American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin act: would provide for the minting and issue $1 silver coins to commemorate disabled American veterans and would pay the proceeds from a $10 surcharge on each coin to the LIFE Memorial Foundation to support construction of the Memorial.

S. 633, the American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act: would provide for the minting and issue of not more than 500,000 $1 coins to commemorate disabled American veterans and would pay the proceeds from a $10 surcharge on each coin to the LIFE Memorial Foundation to support construction of the Memorial.

Voluntary Services

Voluntary service to veterans and their families has always been the hallmark of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and the Auxiliary. Volunteerism is more than the stock in trade of the DAV and the Auxiliary; it is one of the more eloquent expressions of the respect and gratitude that individual members have for those who have served their country.

DAV Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services Programs

The VAVS program is the largest of our volunteer initiatives. Through it, DAV volunteers provide a broad array of services to veterans in our nation's VA medical facilities. Under this program, 14,374 DAV VAVS volunteers donated 2,138,774 hours in the 12 months ending September 2004.

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 19 State Chairmen, 148 VAVS Representatives, 196 Deputy Representatives, 20 Associate Representatives, and five Deputy Associate Representatives.

The DAV volunteer effort is enhanced by a very active corps of 2,825 Auxiliary volunteers who donated 256,015 hours last year. Together, DAV and Auxiliary volunteers provided 2,394,789 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, Transport 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 183 active programs. They've recruited 9,657 volunteer drivers who logged 26,634,281 miles last year, taking 731,085 veterans to and from VA medical facilities. Many of these veterans rode in vans the DAV purchased and donated to VA medical facilities for use in the Transportation Network. DAV Departments and Chapters, together with the National Organization, have now donated 1,668 vans to VA medical centers nationwide at a cost of $34,029,897.

At the DAV's 83rd National Convention, Ford Motor Company donated eight new 12-passenger vans to the Disabled American Veterans Transportation Network. The VAMCs that received these vans were: 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.

As a further demonstration of its commitment to the DAV Transportation Network, Ford Motor Company is again donating eight new 12-passenger vans. This will take place during the opening session at this National Convention. The VAMCs receiving these vans are: Washington, D.C.; Iron Mountain, Michigan; Chillicothe, Ohio; Portland, Oregon; Fort Meade, South Dakota; Spokane, Washington; Clarksburg, West Virginia; and Cheyenne, Wyoming.

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

***Troy Bowling*, a U.S. Marine who was left for dead on the black volcanic sands of Red Beach One on Iwo Jima, has been a DAV volunteer for 40 years. Mr. Bowling, 78, has contributed more than 56,089 hours volunteering at VA medical centers, equivalent to 27 years of consecutive 40-hour weeks.**

Mr. Bowling, a member of DAV Chapter 1 in Lexington, Kentucky, has been contributing as a volunteer at the Lexington VA Medical Center. He began by assisting veterans and widows filing claims for benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. He later became involved with special recreation activities and most recently, compiles volunteer data, processes new volunteers, and encourages other veterans to volunteer.

DAV Auxiliary

***Ruth N. Bier*, 81, is a member of DAV Auxiliary Unit 173 in Austin, Texas. Mrs. Bier served as a volunteer in military hospitals while her husband was stationed in Germany. When they returned to the United States, she served with a first aid unit traveling to military bases. She joined the DAV Voluntary Services program in 1971 and has been volunteering with the DAV Auxiliary ever since.**

Mrs. Bier has donated 35,718 hours, which amounts to more than 17 years as a full-time volunteer. She performs a variety of voluntary services at the Central Texas Veterans Healthcare System outpatient clinic in Austin, Texas. She handles the day-to-day activities and services for volunteers and patients as well as coordinates the DAV Transportation Network at the clinic.

Mr. Bowling and Mrs. Bier will be presented their awards during the opening session of the 2005 DAV and Auxiliary National Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada.

2005 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 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 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 James E. Sursely, is responsible for selecting the scholarship recipients.

The winners of the 2005 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) Andrew Layton, Battle Creek, MI VAMC
2nd Place ($10,000) Ann Marie Sobocinski, Milwaukee, WI VAMC
3rd Place ($7,500) Felicia Ashley Bracey, Richmond, VA VAMC
($7,500) Philip Nodhturft, III, Tampa, FL VAMC
4th Place ($5,000)

1. **Marissa Mignon Jones, Jackson, MS VAMC**
2. **Linda Saleh, Cleveland, OH VAMC – Brecksville Division**
3. **Neil Rangwani, Bedford, MA VAMC**
4. **Shazim Uppal, Wilmington, DE VAMC**
5. **Brody J. Pav, Bay Pines, FL VAMC**
6. **Jared T. Bryant, Topeka, KS VAMC**
7. **Karissa L. Wrock, Detroit, MI VAMC**
8. **Jennifer Snow, White City, OR 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.

Andrew Layton will be presented with his scholarship during the opening session of the 2005 DAV and Auxiliary National Convention in Las Vegas, 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.

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 3-8, 2005, 325 severely disabled veterans took part in the 19th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic at Snowmass Village, Colorado. With more than 350 volunteers – including 198 ski instructors, most 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.

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, wheelchair self-defense, sled hockey, horseback riding, fishing, trap shooting, and other activities.

The 20th Annual National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic promises to be better and bigger and will be held April 2-7, 2006, 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."**

The 2005 recipient of the DAV Freedom Award is Oscar Olguin, from La Puente, California. The 19-year-old combat-wounded Army veteran is also this year's youngest participant. Injured in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Olguin, a right leg below the knee amputee and a beginner skier, took advantage of all the clinic had to offer, and provided encouragement for the other 350 participants who attended this year's clinic.

Golf for the Disabled

Golf is one of the fastest growing and most popular sports in America. 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 56th annual tournament Boulder Creek Golf Club, Henderson, Nevada, October 18-22, 2004, drew 105 entries, 21 of them veterans. The winner of the DAV National Commander's trophy was Arlis J. Brooks of Rainbow City, Alabama.

First Swing Golf

This is the DAV's 16th 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 2004, 35 First Swing seminars and Learn to Golf Clinics included 310 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 pitcher Mike Maroth has continued to visit veteran patients at the Gainesville, Florida, VA Medical Center. A left hander, Mike is one of the Tigers top starting pitchers. In 2004, he was 11-13 with a 4.31 earned run average and completed the season with an impressive 217 innings pitched. Mike was born in Orlando, Florida, attended the University of Central Florida, and currently makes his home with his wife Brooke and their son, Nolan Everett, in Orlando, 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 healthcare 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.

Conclusion

The success of the DAV continues in our endeavors surrounding service, legislation, and volunteerism. Members of Congress, the VA, and other influential policymakers in Washington are aware that the DAV speaks with accuracy and authority.

Your Washington staff has earned an unparalleled respect as the top-notch professional veterans service organization, determined and committed to protecting and preserving the rights of our fellow disabled veterans.

Every one of your program directors and their staffs has spent years as advocates and NSOs representing veterans on a daily basis. They also have credibility that others who represent particular groups don't have…they are all service-connected disabled veterans themselves.

To be sure, the staff at your National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington has done an outstanding job providing the very best services to you and your families. But there is another critical ingredient. We in Washington would not be able to accomplish all that we have without you, our members. And that's 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 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.

✪ ✪ ✪

(The following written annual report was submitted by Mr. Edward R. Reese, National Service Director:)

Annual Report

EDWARD R. REESE, JR.
NATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTOR
to the
Disabled American Veterans
83rd NATIONAL CONVENTION
July 31-August 3, 2004

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.

During 2003, our MSOs traveled nearly 100,000 miles, visiting 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.

Our NSOs, with the assistance of TSOs, partment 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 James E. Sursely 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 Brian Austin, Barry Jesinoski, and Brenda Kecskes, 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, 2004 through June 30, 2005

Office: National Totals

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	63,527
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	62,988
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	72,396
4.	PENSION	10,312
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	8,640
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	2
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	24,819
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	2,713
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	2,311
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	73
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	1
12.	DEATH PENSION	1,641
13.	INSURANCE	37
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	2,690
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	258
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	252,408
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$179,180,147.33
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$2,756,639,303.39
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$2,935,819,450.72
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	238,080
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	90,987
22.	INTERVIEWS	159,780
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	203,542
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	75,231
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	100
26.	NEW CLAIMS	178,499
27.	MEMBERSHIP	10,614

Office: Montgomery, Alabama

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,112
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,431
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,952
4.	PENSION	209
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	268
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	625
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	82
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	40
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	28
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	49
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,796
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,089,993.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$67,528,934.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$71,618,927.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,646
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,967
22.	INTERVIEWS	4,588
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,563
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	44
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	2,536
27.	MEMBERSHIP	201

Office: Phoenix, Arizona

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,214
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,598
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,656
4.	PENSION	116
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	50
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	977
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	65
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	48
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	6
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	45
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,775
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,405,861.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$62,093,892.01
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$66,499,753.01
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,659
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,560
22.	INTERVIEWS	4,924
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,102
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0

26.	NEW CLAIMS	3,889
27.	MEMBERSHIP	**174**

Office: Little Rock, Arkansas

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,192
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,274
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,668
4.	PENSION	476
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	50
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	495
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	46
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	80
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	48
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	116
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,446
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,831,456.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$60,448,462.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$64,279,918.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	13,692
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,655
22.	INTERVIEWS	6,135
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	12,383
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	393
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	10
26.	NEW CLAIMS	5,741
27.	MEMBERSHIP	**403**

Office: Los Angeles, California

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,779
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,023
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,915
4.	PENSION	445
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	212
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	541
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	28
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	44
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	15
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	72
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	7,074
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$5,061,997.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$99,926,528.63
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$104,988,525.63
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,585
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,570
22.	INTERVIEWS	3,546
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,857
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	507
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	3,587
27.	MEMBERSHIP	**129**

Office: Sacremento, California

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	216
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	180
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	138
4.	PENSION	18
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	9
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	0
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	11
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	572
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$684,934.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$4,850,050.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$5,534,984.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	264
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	721
22.	INTERVIEWS	597
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,019
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	857
27.	MEMBERSHIP	**12**

Office: Oakland, California

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,464
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,754
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,354
4. PENSION	136
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	74
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	736
8. MISCELLANEOUS	36
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	27
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	8
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	25
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	5,615
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,241,434.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$66,955,200.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$71,196,634.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	5,308
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,847
22. INTERVIEWS	2,027
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,467
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	343
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	3,222
27. MEMBERSHIP	**120**

Office: San Diego, California

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	2,894
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,613
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,582
4. PENSION	114
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	49
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	897
8. MISCELLANEOUS	28
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	45
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	3
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	13
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	28
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	7,266
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,682,802.54
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$72,851,026.10
19. FULL AMOUNT	$77,533,828.64
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	6,548
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	3,271
22. INTERVIEWS	7,272
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,429
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	36,036
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	5,468
27. MEMBERSHIP	**210**

Office: Denver, Colorado

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	2,951
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,317
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,155
4. PENSION	151
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	90
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	2,301
8. MISCELLANEOUS	139
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	63
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	6
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	1
12. DEATH PENSION	15
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	165
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	10,354
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$6,488,553.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$89,586,088.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$96,074,641.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	9,399
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	3,575
22. INTERVIEWS	2,850
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	8,384
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2,938
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	6,766
27. MEMBERSHIP	**348**

Office: Hartford, Connecticut

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	417
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	416
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	538
4. PENSION	29
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	153
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	220
8. MISCELLANEOUS	7
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	12
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	7
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	27
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	4
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,830
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,328,881.80
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$21,988,899.16
19. FULL AMOUNT	$23,317,780.96
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	982
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	430
22. INTERVIEWS	1,105
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,305
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	4
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	839
27. MEMBERSHIP	70

Office: Wilmington, Delaware

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	80
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	142
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	80
4. PENSION	4
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	14
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	34
8. MISCELLANEOUS	4
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	0
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	2
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	13
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	374
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$186,866.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$2,906,450.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$3,093,316.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	393
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	39
22. INTERVIEWS	299
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	105
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	250
27. MEMBERSHIP	

Office: Washington, D.C.

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	91
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	297
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	316
4. PENSION	72
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	301
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	462
8. MISCELLANEOUS	18
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	26
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	4
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	2
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	74
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,665
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,170,450.80
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$17,026,781.20
19. FULL AMOUNT	$18,197,232.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,292
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	962
22. INTERVIEWS	2,956
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	13,823
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2,301
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	8
26. NEW CLAIMS	862
27. MEMBERSHIP	100

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	18

Office: St. Petersburg, Florida

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	3,904
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	4,120
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	5,073
4.	PENSION	339
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	199
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	1,072
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	190
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	209
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	64
13.	INSURANCE	1
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	143
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	15,314
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$10,513,066.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$163,712,246.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$174,225,312.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	13,903
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,077
22.	INTERVIEWS	3,676
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	8,095
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	212
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	1,858
27.	MEMBERSHIP	670

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	231
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	221
22.	INTERVIEWS	2,823
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	0
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	73
27.	MEMBERSHIP	

Office: Orlando, Florida

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	192
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	208
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	267
4. PENSION	29
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	10
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	1
8. MISCELLANEOUS	20
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	8
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	5
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	22
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	762
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$407,124.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$6,055,596.60
19. FULL AMOUNT	$6,462,720.60
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	352
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	757
22. INTERVIEWS	1,303
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	527
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	3
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,153
27. MEMBERSHIP	59

Office: West Palm Beach, 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	73
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	413
22. INTERVIEWS	4,479
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	166
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	701
27. MEMBERSHIP	44

Office: Atlanta, Georgia

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,159
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,306
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,607
4. PENSION	140
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	68
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	374
8. MISCELLANEOUS	38
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	43
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	7
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	15
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,757
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,964,656.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$58,524,557.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$62,489,213.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,822
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,870
22. INTERVIEWS	4,778
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,483
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	18
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,463
27. MEMBERSHIP	190

Office: Boise, Idaho

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	468
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	766
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	497
4. PENSION	68
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	25
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	320
8. MISCELLANEOUS	12
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	15
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	3
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	1
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	7
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,182
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,233,961.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$16,720,373.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$17,954,334.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	529
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	529
22. INTERVIEWS	2,350
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,569
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	260
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	2,620
27. MEMBERSHIP	62

Office: Chicago, Illinois

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,297
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,355
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,252
4. PENSION	356
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	165
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	389
8. MISCELLANEOUS	40
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	37
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	16
13. INSURANCE	7
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	102
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	5,016
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,409,156.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$56,313,450.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$59,722,606.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,357
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,672
22. INTERVIEWS	3,679
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,691
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	3,093
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	3,723
27. MEMBERSHIP	274

Office: Indianapolis, Indiana

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,259
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,094
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	786
4. PENSION	226
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	56
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	475
8. MISCELLANEOUS	172
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	62
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	44
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	69
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,243
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,785,415.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$34,000,351.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$36,785,766.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	5,487
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,271
22. INTERVIEWS	1,767
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,919
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	104
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	3
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,699
27. MEMBERSHIP	153

Office: Des Moines, Iowa

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	667
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	517
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	834
4.	PENSION	206
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	177
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	171
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	17
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	62
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	4
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	58
13.	INSURANCE	15
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	26
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,754
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,921,047.41
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$30,596,003.74
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$32,517,051.15
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,880
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,488
22.	INTERVIEWS	1,395
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,631
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	2,770
27.	MEMBERSHIP	74

Office: Wichita, Kansas

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	759
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	542
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	919
4.	PENSION	84
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	271
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	291
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	14
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	46
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	15
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	42
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,983
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,240,356.76
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$33,465,385.56
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$35,705,742.32
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	5,441
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	901
22.	INTERVIEWS	2,481
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,399
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	1,809
27.	MEMBERSHIP	389

Office: Louisville, Kentucky

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,065
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,262
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,738
4.	PENSION	672
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	221
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	174
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	88
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	78
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	173
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	70
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,541
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,015,083.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$69,675,330.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$73,690,413.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,696
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	4,379
22.	INTERVIEWS	2,590
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,259
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	1,247
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	6
26.	NEW CLAIMS	7,662
27.	MEMBERSHIP	325

Office: New Orleans, Louisiana

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	921
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,043
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,441
4.	PENSION	243
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	193
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	218
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	58
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	15
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	10
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	14
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,156
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,010,351.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$49,327,491.47
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$52,337,842.47
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	4,039
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,625
22.	INTERVIEWS	5,266
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,247
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	143
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	1,912
27.	MEMBERSHIP	**184**

Office: Togus, Maine

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	403
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	422
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	513
4.	PENSION	127
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	33
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	128
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	13
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	18
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	1
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	9
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,667
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,263,406.50
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$17,241,958.58
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$18,505,365.08
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,717
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	395
22.	INTERVIEWS	1,381
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,422
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	874
27.	MEMBERSHIP	**145**

Office: Baltimore, Maryland

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	593
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	678
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,027
4.	PENSION	39
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	327
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	169
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	12
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	26
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	6
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	26
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,903
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,312,786.12
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$35,722,421.44
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$38,035,207.56
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,825
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	440
22.	INTERVIEWS	1,243
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,366
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	1,285
27.	MEMBERSHIP	**18**

Office: Boston, Massachusetts

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,100
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,146
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,670
4.	PENSION	76
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	29
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	327
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	12
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	44
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	5
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	184
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,593
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,921,385.08
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$57,607,172.08
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$61,528,557.16
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	5,096
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,153
22.	INTERVIEWS	2,128
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,616
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	2,066
27.	MEMBERSHIP	260

Office: Detroit, Michigan

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	863
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,087
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,066
4.	PENSION	492
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	129
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	487
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	87
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	89
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	66
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	169
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,537
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,052,799.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$48,442,792.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$51,495,591.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	7,152
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,715
22.	INTERVIEWS	1,179
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,263
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	4,539
27.	MEMBERSHIP	238

Office: St. Paul, Minnesota

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	2,450
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,267
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,567
4.	PENSION	128
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	77
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	32
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	35
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	77
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	21
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	87
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,742
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,952,041.21
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$61,143,408.29
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$65,095,449.50
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	6,838
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,787
22.	INTERVIEWS	1,434
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,713
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	4,947
27.	MEMBERSHIP	440

Office: Jackson, Mississippi

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	264
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	526
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	501
4.	PENSION	112
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	43
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	12
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	3
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	13
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	9
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	3
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,488
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,076,451.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$16,607,587.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$17,684,038.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,661
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	208
22.	INTERVIEWS	629
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,115
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	1,054
27.	MEMBERSHIP	30

Office: St. Louis, Missouri

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,714
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,008
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,293
4.	PENSION	388
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	154
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	525
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	104
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	61
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	4
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	26
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	48
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	7,325
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,482,263.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$68,230,285.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$72,712,548.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	6,862
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	3,072
22.	INTERVIEWS	2,316
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,015
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	320
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	5,354
27.	MEMBERSHIP	289

Office: Fort Harrison, Montana

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	238
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	297
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	411
4.	PENSION	60
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	54
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	120
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	2
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	11
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	2
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	20
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,216
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$804,737.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$11,184,996.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$11,989,733.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	206
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	218
22.	INTERVIEWS	686
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,241
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
26.	NEW CLAIMS	423
27.	MEMBERSHIP	49

Office: Lincoln, Nebraska

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	344
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	161
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	533
4.	PENSION	22
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	53
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	73
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	21
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	16
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	8
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	29
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,260
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,012,624.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$13,354,208.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$14,366,832.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,169
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	309
22.	INTERVIEWS	340
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,178
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	1
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	856
27.	MEMBERSHIP	17

Office: Reno, Nevada

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	572
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	620
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	653
4.	PENSION	73
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	51
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	325
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	21
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	20
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	3
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	16
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,354
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,604,230.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$25,527,232.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$27,131,462.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,587
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	775
22.	INTERVIEWS	3,328
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,279
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	1,170
27.	MEMBERSHIP	

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	

Office: Manchester, New Hampshire

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	233
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	285
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	517
4.	PENSION	27
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	15
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	105
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	1
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	6
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	3
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,193
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$873,339.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$11,412,890.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$12,286,229.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	881
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	100
22.	INTERVIEWS	491
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	783
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	251
27.	MEMBERSHIP	24

Office: Newark, New Jersey

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	789
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	819
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	687
4.	PENSION	30
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	24
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	94
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	59
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	20
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	19
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	10
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,551
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,197,906.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$33,507,970.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$35,705,876.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,889
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	698
22.	INTERVIEWS	2,446
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,406
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	1,198
27.	MEMBERSHIP	141

Office: Albuquerque, New Mexico

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	847
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,447
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,119
4.	PENSION	131
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	180
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	194
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	14
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	41
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	12
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	18
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,003
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,149,432.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$50,895,585.96
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$54,045,017.96
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,104
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,326
22.	INTERVIEWS	3,914
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,876
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	1,897
27.	MEMBERSHIP	196

Office: New York, New York

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	926
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	949
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,405
4.	PENSION	52
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	27
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	4
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	3
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	14
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	1
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	6
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	3,388
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,262,328.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$56,564,727.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$59,827,055.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,034
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,386
22.	INTERVIEWS	3,560
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,117
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	2,375
27.	MEMBERSHIP	219

Office: Albany, New York

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	0
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	0
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	0
4.	PENSION	0
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	0
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	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	12
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	439
22.	INTERVIEWS	1,359
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	9
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	720
27.	MEMBERSHIP	57

Office: Buffalo, New York

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	435
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	468
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	539
4.	PENSION	40
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	30
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	602
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	8
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	23
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	3
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	57
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,206
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,527,095.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$23,192,471.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$24,719,566.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,257
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	237
22.	INTERVIEWS	829
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,600
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	667
27.	MEMBERSHIP	136

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	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
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	90
22.	INTERVIEWS	391
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	0
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	772
27.	MEMBERSHIP	3

Office: Winston-Salem, North Carolina

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,217
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,147
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,999
4.	PENSION	87
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	40
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	986
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	4
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	39
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	12
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	7
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	6,539
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$5,341,586.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$79,569,170.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$84,910,756.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	6,070
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	3,992
22.	INTERVIEWS	2,271
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,031
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	3,447
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	15
26.	NEW CLAIMS	6,637
27.	MEMBERSHIP	71

Office: Fargo, North Dakota

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	620
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	514
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	695
4.	PENSION	81
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	64
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	238
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	14
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	38
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	44
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	53
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,361
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,436,696.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$19,729,787.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$21,166,483.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,281
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	736
22.	INTERVIEWS	727
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,756
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	1,399
27.	MEMBERSHIP	157

Office: Cleveland, Ohio

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,626
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,677
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,952
4.	PENSION	533
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	226
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	500
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	31
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	65
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	53
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	42
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	6,706
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,203,857.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$70,715,919.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$74,919,776.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	11,759
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,899
22.	INTERVIEWS	1,861
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	9,714
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	26
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	2
26.	NEW CLAIMS	5,860
27.	MEMBERSHIP	**168**

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	72
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	393
22.	INTERVIEWS	325
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	27
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	1,029
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	934
27.	MEMBERSHIP	**21**

Office: Muskogee, Oklahoma

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	2,061
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,573
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,775
4.	PENSION	265
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	177
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	625
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	95
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	58
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	3
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	29
13.	INSURANCE	1
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	25
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	6,687
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,655,160.43
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$68,916,423.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$73,571,583.43
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	9,306
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,279
22.	INTERVIEWS	3,282
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	8,780
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	5,447
27.	MEMBERSHIP	**132**

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	6
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,263
22.	INTERVIEWS	1,536
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	0
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	1,264
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	1,894
27.	MEMBERSHIP	159

Office: Portland, Oregon

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	503
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	726
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	619
4.	PENSION	97
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	150
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	668
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	16
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	25
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	9
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	26
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,839
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,955,590.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$28,978,065.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$30,933,655.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	4,942
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	409
22.	INTERVIEWS	892
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,274
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	854
27.	MEMBERSHIP	24

Office: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,015
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,601
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,250
4.	PENSION	805
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	1,261
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	315
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	93
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	40
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	223
13.	INSURANCE	13
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	134
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	6,750
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,057,430.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$63,148,191.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$67,205,621.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,281
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	923
22.	INTERVIEWS	2,530
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,723
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	1,515
27.	MEMBERSHIP	156

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	2
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	87
22. INTERVIEWS	327
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	155
27. MEMBERSHIP	

Office: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	512
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	947
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	878
4. PENSION	242
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	71
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	203
8. MISCELLANEOUS	20
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	39
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	26
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	94
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	3,032
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,074,438.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$33,383,442.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$35,457,880.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,705
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	644
22. INTERVIEWS	1,515
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,051
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,120
27. MEMBERSHIP	173

Office: Providence, Rhode Island

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	570
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	484
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	814
4. PENSION	45
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	42
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	67
8. MISCELLANEOUS	1
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	16
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	11
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	12
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,063
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,613,134.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$25,606,359.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$27,219,493.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,736
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	571
22. INTERVIEWS	1,827
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,866
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,563
27. MEMBERSHIP	87

Office: Columbia, South Carolina

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,099
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,318
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,781
4.	PENSION	102
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	48
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	514
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	213
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	33
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	4
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	7
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,120
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,020,074.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$60,098,205.95
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$64,118,279.95
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,076
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,415
22.	INTERVIEWS	4,738
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,435
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	1,779
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	3
26.	NEW CLAIMS	2,424
27.	MEMBERSHIP	84

Office: Sioux Falls, South Dakota

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	532
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	546
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	654
4.	PENSION	100
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	90
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	344
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	15
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	31
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	28
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	71
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,411
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,550,296.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$19,900,095.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$21,450,391.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,035
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	750
22.	INTERVIEWS	1,015
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,628
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	2,067
27.	MEMBERSHIP	167

Office: Nashville, Tennessee

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	2,286
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,744
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,194
4.	PENSION	334
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	194
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	491
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	159
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	68
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	43
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	62
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	7,575
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$5,204,880.84
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$73,324,390.94
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$78,529,271.78
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	6,356
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	3,212
22.	INTERVIEWS	1,455
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,766
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	43
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	29
26.	NEW CLAIMS	4,367
27.	MEMBERSHIP	201

Office: Waco, Texas

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	2,404
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,704
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	3,811
4. PENSION	409
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	1,284
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	1,613
8. MISCELLANEOUS	325
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	112
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	104
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	87
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	12,854
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$8,607,701.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$121,695,554.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$130,303,255.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	13,214
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	5,633
22. INTERVIEWS	2,988
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	10,947
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2,438
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	9,218
27. MEMBERSHIP	**383**

Office: Houston, Texas

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	2,975
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,056
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,646
4. PENSION	248
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	625
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	979
8. MISCELLANEOUS	10
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	50
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	155
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	73
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	9,817
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$7,086,658.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$113,163,448.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$120,250,106.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	8,812
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,136
22. INTERVIEWS	5,284
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	7,148
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,559
27. MEMBERSHIP	**346**

Office: San Antonio, Texas

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	49
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	2
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	3
4. PENSION	0
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	0
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8. MISCELLANEOUS	1
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	173
16. TOTAL AWARDS	228
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$491,401.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$4,854,371.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	$5,345,772.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	254
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	5,422
22. INTERVIEWS	8,299
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	189
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2,452
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	10,986
27. MEMBERSHIP	**56**

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	425
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	341
22.	INTERVIEWS	2,051
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	0
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	28
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	2
26.	NEW CLAIMS	507
27.	MEMBERSHIP	

Office: Salt Lake City, Utah

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	928
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	768
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	947
4.	PENSION	46
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	5
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	528
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	1
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	10
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	2
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	8
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	3,245
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,212,345.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$30,348,283.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$32,560,628.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	5,194
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	482
22.	INTERVIEWS	1,945
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,785
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	2,729
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	3,156
27.	MEMBERSHIP	88

Office: White River Junction, Vermont

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	193
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	198
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	301
4.	PENSION	18
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	25
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	23
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	0
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	10
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	0
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	2
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	772
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$743,347.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$9,372,169.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$10,115,516.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,160
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	200
22.	INTERVIEWS	1,951
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	751
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	1,591
27.	MEMBERSHIP	

Office: Roanoke, Virginia

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,853
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,329
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,503
4.	PENSION	123
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	27
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	439
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	20
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	35
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	11
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	6
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	19
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,365
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,879,771.51
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$63,841,661.50
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$67,721,433.01
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,341
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	951
22.	INTERVIEWS	895
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,047
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	3,443
27.	MEMBERSHIP	117

Office: Seattle, Washington

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	3,377
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,682
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,880
4.	PENSION	163
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	95
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	1,362
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	9
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	62
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	14
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	32
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	11
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	8,689
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$6,068,276.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$92,694,477.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$98,762,753.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,354
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	3,100
22.	INTERVIEWS	2,776
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,740
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	11,806
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	14
26.	NEW CLAIMS	4,501
27.	MEMBERSHIP	123

Office: Huntington, West Virginia

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	666
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	972
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	906
4.	PENSION	38
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	49
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	83
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	54
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	15
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	0
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	1
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,785
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,142,003.33
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$32,560,706.32
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$34,702,709.65
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,549
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	590
22.	INTERVIEWS	2,335
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,434
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	738
27.	MEMBERSHIP	188

Office: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,115
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,310
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,980
4.	PENSION	182
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	93
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	573
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	73
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	75
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	53
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	132
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,586
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,325,998.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$67,075,482.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$71,401,480.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	4,944
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,079
22.	INTERVIEWS	2,749
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,494
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	7
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	3,526
27.	MEMBERSHIP	**1,028**

Office: Cheyenne, Wyoming

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	118
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	125
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	171
4.	PENSION	11
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	14
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	76
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	14
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	3
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	533
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$369,270.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$5,075,764.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$5,445,034.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	532
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	133
22.	INTERVIEWS	629
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	417
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	473
27.	MEMBERSHIP	

Office: San Juan, Puerto Rico

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	463
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	581
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,090
4.	PENSION	446
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	173
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	167
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	39
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	17
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	84
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	14
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	3,076
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,037,249.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$39,319,371.86
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$41,356,620.86
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,493
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	705
22.	INTERVIEWS	1,998
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,103
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	7
26.	NEW CLAIMS	1,304
27.	MEMBERSHIP	63

Office: Honolulu, Hawaii

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	473
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	546
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	278
4.	PENSION	7
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	6
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	55
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	9
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	20
10.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11.	SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12.	DEATH PENSION	2
13.	INSURANCE	0
14.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	77
15.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,474
17.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$936,717.00
18.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$18,079,168.00
19.	FULL AMOUNT	$19,015,885.00
20.	VA FILES REVIEWED	312
21.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	494
22.	INTERVIEWS	1,039
23.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,012
24.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	216
25.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26.	NEW CLAIMS	353
27.	MEMBERSHIP	53

(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
84TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF THE
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA
August 14-17, 2005

NATIONAL COMMANDER JAMES E. SURSELY, NATIONAL OFFICERS, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, AND DELEGATES TO THE 84TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS:

Voluntary service to veterans and their families has always been the hallmark of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and the Auxiliary. Volunteerism is more than the stock in trade of the DAV and the Auxiliary; it is one of the more eloquent expressions of the respect and gratitude that individual members have for those who have served their country.

In selflessly giving of their time and love, DAV and Auxiliary members at the Chapter, Unit, Department, and National levels, as well as today's student youth, serve veterans and their families through a wide range of voluntary service programs. Each year these volunteers increase the hours they donate in working with veterans in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities, disabled veterans' homes, community nursing homes, outpatient clinics, and anywhere that disabled veterans need a hand.

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 our volunteer initiatives. Through it, DAV volunteers provide a broad array of services to veterans in our nation's VA medical facilities. Under this program, 14,374 DAV VAVS volunteers donated 2,138,774 hours in the 12 months ending September 2004.

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 19 State Chairmen, 148 VAVS Representatives, 196 Deputy Representatives, 20 Associate Representatives, and five Deputy Associate Representatives.

The DAV volunteer effort is enhanced by a very active corps of 2,825 Auxiliary volunteers who donated 256,015 hours last year. Together, DAV and Auxiliary volunteers provided 2,394,789 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 183 active programs. They've recruited 9,657 volunteer drivers who logged 26,634,281 miles last year, taking 731,085 veterans to and from VA medical facilities. Many of these veterans rode in vans the DAV purchased and donated to VA medical facilities for use in the Transportation Network. DAV Departments and Chapters, together with the National Organization, have now donated 1,668 vans to VA medical centers nationwide at a cost of $34,029,897.

At the DAV's 83rd National Convention, Ford Motor Company donated eight new 12-passenger vans to the Disabled American Veterans Transportation Network. The VAMCs that received these vans were: 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.

As a further demonstration of its commitment to the DAV Transportation Network, Ford Motor Company is again donating eight new 12-passenger vans. This will take place during the opening session at this National Convention. The VAMCs receiving these vans are: Washington, D.C.; Iron Mountain, Michigan; Chillicothe, Ohio; Portland, Oregon; Fort Meade, South Dakota; Spokane, Washington; Clarksburg, West Virginia; and Cheyenne, Wyoming.

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

***Troy Bowling*, a U.S. Marine who was left for dead on the black volcanic sands of Red Beach One on Iwo Jima, has been a DAV volunteer for 40 years. Mr. Bowling, 78, has contributed more than 56,089 hours volunteering at VA medical centers, equivalent to 27 years of consecutive 40-hour weeks.**

Mr. Bowling, a member of DAV Chapter 1 in Lexington, Kentucky, has been contributing as a volunteer at the Lexington VA Medical Center. He began by assisting veterans and widows filing claims for benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. He later became involved with special recreation activities and most recently, compiles volunteer data, processes new volunteers, and encourages other veterans to volunteer.

DAV Auxiliary

***Ruth N. Bier*, 81, is a member of DAV Auxiliary Unit 173 in Austin, Texas. Mrs. Bier served as a volunteer in military hospitals while her husband was stationed in Germany. When they returned to the United States, she served with a first aid unit traveling to military bases. She joined the DAV Voluntary Services program in 1971 and has been volunteering with the DAV Auxiliary ever since.**

Mrs. Bier has donated 35,718 hours, which amounts to more than 17 years as a full-time volunteer. She performs a variety of voluntary services at the Central Texas Veterans Healthcare System outpatient clinic in Austin, Texas. She handles the day-to-day activities and services for volunteers and patients as well as coordinates the DAV Transportation Network at the clinic.

Mr. Bowling and Mrs. Bier will be presented their awards during the opening session of the 2005 DAV and Auxiliary National Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada.The DAV and Auxiliary can be proud of people like Mr. Bowling and Mrs. Bier 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 Troy and Ruth 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.

2005 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 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 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 James E. Sursely, is responsible for selecting the scholarship recipients.

The winners of the 2005 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) Andrew Layton, Battle Creek, MI VAMC
2nd Place ($10,000) Ann Marie Sobocinski, Milwaukee, WI VAMC
3rd Place ($7,500) Felicia Ashley Bracey, Richmond, VA VAMC
($7,500) Philip Nodhturft, III, Tampa, FL VAMC
4th Place ($5,000)

- **I. Marissa Mignon Jones, Jackson, MS VAMC**
- **II. Linda Saleh, Cleveland, OH VAMC – Brecksville Division**
- **III. Neil Rangwani, Bedford, MA VAMC**
- **IV. Shazim Uppal, Wilmington, DE VAMC**
- **V. Brody J. Pav, Bay Pines, FL VAMC**
- **VI. Jared T. Bryant, Topeka, KS VAMC**
- **VII. Karissa L. Wrock, Detroit, MI VAMC**
- **VIII. Jennifer Snow, White City, OR 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.

Some of the benefits of volunteering at a local VA medical center may include: scholarships for college, job experience, healthcare career possibilities, providing assistance to hospitalized veterans, completing high school volunteerism requirements and community involvement. Andrew Layton will be presented with his scholarship during the opening session of the 2005 DAV and Auxiliary National Convention in Las Vegas, 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 Healthcare Magazine* states that sports offer a better quality of life, improved self-confidence and self-esteem, and a way for many newly disabled people to adjust to their handicaps. Athletic activity provides a new and very necessary social outlet, while improving physical endurance and maintaining physical fitness.

More and more, doctors recognize it's not enough to stabilize patients medically and send them home. Without an introduction to sports or recreation, the hospital will see that person again and again. Disabled people involved in sports generally 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 3-8, 2005, 325 severely disabled veterans took part in the 19th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic at Snowmass Village, Colorado. With more than 350 volunteers – including 198 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 2005 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; Sprint; Veterans Canteen Service/Burger King; Veterans Canteen Service

NATIONAL ($20,000 – $29,999): AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals; The Coca-Cola Company; Independence Technology a Johnson & Johnson Company; Pfizer, Inc.; Prince Bandar bin Sultan; QTC Medical Services, Inc.

GOLD ($10,000 – $19,999): Baxter Healthcare Corporation; Cisco; DAV California Rehabilitation Foundation, Inc.; DAV Department of Arkansas; DELL; ELAN; Eli Lilly and Company; Fifth Third Asset Management, Inc.; Health Net Federal Services; J.H. O'Brien Landscaping & Maintenance, Inc.; Johnson & Johnson Health Care Systems, Inc.; Moore Wallace Response Marketing Services; Pearson Government Solutions; Purdue Pharma Fund; United Airlines; 3M Health Care

SILVER ($5,000 – $9,999): APPTIS; The Colorado Elks Association Charities, Inc.; Elks National Veterans Service Commission; EMC; GE Healthcare; Healthlink Incorporated; Leadership VA Alumni Association; Northrop Grumman Corporation; The ROHO Group; Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 57

BRONZE ($2,500 – $4,999): Advanced Prosthetics and Orthotics, Inc.; The American Board for Certification in Orthotics and Prosthetics, Inc.; Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS); AMSUS Sustaining Members Section; DAV Auxiliary; DAV Department of Colorado; DAV Department of Florida; DAV Department of Indiana; DAV Department of Nebraska; DAV Department of Virginia; DAV Elkhart Chapter 19, Elkhart, Indiana; DAV H.H. MacKenzie, Chapter 3, Roanoke, Virginia; DAV State Commanders and Adjutants Association; EZ-ACCESS Ramps – A Homecare Products Company; The Fischer Family; Fox River Mills, Inc.; Frank Pacello, Inc.; Invacare; Lockheed Martin Corporation; Pride Mobility; PSA Healthcare; sanofi aventis; Mary C. Thomas; THOR-LO, Inc.; Mike Weiss

CONTRIBUTOR (To $2,499): DAV Auxiliary 3rd District; DAV Auxiliary Will County Chapter 103, Illinois; DAV Chapter 15, Manassas, Virginia; George and Nancy Evseeff; John F. Heilman, Jr.; Nora E. Brennan and Stephen E. Miller, Jr.; Robert C. Thomas; Western Colorado Chapter Military Officers Association of America

SUPPLIER: 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, wheelchair self-defense, sled hockey, horseback riding, fishing, trap shooting, and other activities.

The 20th Annual National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic promises to be better and bigger and will be held April 2-7, 2006, 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."**

The 2005 recipient of the DAV Freedom Award is Oscar Olguin, from La Puente, California. A 19-year-old combat-wounded Army veteran, is also this year's youngest participant. Injured in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Olguin, a right leg below the knee amputee and a beginner skier, took advantage of all the clinic had to offer, and provided encouragement for the other 350 participants who attended this year's clinic.

Golf for the Disabled **– Golf is one of the fastest growing and most popular sports in America. 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 56th annual tournament Boulder Creek Golf Club, Henderson, Nevada, October 18-22, 2004, drew 105 entries, 21 of them veterans. The winner of the DAV National Commander's trophy was Arlis J. Brooks of Rainbow City, Alabama.**

First Swing Golf **– This is the DAV's 16th 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 2004, 35 First Swing seminars and Learn to Golf Clinics included 310 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 pitcher Mike Maroth has continued to visit veteran patients at the Gainesville, Florida, VA Medical Center.

Mike was the Boston Red Sox's second 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. A left hander, Mike is one of the Tigers top starting pitchers. In 2004, he was 11-13 with a 4.31 earned run average and completed the season with an impressive 217 innings pitched.

Mike was born in Orlando, Florida, attended the University of Central Florida, and currently makes his home with his wife Brooke and their son, Nolan Everett, in Orlando, 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 healthcare 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 Laura Balun, who heads up the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Program, her 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 James E. Sursely and Auxiliary National Commander Gertrude E. Tidwell, 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, 2003 through September 30, 2004

NUMBER OF REGULARLY SCHEDULED VAVS VOLUNTEERS 14,374

NUMBER OF HOURS BY REGULARLY SCHEDULED VOLUNTEERS 2,138,774

NUMBER OF HOURS BY OCCASIONAL VOLUNTEERS 73,665

NUMBER OF HOURS BY ALL VAVS VOLUNTEERS 2,212,439

VAVS APPOINTED POSITIONS

NUMBER OF STATE CHAIRMEN 19

NUMBER OF STATE CHAIRMEN ALSO SERVING AS REPRESENTATIVES 13

NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES 148

NUMBER OF DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVES 196

NUMBER OF ASSOCIATE REPRESENTATIVES 20

NUMBER OF DEPUTY ASSOCIATE REPRESENTATIVES 5

NUMBER OF HONORARY REPRESENTATIVES 1

NUMBER OF APPOINTED POSITIONS 402

ANNUAL JOINT REVIEWS RECEIVED FOR THE YEAR 60

DAV TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM
(January 1, 2004 through December 31, 2004)

TOTAL NUMBER OF HOSPITAL SERVICE COORDINATORS (HSCs) 187

NUMBER OF VETERANS TRANSPORTED 731,085

TRANSPORTATION HOURS 1,508,827

TRANSPORTATION MILES 26,634,281

2004 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK GRANTS

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK HSC PROGRAM GRANTS $ 729,413

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK VAN GRANTS $ 2,622,576
(144 vans purchased and delivered in 2004)

2004 Total National Grant Expenditures $ 3,351,989

(The following written annual report was submitted by Mr. Joseph A. Violante, National Legislative Director.)

ANNUAL REPORT
of the
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
for
2004-2005
by
JOSEPH A. VIOLANTE
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR
for presentation to
THE 84TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA
AUGUST 14-17, 2005

NATIONAL COMMANDER JAMES E. SURSELY AND DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES:

With our Nation locked in hostilities in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other venues in the global war on terrorism, the Disabled American Veterans has just added another year to its long history of veterans' advocacy to ensure we continue to properly honor and care for those who have borne the greatest burdens of war and made the greatest sacrifices in answering their country's call. During the past 12 months, we have expended great effort on the legislative front in carrying on our cause of building better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families. As usual, the budget process proved challenging. We continued to press for favorable legislation in a number of areas and presented testimony in several congressional hearings.

With the close of the 108th Congress at the end of 2004 and the beginning of the 109th Congress in January 2005, the political landscape changed notably in Washington. The House Leadership stripped Congressman Chris Smith of his chairmanship of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee because he was an honest advocate for what was right. He would not bend to leadership pressure to quietly "go along with the program" to under fund veterans' medical care and support other actions detrimental to veterans. The House leadership replaced Congressman Smith with Congressman Steve Buyer (R-IN). Senator Arlen Specter's (R-PA) term as chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee expired, and he was replaced by Senator Larry Craig (R-ID). Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI) became the new Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee.

With its reorganization of the appropriations subcommittees, the congressional leadership included VA under a new subcommittee in both the House and Senate. In the House, VA's appropriation is now under the Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies. In the Senate, the Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans' Affairs, and Related Agencies has jurisdiction over VA's appropriation. Apparently, some in the leadership wanted this change to avoid competition by VA against other favored programs, such as NASA, under the prior appropriations subcommittee. With President Bush's second term came a new Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Our longtime acquaintance, Secretary Anthony J. Principi, was replaced by Secretary James R. Nicholson. We lost some friends in key places.

Among our own ranks, we lost one of our most special friends. Past National Commander Oliver Meadows died on April 26, 2005. Following a distinguished 20-year career as Staff Director of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Oliver served as our National Commander in 1977 and 1978. He remained a trusted advisor for the DAV national staff throughout the years, and the DAV legislative staff regularly sought his invaluable advice and counsel. We will miss that advice, and we will miss him.

Changing times do not change our mission. Though the road uphill seems to have become ever steeper, I am happy to say, we continue to have successes to report again this year. It is my pleasure to report this year's activities to you.

Budget & Appropriations

Fiscal Year 2005

Each year, the budget debate centers on the amount of discretionary appropriations that should be provided for veterans' programs, predominantly veterans' medical care. As they began work to draft their fiscal year (FY) 2005 appropriations bill for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and other independent agencies in late July 2004, House appropriators expected to cut spending for all the agencies funded by the bill except VA. Because of its political importance, the amount of appropriations for veterans' medical care was expected to make the bill one of the most controversial among the 13 annual appropriations bills.

The bill approved by the House Appropriations Committee on July 22, 2004, added $1.2 billion to the $27.4 billion the President requested in his budget. The President's request amounted to only $310 million above the FY 2004 appropriation. The Appropriations Committee voted down an amendment offered by Congressman Chet Edwards (D-Tex.) to add another $1.3 billion to bring funding more in line with our request in *The Independent Budget* of $30.3 billion in appropriations for medical care. In reaction to strong objections from the veterans community, the Committee rejected the President's recommendation to increase medical copayments and impose a $250 annual enrollment fee for medical care, however. The House bill did follow the President's recommendation to cut staffing in the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) by 540 fulltime employees (FTE). On September 21, 2004, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its bill, which provided funding slightly higher than the House bill with an additional $1.2 billion designated as emergency funding for medical care.

As we neared October 1, 2004, the beginning date of FY 2005, Congress had yet to agree on most of the spending bills, and it became apparent that temporary funding bills would be required to keep the Government running until Congress returned after the November election. On November 20, 2004, Congress passed an omnibus appropriations bill that consolidated several appropriations bills, and the President signed it on December 8, 2004. The appropriation for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) was $28.1 billion, an increase of $1.5 billion from FY 2004, but $1.7 billion less than we sought. The omnibus bill required an across-the-board reduction in spending, a "recision," which reduced the increase by $228 million. Another $125 million was to be transferred to VBA to cover the costs of hiring new claims processing staff. Nearly all of the remaining increase was wiped out by a pay increase for Federal employees above that funded in the budget.

Fiscal Year 2005 Supplemental Appropriation

With an influx of new veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom needing medical services and with news reports from across the Nation of shortfalls already in FY 2005 funding for veterans' medical care, Representative Darlene Hooley (D-Ore.) and other House Democrats wrote the President in February 2005 to urge him to support the inclusion of $1.3 billion for veterans' medical care in the emergency supplemental appropriations for the war. In congressional testimony on February 16, 2005, VA Secretary Nicholson denied that VA was deferring purchases and maintenance because of funding shortfalls. In his March 8, 2005, testimony in a joint hearing before the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committees, DAV National Commander James E. Sursely provided several examples of news stories about the effects of shortfalls on various VA medical centers. These stories began to appear in the first quarter of the fiscal year. In March, the House leadership blocked Representative Hooley's efforts to amend the supplemental appropriations bill to add $1.2 billion for medical care. On April 5, 2005, Secretary Nicholson told Congress VA did not need additional money for veterans' medical care. On April 12, 2005, an effort by Senator Patty Murray (D-Wash.) to add $2 billion to the bill for veterans' medical care was defeated by a vote along party lines of 54 to 46.

On June 23, 2005, VA admitted that a $1 billion shortfall in medical care funding for FY 2005 had required it to divert construction money and dip into reserve funds to cover the shortage. On June 29, 2005, the Senate voted to add $1.5 billion to the FY 2005 medical care appropriation. The House passed its supplemental funding bill the following day. Based on the Administration's initial estimate of the extra funding needed, the House bill would provide only $975 million. The Administration subsequently revised its estimate and informed Congress that $300 million more would be required to cover the shortfall. As of this writing, the Senate is still considering alternatives for the best legislative vehicle for the supplemental funding, and the Senate and House must both agree to the same amount before the legislation can be sent to the President to be signed into law.

Fiscal Year 2006

The budget cycle for FY 2006 began with the President's submission of this budget to Congress on February 7, 2005. The President's FY 2006 budget for VA requests $70.8 billion in total budget authority. This total consists of $37.4 billion for mandatory spending for the benefit programs and $33.4 billion for discretionary funding. The mandatory funding would include $478.3 million to cover a 2.3 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in disability compensation. The medical care budget authority of $30.7 billion would include $27.8 billion in discretionary appropriations with the remainder to be obtained from copayments, enrollment fees, and other collections. Another $2.7 billion in discretionary funding would cover general operating expenses (GOE), some construction costs, and medical research.

The $27.8 billion in appropriations for veterans' medical care amounts to only a 0.4 percent—or less than one-half of one percent—increase over the FY 2005 appropriation in nominal, or constant, dollars and therefore would be a reduction below the FY 2005 appropriation of $27.7 billion adjusted for inflation. *The Independent Budget* estimates that VA will need at least $31.2 billion in appropriations for veterans' medical care in FY 2006.

To bridge some of the gap between the resources needed and the appropriations requested, the Administration's budget would shift some of the costs of VA medical care from the Government onto veterans themselves. It would impose a $250 annual enrollment fee and increase pharmacy copayments for so-called "lower priority veterans" (Priority Groups 7 & 8 veterans) seeking medical care. According to the Administration's budget, imposing these fees has two goals: (1) to generate non-appropriated revenues in the form of money collected from veterans and thereby partially offset reductions in appropriations, and (2) save money by driving a projected 213,000 veterans away from the VA medical care system in FY 2006. To further partially reduce the gap between resources needed and appropriations requested, the Administration merely declares that it will achieve $590 million in savings through new management efficiencies.

Assuming Congress agreed to impose the enrollment fee and increased copayments on disabled veterans, assuming attainment of the projected savings from the scheme to drive veterans away from the system, and assuming all of the savings from the acheivment of new efficiencies, the total budget authority would still fall far short of what is needed to maintain services. The total budget authority for medical care would still be so inadequate that it would require draconian reductions in essential medical services to veterans. The Administration's budget would reduce VA medical care staffing in FY 2006 by 3,712 FTE below FY 2005 levels.

Also, the Administration's budget proposes a sharp curtailment of long-term care to disabled veterans. The Administration's budget requests that Congress change the law to relieve VA from congressionally mandated levels of VA long-term care. With the mandated FY 1998 minimum level of nursing care capacity lifted, the President's budget would provide VA nursing care to 27 percent fewer veterans in FY 2006 than in FY 1998. In addition, the Administration's budget would reduce nursing care in state institutions. It would cover the costs of nursing care in state institutions for 61 percent fewer veterans in FY 2006 than in FY 2005.

The Administration's budget would also make personnel reductions in VBA, with 76 fewer employees than VBA has authorized for FY 2005 and 539 fewer employees than VBA had in FY 2003. The budget includes no funding to continue several information technology initiatives designed to improve efficiency in benefits administration.

Along with the dollar amounts, the President's budget includes the underlying justification for the funding levels 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 2006 contains very little in the way of recommendations to improve veterans' programs. The President's budget includes only one recommendation for beneficial legislation, and that is the typical recommendation that Congress enact a COLA for compensation and related benefits under that account.

Earlier this year, we testified in three separate congressional hearings to state the DAV's position on the President's FY 2006 budget recommendations and to present our own alternative budget recommendations as set forth in *The Independent Budget*. We appeared before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee on February 15, 2005, and before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee on February 16, 2005. We testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and Veterans' Affairs, and Related Agencies on April 7, 2005. 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 inadequacy of the budget request for medical care. In his testimony before the joint session of the two Veterans' Affairs Committees, National Commander Sursely reminded legislators that a VA official had recently conceded that VA needs a 13-to 14-percent increase in medical care funding each year just to stay even with rising costs. The National Commander noted that the President's FY 2006 budget requested an increase of less than one-half of one percent. He urged Congress to provide $31.2 billion for medical care, $3.4 billion more than the President's request. He also informed the members of the Committees of DAV's strong opposition to enrollment fees and higher copayments.

At the time of the National Commander's testimony, House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Steve Buyer had already recommended to the House Budget Committee that the budget include enrollment fees on a sliding scale from $230 to $500 based on income. Other Republican members of the Committee distanced themselves from the recommendation. Democratic members wrote separately to the Budget Committee to express their opposition to any enrollment fee or increase in copayments.

In the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, the majority and minority also submitted their recommendations separately to the Budget Committee. The majority did not expressly object to the imposition of an annual enrollment fee, but specifically stated that it did not endorse an increase in copayments. The minority rejected both an enrollment fee and increased copayments.

As part of the annual budget process, the two chambers of Congress adopt budget resolutions as a revenue and spending plan for the upcoming fiscal year. If both chambers agree on the same plan, the concurrent budget resolution then sets general spending levels for Federal departments and agencies. The House and Senate agreed upon and adopted the concurrent budget resolution for FY 2006 on April 28, 2005. The resolution did not include plans for an annual medical care enrollment fee or increased copayments. Though it included instructions for cuts in mandatory spending for most Federal programs, none was directed at veterans' programs. The measure recommended only about $400 million above the President's budget for veterans' medical care. Attempts to add more money for medical care failed.

On May 26, 2005, the House passed its appropriation bill funding VA. The bill would provide $28.4 billion for veterans' medical care programs, which would amount to just over $600 million in increased appropriations. This amount is $2.7 billion below our recommendation in *The Independent Budget.* An amendment offered by Congressman David Obey (D-Wis.) to add $2.6 billion for VA programs was defeated by a vote largely along party lines. Another amendment offered by Congressman Charlie Melancon (D-La.) would have added $53 million for veterans' medical care and claims processing. The Speaker of the House voted against the amendment to break a tie, and the amendment failed by a vote of 214 to 213.

On July 14, 2005, the Administration amended its FY 2006 budget request for VA medical care and asked Congress to provide $1.677 billion above the original request.

On July 21, 2005, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its appropriations bill to fund VA. The bill would provide $30.9 billion for veterans' medical care. As with the House-passed bill, it would provide $412 million for medical research, $19 million more than the President's budget request. The Senate bill would provide $1.418 billion for GOE, which predominantly covers the administrative expenses of administering the benefit programs. The Senate GOE appropriation is $10 million above the President's request and $7 million above the House-passed appropriation.

Medical Care

Mandatory Funding

Our campaign for legislation to change the manner in which Congress funds veterans' medical care, from discretionary appropriations to mandatory spending, continued full force through the end of 2004 and the end of the 108th Congress. The Senate bill to make funding mandatory, S. 50, had 29 cosponsors. The House bill, H.R. 2318, had 188. Though we succeeded in increasing awareness among legislators of the need to enact mandatory funding legislation, we continued to run up against strong opposition from appropriators and those opposed to mandating spending levels for veterans' medical care.

Several measures have been introduced in the 109th Congress that would shift funding for VA medical care from a discretionary to a mandatory account. Representative Lane Evans (D-IL) introduced H.R. 515, the Assured Funding for Veterans Health Care Act. The bill would require the Secretary of the Treasury to make mandatory appropriations for VA medical care based on a funding formula. For fiscal year 2007, the amount of funds available to VA for veterans' medical care would equal 130 percent of the total obligations made by VA for such programs in FY 2005. The amounts in following years would be based on the number of veterans enrolled for VA health care on a given date, with annual adjustments for medical inflation. This bill has 112 cosponsors. Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD) introduced a companion bill, S. 331, which has 19 cosponsors. Two additional measures include provisions for mandatory funding for veterans health care as well: S. 13, introduced by Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI) and S. 963, introduced by Senator John Thune (R-SD).

The DAV and eight other major veterans organizations of The Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform continue to combine and coordinate efforts to obtain this legislation. We continue to gain support, and the current failures of the discretionary budget process have made the need for mandatory funding all the more evident.

Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services

VA continues its project to reconfigure, and relocate, where necessary, its medical care facilities according to current geographic, demographic, and structural needs. Designated the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services, and known as CARES, VA initiated this comprehensive and systematic update of its national medical care infrastructure in 2001.

Based on assessments of veteran populations within major geographical market areas and analyses 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 receive 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.

Upon the VA Secretary's acceptance of the Commission's recommendations in May of last year, implementation of the plan began. The CARES plan includes 30 high-priority construction projects that make up the initial phase of implementation, but the plan identifies more than 100 construction projects overall. In early January 2005, VA awarded a contract to the firm PricewaterhouseCoopers to complete studies at 18 sites across the country, and implementation is ongoing. The Senate FY 2006 appropriations bill for VA, H.R. 2528, as approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee on July 21, 2005, would forestall closure of or changes to any of these 18 facilities. The bill provides that "none of the funds in this or any other Act may be used to modify or alter the mission, services or infrastructure of the 18 facilities on the [CARES] list requiring further study as specified by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. The Appropriations Committee took this action because of its understanding that VA is now seeing large concentrations of veterans in areas that were not originally anticipated to experience an increased workload, and the Committee therefore believed that the 2004 CARES report may be outdated.

Other Medical Care Issues and Legislation

On July 22, 2004, we testified before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on the state of collaboration between the Department of Defense (DOD) and VA in medical research and amputee care for veterans, and on potential reforms in VA's blind rehabilitation services. We acknowledged that Walter Reed Army Medical Center provides amputees technologically advanced prostheses, and we noted the facility's initiatives to upgrade its Amputee Center and expand research on prosthetic care, limb development, and rehabilitation. We expressed concerns as to whether Congress has provided VA the necessary resources to provide the same excellent care and prosthetic services. We included recommendations for ensuring VA maintains the highest quality programs for amputees. We observed that, despite its history of excellence, VA's Blind Rehabilitation Service, had several deficiencies and offered specific recommendations to address them.

On November 30, 2004, Congressman Chris Smith's bill, H.R. 3936, was enacted as Public Law. 108-442, the Veterans Health Programs Improvement Act of 2004. Among its many provisions, the Act authorized establishment of new VA research and education centers to develop new treatments for veterans with complex multi-trauma combat injuries. It created a new pilot program to use innovative technologies for recruitment of nurses, eliminated copayments for veterans receiving VA hospice care, authorized 16 leases for community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs), and added permanent authority for VA's sexual trauma counseling program.

Public Law 108-445, the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Personnel Enhancement Act of 2004, was enacted on December 3, 2004. This legislation overhauled the pay system for VA dentists and physicians and authorized more flexible work schedules for VA nurses.

On June 9, 2005, we testified in a Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee hearing regarding several pieces of health care legislation under consideration. We commented on the several sections of S. 1182, the Veterans Health Care Act of 2005. We supported provisions to expand the exemption of hospice care from copayments to cover settings other than long-term care, as well as provisions to exempt former prisoners of war from inpatient long-term care copayments. We opposed a provision that would eliminate a requirement that VA maintain nursing care capacity at 1998 levels. We supported provisions to improve the salary of VA's Nursing Service Director. We commented on the beneficial or detrimental aspects of several other provisions for which we had no DAV mandate.

We noted that S. 481 would be beneficial in that it would extend the 2-year period of medical care eligibility for combat veterans of the Persian Gulf War and thereafter to 4 years. We voiced our opposition to provisions in S. 614 that would require copayments from Medicare-eligible veterans and other veterans who would be allowed to have prescriptions by non-VA physicians filled by VA. We noted that provisions in S. 716, the Vet Center Enhancement Act of 2005, to expand readjustment counseling and mental health services at Vet Centers would be beneficial.

We supported the provisions of S. 1180 to reauthorize medical services programs for homeless veterans. We supported the provisions of S. 1190, the Blinded Veterans Continuum of Care Act of 2005. This bill would require VA to have blind rehabilitation specialists at designated VA medical facilities. Though we support strengthening VA's long-term care capacity, we opposed provisions in S. 1189 that would shift to Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance the costs for this expanded care. We testified in support of S. 1191, which would establish grants for programs to transport veterans from remote rural areas to VA medical appointments.

During a House Veterans' Affairs Committee hearing on July 27, 2005, we emphasized the need for VA and DOD to take the steps necessary to address the mental health needs of a new generation of combat veterans. We expressed concerns that VA does not have sufficient capacity to meet this new demand for counseling and treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). We cited shortcomings in the cooperation between DOD and VA to coordinate the transition from DOD mental health services to VA treatment and counseling programs. We recommended increased emphasis by DOD and VA on strengthening programs to ensure they are prepared to properly deal with posttraumatic stress disorder and other mental disorders in servicemembers and veterans of today's conflicts.

Benefits

Legislation Enacted

On October 13, 2004, Congress cleared H.R. 4175, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2004, for the President's signature. The President signed the Act into law on October 25, 2004. This legislation, Public Law 108–363, increased disability compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), and the clothing allowance by 2.7 percent based on the increase in the cost of living as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

On October 9, 2004, the House and Senate agreed to the conference report for H.R. 4200, the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005. The President signed the Act on October 28, 2004, and it became Public Law 108–375. This legislation made another incremental step on the "concurrent receipt" issue. For military retired veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 100 percent, it removed provisions for a gradual phase-in of concurrent payment of military retired pay and compensation, authorizing full payment of both benefits beginning in January 2005. This bill also eliminated the Social Security offset against an annuity under the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP). Another provision directed DOD to conduct a study of the service-connected disability benefits available to veterans and directed the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study of other government disability benefit programs in which employees perform tasks with risks analogous to those performed by members of the Armed Forces.

The Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004, S. 2486, was enacted as Public Law 108–454 on December 10, 2004. This bill consolidated various provisions of other bills into one. The bill made several improvements to apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs for veterans and extended from 10 to 20 years the period for educational assistance to surviving spouses of members who die on active duty. It strengthened reemployment laws for veterans. It made a number of improvements to the home loan program. The Act added new protections against misuse of funds of an incompetent veteran by a fiduciary. Some of the other miscellaneous improvements to the benefits programs in this legislation were:

- **increased by $250 the monthly amount of DIC in the case of a surviving spouse with one or more children below the age of 18, to be payable until all such children have attained age 18;**
- **provided that a payment to a radiation-exposed veteran under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act of 1990 shall not deprive such veteran of the payment of any veterans' disability compensation to which the veteran is entitled and that payment to a person under the Act shall not deprive such person to DIC to which such person is entitled, but that there shall be deducted from such compensation or DIC the amount of any payment made under the Act;**
- **excluded life insurance proceeds from consideration as income for veterans' pension purposes;**
- **provided expressly that a disability incurred through VA treatment or vocational rehabilitation will be treated as a service-connected disability for purposes of eligibility to special adapted housing and the automobile grant, and**
- **added bone, brain, colon, lung, and ovarian cancers to the list of diseases subject to presumptive service connection in the case of a veteran exposed to ionizing radiation.**
-

This Act also amended the law to authorize the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to be at any location in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area rather than in the District of Columbia.

On May 11, 2005, the President signed into law H.R. 1268, an emergency defense supplemental appropriations measure, enacted as Public Law 109–13. This legislation included a temporary increase in coverage under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) programs from $250,000 to $400,000. As noted below, both the Senate and House have bills pending that would make these increases permanent. This legislation also added provisions to require that a member insured under the SGLI program will be automatically issued a traumatic injury protection rider. The rider will provide a payment of up to $100,000 if the member, while so insured, sustains a traumatic injury that results in: (1) a loss of sight, limbs, speech, or hearing; (2) certain burns; or (3) a coma or the inability to carry out certain daily living activities. The provision requires the member serving on active or reserve duty to pay a premium for this traumatic injury insurance.

Hearings on Benefit Bills and Oversight

On April 20, 2005, we testified before the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs regarding the functioning of VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program. We cited shortcomings in the program as found by the VR&E Task Force that was created by the VA Secretary to study the program. We also recounted deficiencies noted by *The Independent Budget* and provided recommendations for more adequate resources and program improvements.

On May 4, 2005, our testimony before the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity dealt with four bills under consideration. We informed the Subcommittee that we would support H.R. 419, a bill to extend for 3 years authority for the President's National Hire Veterans Committee, only if funding for the Committee was not taken from funding for the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) or Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) program budgets.

On May 5, 2005, we testified in an oversight hearing before the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee regarding the functioning and performance of VA's appellate operations. We pointed out that the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims overturns or remands 61 percent of the BVA decisions the Court reviews, which reflects a high error rate in those BVA decisions appealed to the Court. We observed that the number of appeals from regional office decisions is on the rise, and that processing timeliness of appeals is slipping. We similarly noted higher than projected workloads and decreasing timeliness at VBA's Appeals Management Center, a special unit created to complete actions ordered by BVA remands. We recommended increased personnel to handle these higher workloads.

On May 12, 2005, we were again before the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity to provide our views on the needs and performance of the Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) of the Department of Labor and on the grant programs that fund the activities for DVOP representatives and LVERs. We expressed concern about DVOPs being diverted to perform duties outside the scope of their intended responsibilities of assisting disabled veterans in securing employment. We voiced our opposition to proposed consolidation of the grants for the DVOP and LVER services with corresponding changes to oversight of the programs. We renewed our call for more adequate funding for the National Veterans Training Institute and to ensure the continued effectiveness of transition assistance to separating servicemembers. We stated our continuing support for the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program.

In response to an invitation to testify before the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity on May 25, 2005, to provide DAV's views on three bills, H.R. 717, H.R. 745, and H.R. 1207, we informed the Subcommittee that the DAV had no legislative mandate on any of the three bills dealing with educational benefits.

On May 26, 2005, we provided the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee with our views on the functioning of VA's claims and appeals processes. We observed that some of the same deficiencies that have persisted for years continue to plague VBA today and cause the work to back up, thereby delaying the delivery of benefits to disabled veterans who often urgently need them to purchase the necessities of life. Because of inadequate staffing levels, adjudicators must rush their work. With insufficient time for adjudicators to thoroughly develop and review the record, error rates are high. Consequently, many claims decisions must be reworked to correct errors. Substantial time is required for processing of appeals. When workload inventories begin to show large backlogs, the emphasis is on production, and quality is compromised even more, making the situation worse in the long term. We recommended that VBA be provided more employees, that training be improved, and that management be held accountable for quality first. We repeated our observation that BVA and the Appeals Management Center were also strained, with caseloads and processing times increasing to the detriment of veterans needing benefits. Here again, we recommended an increase in staffing levels.

We testified on June 16, 2005, before the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs to address (1) H.R. 3200, the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Act; (2) traumatic injury insurance provisions in Public Law 109–13; and (3) H.R. 1618, the Wounded Warrior Servicemembers' Group Disability Insurance Act of 2005. Regarding provisions in H.R. 3200 to replace the temporary increase for SGLI and VGLI in Public Law 109–13 with a permanent increase, we noted we had no mandate from our membership but had no objection to enactment of this beneficial legislation. We objected to the concept in Public Law 109–13 and in H.R. 1618 whereby servicemembers pay to insure themselves against disability incurred in military service.

On June 23, 2005, we testified on several bills in a hearing before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. We stated our support for S. 1234, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Act of 2005. As with H.R. 3200 in the House, we noted we had no mandate on the permanent increase in SGLI and VGLI that would be provided by S. 1235. We urged Congress to promptly enact S. 552, a bill to restore entitlement to specially adapted housing for servicemembers with qualifying disabilities. These provisions were inadvertently removed from the law. We noted we had no resolution on making the direct housing loan program for Native American veterans permanent but stated we had no objections to enactment of this meritorious legislation as provided in S. 917. We testified in support of S. 1252, which would increase the amount of supplemental life insurance available on a Service-Disabled Veterans' (SDVI) Insurance policy from $20,000 to $40,000. We also stated our support for enhancement of VA outreach activities that would be mandated by S. 151. We supported S. 909, a bill that would provide an earlier effective date for provisions authorizing a Government marker in cases where a veteran's grave has a privately provided marker in place. We supported enactment of S. 1259, a bill that would ensure the DAV and other organizations are granted access to military facilities for the purpose of counseling and aiding servicemembers transitioning into civilian life. We applauded S. 1271, which would liberalize provisions for presumptive service connection for diseases related to detention as a prisoner of war. We advised the Committee that we had no position on S. 423, a bill to include a stillborn child as an insurable dependent on an SGLI policy. We also informed the Committee that we had no position on S. 551, a bill to establish a new veterans cemetery in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and on S. 1138 a bill to authorize a monument in Arlington National Cemetery to honor

veterans who fought in World War II as members of United States Army Ranger battalions.

On June 29, 2005, we were once again before the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity for testimony in an oversight hearing regarding the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and the Disabled Transition Assistance (DTAP) program. We recommended that attendance at these sessions be made mandatory to avoid members being pressured by their superiors not to attend. We offered suggestions for improving the availability of TAP/DTAP sessions for members of the Reserves and National Guard.

In a July 27, 2005, hearing before the Subcommittee of Economic Opportunity on six pieces of legislation, we supported a draft bill to establish within VA a new office and director for special national sports and rehabilitative events for disabled veterans. We supported another draft bill to increase from $50,000 to $55,000 the grant for purchase or construction of specially adapted housing and from $10,000 to $12,000 the grant for home adaptations. We supported a separate draft bill that would create a new grant for adaptations to homes of disabled veterans' parents or relatives in situations where eligible disabled veterans reside with parents or relatives.

We noted we had no objections to three other bills for which we had no mandate from DAV's membership. These bills were H.R. 3082, which would, among other things, require that 9 percent of procurement contracts entered into by VA be awarded to small business concerns owned by veterans; H.R. 1773, would make the direct home loan program for Native American veterans permanent: and a draft bill to direct the Department of Labor to establish professional standards or qualifications for DVOP representatives and LVERs.

Pending Legislation

Medical Care

H.R. 202, the Depleted Uranium Screening and Testing Act of 2005, would direct the DOD Secretary and other officials to establish procedures for notification to servicemembers about depleted uranium and its risks, to provide training for its safe handling, and to take other steps to identify, test and track those exposed

H.R. 922, the Veterans Mental Health Services Enhancement Act of 2005, would add psychiatrists and other mental health specialists in PTSD at VA facilities, require a nationwide outreach program for veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom who are or may be suffering from PTSD, and would require other measures to improve services for veterans suffering from PTSD

H.R. 1588, the Comprehensive Assistance for Veterans Exposed to Traumatic Stressors Act of 2005, would require DOD and VA to take a number of cooperative steps to improve means for prevention, early intervention, and treatment of PTSD and substance abuse

S. 460 would require, among other things related to benefits and services for military members, VA to employ at least one psychiatrist and a complementary clinical team at each VA medical center to provide post-traumatic stress disorder treatment for veterans of service in Afghanistan and Iraq and the War on Terrorism

S. 1177, the Veterans Mental Health Care Capacity Enhancement Act of 2005, would require VA to institute a variety of measures to increase and improve its capacity for treatment in the area of mental health

Concurrent Receipt of Retired Pay and Compensation

Legislators have introduced several bills to end the remaining prohibition against concurrent receipt of military longevity retired pay and disability compensation. They are:

H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2005

H.R. 2076, the Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2005

H.R. 2368, the Immediate and Full Repeal of the Disabled Veterans Tax Act of 2005

S. 558, the Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2005

S. 845, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit retired servicemembers who have a service-connected disability to receive disability compensation and either retired pay or Combat-Related Special Compensation and to eliminate the phase-in period with respect to such concurrent receipt

Other Benefits Legislation

H.R. 30, the Samuel B. Moody Bataan Death March Compensation Act, would require DOD to make, upon request, a payment to survivors of the Bataan death march a sum based upon the number of days the veteran was held in captivity

H.R. 805, the Veterans Burial Benefits Improvement Act of 2005, would increase burial and plot allowances

H.R. 808, the Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act, would repeal the offset between DIC and SBP

H.R. 831 would increase the burial plot allowance from $300 to $1,000 and provide for automatic annual adjustments for inflation.

H.R. 1188, the Disabled Veterans Right to Commissaries and Space Available Travel Act, would extend military commissary and exchange privileges to veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 30 percent or more and would extend space-available air travel aboard military aircraft to 50 percent or more service-connected veterans and their dependents

H.R. 1198, the Veterans Carbon Tetrachloride Benefits Act, would authorize presumptive service connection for certain disabilities as related to exposure to carbon tetrachloride during military service

H.R. 1220, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2005, would increase disability compensation, DIC, and the clothing allowance by the percentage of the annual increase in the cost of living

H.R. 2747, the Disabled Veterans Life Insurance Enhancement Act of 2005, would increase maximum SDVI coverage from $10,000 to $50,000, would require SDVI premium rates to be based on current mortality tables, and would make other technical conforming changes to the SDVI; would increase maximum coverage on policies of Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI) from $90,000 to $200,000; and would include a stillborn child as an insurable dependent under an SGLI policy

H.R. 2962, the Atomic Veterans Relief Act, would remove dose levels as a factor in service connection of radiogenic diseases not covered by provisions for presumptive service connection and would expressly include exposure to ionizing radiation due to residual contamination resulting from a detonation as qualifying radiation exposure for purposes of presumptive service connection for diseases related to radiation exposure

H.R. 2963, the Dr. James Allen Disabled Veterans Equity Act, would liberalize requirements, with respect to visual impairments, for consideration of compensation for both eyes in the case of service-related disability of one eye and nonservice-related disability of the other eye

S. 58, would authorize space-available air travel aboard military aircraft for veterans with total service-connected disability

S. 59, would extend military commissary and exchange privileges to former prisoners of war rated 30 percent or higher for service-connected disabilities

House Minority Leadership Bill

The New GI Bill of Rights for the 21st Century Act, H.R. 2131, introduced by the Democratic leadership of the House, with 169 cosponsors, contains multiple provisions to improve benefits for servicemembers, veterans, and dependents. The bill includes provisions for such matters as concurrent receipt of military retired pay and disability compensation, removal of the offset between SBP and DIC, improvement of educational programs, increased funding for veterans' medical care, and prohibition of increases in medical copayments and imposition of enrollment fees.

Other

H.R. 1951, the American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin act, would provide for the minting and issue of silver $1 coins to commemorate disabled American veterans and would pay the proceeds from a $10 surcharge on each coin to the LIFE Memorial Foundation to support construction of a Memorial to disabled veterans

S. 633, the American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act, would provide for the minting and issue of not more than 500,000 $1 coins to commemorate disabled American veterans and would pay the proceeds from a $10 surcharge on each coin to the LIFE Memorial Foundation to support construction of a Memorial to disabled veterans

Ours is not a task where we can do our best, win a decisive victory, and declare the "mission accomplished." As world affairs continually change, the roles of our men and women in uniform change, and the programs for veterans need change. With new needs to be met, veterans' programs need continual adjustments. Persuading our elected officials to make those changes is often a labor. This past year, many have toiled. I want to extend my thanks to all who did, but I want to especially recognize a few here. Certainly, we could claim no success without the guidance, support, and encouragement of National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson and the Executive Directors of our National Headquarters in Kentucky and Washington, D.C., Richard E. Patterson and David W. Gorman. During the haste and heat of the ongoing battles, I seldom have time to stop and adequately commend the members of my staff. This report provides me with an opportunity to recognize their hard work and dedication. They are: Deputy National Legislative Director Rick Surratt; Assistant National Legislative Directors Joy Ilem, Brian Lawrence, and Adrian Atizado; and Legislative Support Specialists Lisa Bogle and Caren Wooley. Also, let me acknowledge the instrumental role National Commander Sursley and his line officers played in carrying our message to legislators and the public. I must extend special thanks to our Benefits Protection Team Leaders, Commander's Action Network, DAV Auxiliary, and National Service Officers for the many things they do to support our legislative efforts. We will need the continued contributions of our many participants during the next 12 months.

The upcoming year shows all the potential of being another one filled with challenge. We have objectives yet to be achieved; we have threats yet to be confronted. I ask all of you to again join in and march forward with the Legislative Department to meet the challenges on the road ahead.

(The following annual written report was submitted by Mr. Michael J. Walsh, National Membership Director:)

Annual Report
Michael J. Walsh
National Membership Director
84th National Convention
Las Vegas, Nevada
August 14-17, 2005

National Commander Sursely, Officers of the DAV and all DAV Members:

The 2004-2005 membership year has been strong and successful for the Disabled American Veterans. As we begin the new year and meet in National Convention, it is the perfect time to update you on our accomplishments of the past year. DAV membership continues to grow; we become more enthusiastic by investing time, energy and resources into making this Organization the finest veterans' service organization in America. Members at all levels, from local Chapters to state Departments and the National Organization have provided us with the leadership to develop strong and effective strategies that will benefit DAV and shape our future successes for many years. More than ever before, the DAV stands ready, willing and able to assist America's disabled veterans. The newest generation of disabled veterans from the war on terror, the ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere need the DAV and the programs of service we provide. Without question or reservation, we will continue to "Build Better Lives for America's Disabled Veterans and their Families."

Our advocacy efforts are unmatched. And the membership program provides a variety of services to build the large, strong, knowledgeable and active membership base required to effectively promote a positive agenda for all disabled veterans. In accomplishing this, DAV extends its mission into communities where veterans and their families live. Fifty-two state Departments and more than 1,900 local Chapters nationwide support this mission.

DAV Membership and Recruitment

For the fourth consecutive year, DAV finished the membership year with more members than we have ever had before. At the close of the membership year on June 30, 2005, total membership stood at 1,300,727. Of that, 986,637 were fully paid Life Members. Each year we get closer to our goal of over 1 million fully paid Life Members. The impact of that number is something that cannot go unnoticed in the halls of Congress. The growth we have experienced is unparalleled in this day and age when many individuals find organizations to be antiquated and out of touch, or not worthy of the time, effort and energy to become involved. DAV has a place for everyone. Our member population of over 1.3 million effectively makes up half of those with service-connected disabilities who are eligible for DAV membership. Any organization would be proud of that kind of market penetration.

Membership growth is directly attributable to the many effective recruiters who have tirelessly worked to increase our membership roles. Recruiters like Coy Hennis of North Carolina, this year's Recruiter of the Year, with 345 new members sponsored has again recruited members not only in North Carolina but wherever he travels, even on trips to events like the National Convention and the Mid-Winter Conference. Other recruiters such as Prosper Sodano of New York, Al Hindes of Michigan, Mary Tristan of North Carolina and Henry Sadler of Minnesota, each recruited over 100 fully paid members during the year.

I am also pleased to report that our National Service Officers have also been as successful as ever. NSOs have been responsible for recruiting 6,561 fully paid life members and 4,378 partial paid members. Many of our NSOs recruited more than 100 new members each and deserve special thanks. They are: Kerry Baker, Wisconsin; Jay Vierra, Kansas; Joshua Sniegowski, Wisconsin; David Reeves, Oklahoma; James Balmer, Kentucky; G. Raymond Raulerson, Florida; Maurice Jackson, Wisconsin; Gregory Seurer, North Dakota; Johnny DeLaughter, Texas; Robert Sinclair, Massachusetts; Michael Lautermilch, Wisconsin; Marc Audette, Minnesota; Donald Horton, Massachusetts; Peter Philippi, Minnesota; Calvin Cabarrus, West Virginia; Ebony Walker, Wisconsin; James Schultz, Minnesota; and Andrew Smith, Arkansas.

In addition to the effectiveness of our recruiters and NSOs, we have completed several direct mail campaigns targeting our partial paid members and updating our files to assure that every eligible person who wants to join DAV has that opportunity.

As a result of all these efforts, I am pleased to announce the winners of several key awards for excellence in membership. The Jonathon Wainwright Award for the Department with the largest number of new members for the membership year. This year the award goes to the Department of California, led by Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster, who guided the Department of California in securing a total of 11,844 brand new members for the year. The Judge Robert Marx Award for the Department that attained to highest percentage of Life Members over goal is presented to the Department of Kansas and Commander Charlie Stephens who finished at 104.69% of goal. This just goes to show us all that even the smaller Departments can do great things.

In the race for Division Commanders of the Year, we experienced more lead changes this year than ever before. This resulted in some new names to be recognized for the achievements of their Departments. In Division I, Departments with over 35,000 total members, the Department of California, led by Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster led most of the year and finished first with 2,112 fully paid members over goal. Virtually each Department in the Division led at one time or another during the year. In Division II, those Departments with 18,000 to 34,999 total members, the Department of Minnesota and Commander Henry Sadler took all honors with 757 fully paid members over goal, or 104.64% of goal. Division III, Departments having 10,000 to 17,999 members, the Department of Arkansas and Commander Roy Schultz edged out New Mexico with 405 fully paid members over goal, finishing at 103.36% of goal. Division IV, Departments with 5,000 to 9,999 members, the Department of Kansas surpassed the Department of South Dakota and finished with 372 fully paid members over goal, or 104.89%. And finally, Division V, Departments with fewer than 5,000 members, the Department of North Dakota again wins with 118 fully paid members, or 102.92%, over goal.

Several years ago, we began taking the opportunity in the annual report to recognize the top recruiter in each of the five Divisions. This year those special hard working individuals are Division I, Mary Tristan of North Carolina; Division II, David Reeves of Oklahoma; Division III Calvin Cabarrus of West Virginia; Division IV, Jay Vierra of Kansas; and Division V, Gregory Seurer of North Dakota.

Member Benefit Program

The DAV offers our members a variety of member benefits that provide real value on products and services that enhance their lives as well as their families. Discount programs from long distance and mobile phone services from PowerNet Global; Ford Motor Company Partner Plan; Dell and Apple Computers discounts; Hertz Rental Car; travel and dining discount program; discount prescription drug plan from Scrip Pharmacy Solutions; and Creative Benefits Design, a full-service relocation plan that incorporates the moving, mortgage and realty discounts into one package. Also products such as the Hickory Farms, Omaha Steaks and our own Legal Service referral all help make the member benefits an attractive recruitment tool. However, I remain convinced that eligible disabled veterans are joining DAV because they recognize the valuable and important role we play in the arena of veterans affairs.

On several of the member benefits, DAV receives a commission or royalty based on its use by members. These funds are directly deposited to the Life Membership Fund. During the 2004-05 membership year, $123,000 in commissions was deposited to the Life Membership Fund from the member benefit program.

We will continue to explore new programs and products that will benefit our members while we carefully review the current programs to assure they are what our members desire and need.

Technological Advances

Slightly more than two years ago, we introduced the new Membership System. A database that is easily accessible from the Internet. It provides DAV Chapters and Department officials with an invaluable tool in the management of their members. Chapter and Department leaders are learning more about what the system can do for them and how they can use the system without having to contact National Headquarters for assistance.

The system provides them the ability to essentially access their membership roster to download it for lists, create mailing labels, track dues payments, initiate address changes and transfer requests, update some records and complete officer reports and financial reports as necessary. As we strive to achieve the 1 million full-paid Life Member benchmark, we will look to improving our response rates to dues notices by taking advantage of the system's ability to allow us to target specific members and improve the look and feel of the quarterly notices.

During the past year, we took a critical look at the information we request from potential members in our membership application. As a result, we revamped our applications to either delete some information or expand on others. This will provide us with more consistent eligibility criteria on the application. We also amended the database screens to accommodate the changes in this information and completed a direct mail campaign to verify and assure ourselves that those currently on our membership roles truly are eligible for membership in this great organization.

Staff

No component in DAV can be successful without the dedicated efforts of its employees. Former Assistant National Membership Director Andre′ Smith recently accepted reassignment to the National Service Office in Oakland, California, returning to the position of providing counseling and representing disabled veterans with their claims for benefits. His assistance was invaluable for the past four years. Anthony Baskerville, most recently the Deputy Director of Human Resources was appointed in April to replace Andre′. Tony has a 30-year history of service to DAV and our members.

The Membership Department's support staff at National Headquarters is dedicated to a single purpose—taking care of our members. They do the bulk of the work in responding to telephone inquiries, answering correspondence, completing mail campaigns for the Mobile Service Office and Information Seminars and generally providing information about DAV programs and services. Their efforts day in and day out make it possible for us to accomplish our goals. They firmly believe that the member is the most important person in our organization. Everyone understands their role within the organization, and with a team like that, we can't help but be successful.

I would not be much of a Membership Director if I failed to recognize several individuals who have provided much support and guidance during the past year. I firmly believe in the vision and trust provided by our National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. His leadership provides the wisdom and guidance we need to care for our members and to plan strategically for the future. The knowledge and oversight provided by Executive Director of National Headquarters Richard E. Patterson continues to provide the Membership Department with a clear picture of our responsibilities that are easy to understand and implement. The DAV Interim Membership Committee, comprised of Coy Hennis of North Carolina, Prosper Sodano of New York, H.G. Kroschell of South Dakota, and Roger Cloutier of Maine, have offered suggestions and recommendations that have been helpful in designing programs to attract new members and improve our services consistently improved the membership effort.

In closing

Finally, I want to express my personal thanks to all members of the DAV for the continued support of the Membership Department. The many recruiters and our National, Department and Chapter leaders have all made this year the best ever. For that, I thank you.

While this report provides you a small glimpse of what DAV has been able to accomplish during the past year, it is always my belief that looking ahead and planning for the next year of success is more exciting. We have demonstrated a commitment to remain proactive in our efforts to recruit new members and improve the services we provide as we strive to give stronger voice to our nation's disabled veterans. We have a responsibility to the members of the DAV and all those who were wounded, gassed, injured or disabled in the line of duty to provide the best membership services and programs possible. I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to provide this report. We can all look back on 2004-2005 with pride and a sense of accomplishment as we look forward to a successful 2005-2006.

COMMANDER SURSELY: I would like to at this time introduce National Service Director Randy Reese for presentation of Employment Awards. Randy. (Applause)

MR. EDWARD REESE, JR.: Thank you, Commander. Good morning everyone. Thank you for joining us here as we pay tribute to the men and the women who generously assist disabled veterans gain substantial, gainful and meaningful employment and instill in them a greater sense of self-esteem.

It is crucial that veterans, especially disabled veterans, enjoy the satisfaction and self-esteem of earning a fair living. This year we again recognize truly worthy individuals and companies for their efforts toward employing veterans with the National Commander's Employment Awards.

The individuals and companies recognized this year have demonstrated their deep commitment to veterans in the labor force and recognize that disabled veterans are indeed capable workers who are in great demand.

The recipient of the Outstanding Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist of the Year is James E. Gilmer, an employment specialist at the Gainesville Career Center in Gainesville, Georgia.

He was selected for the award in recognition of a remarkable record in finding jobs for disabled veterans. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. James Gilmer. (Applause)

MR. JAMES GILMER: Well, this is a great honor but most of all it's a great honor that God has given me the opportunity to work with veterans, help people find jobs, be placed in jobs, help veterans that need the help and assistance that they don't know which way to turn.

And basically I really don't do anything for people. I just give them a guiding finger and hope they will follow through with it. But it is such an honor to be able to stand. And I thank Richard Williams.

I thank the people from the state of Georgia for their backing and support. And where are my people this morning from Georgia? (Applause) Great people. So, thank you again.

For veterans, for anyone, my phone is open 24-hours a day and another reason I'm in this, I thank my wife for the support that she gives me. She is 100 percent behind me so you can't ask for no better than that. So, thank all of you. If I can help you, give me a call. (Applause)

MR. REESE: John Heritage Jr., at the Texas Workforce Center, Richardson, Texas, was selected as the Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative of the Year.

John's job is to help unemployed veterans find suitable employment and he has achieved a great success record, utilizing compassion, professionalism in all phases of his work. I am pleased to present this award to John Heritage. Mr. Heritage. (Applause)

MR. JOHN HERITAGE, JR.: Commander Sursely, Adjutant Wilson, national staff members and delegates, my fellow veterans, sir, first I would like to express my sincere appreciation for you bestowing me this award here today.

My wife Sandy and I truly appreciate the professionalism and the hospitality that has been shown to us since our arrival here in Vegas. It is both an honor and a privilege to be here today in the presence of such a distinguished group and fellow veterans.

I am truly proud to be associated as a lifetime member of DAV. And I am confident that there are many local veterans' representatives out there that are deserving of this award.

My transition from a command sergeant-major in the army to a veterans' representative was not a difficult one for me. In the military I took care of and loved our soldiers and their families. Now as a veterans' representative I take care of veterans and their families.

My primary duties as a veterans' representative in our local area in Richardson, Texas, is to assist the veteran, especially the disabled veteran, during his job search process.

And my job is made easy because of the many employers in our area whose sense of patriotism and appreciation for our nation's veterans runs high. There are no military installations in our particular area but there are a lot of veteran employers that assist us in placing veterans in jobs and I would like to thank them at this time.

I also would like to thank my manager, Linda Sheerer for her nomination of me for this particular award and all my colleagues in the office who support everything that we do for our vets.

There is an increase of a new generation of disabled vets that we are seeing today in our office. It is my sincere desire to do for them what my veterans' employment representative did for me, but not only for employment purposes but also for retraining.

Now, basically what we really are in our business is veterans taking care of veterans, veterans taking care of each other.

I would like to just relate a short story of one of my clients that came into my office not long ago and he sat at my desk and grabbed both my hands and looked me straight in the face with tears in his eyes and he said, "I want to thank you for saving my life."

I responded with, you know, "I don't understand." And he stated that, "A while back you referred me to the VA hospital and you instructed me to register at the VA and to ask them to give me a physical because it was recommended that you take a physical at least once a year.

"As a result of that physical they discovered that I had cancer and it was starting to spread. If it was not for you to refer me to that VA I wouldn't be sitting here speaking to you today. Now you also referred me to DAV which is located there at the VA hospital.

"You told me that they would assist me in processing my claim and as a result of that currently I have a VA 100 percent disability rating which makes my family eligible for medical attention and currently VA is assisting my children during their educational endeavors."

This is just one example of the rewards that I receive during my daily duties and responsibilities of taking care of veterans. So it is on behalf of all my LVERs and all my disabled veteran clients that it is with great humility and appreciation that I thank you for this award. (Applause)

MR. REESE: The two companies being recognized as Outstanding Employers of the Year stress the need for workers who have the background and dedication to perform superlative work.

They have reached out to veterans because of the skills they possess, the knowledge they have, and the dedication and perseverance they exhibit as veterans.

AKAL Security of Espanola, New Mexico, was selected as the Outstanding Large Employer of the Year. AKAL has done a remarkable job employing veterans. Accepting the award for AKAL Security is Army Contracts Division Director Rick Durham. (Applause)

MR. RICK DURHAM: I am not accustomed to speaking to large groups like this so if I vapor lock, somebody just roll me off. (Laughter) First, I'm truly humbled to receive this award and I thank the DAV on behalf of AKAL Security for the Award.

AKAL Security has about 12,000 employees across the United States and we have discovered, well, they have discovered something I've always known, is that the best workers out there are the veterans. (Applause)

They've got the discipline and maturity that's needed to be the kind of worker that we look for. I would also like to thank the Veterans Service Center and the Texas Workforce Center in Killeen, Texas, for the nomination. And since we recognized Georgia, where is Texas? (Applause)

What I'd like to say real quick is since this award began at Fort Hood, Texas, I feel it's necessary to talk about my company's mission at Fort Hood as we provide the access control security to that installation and seven others.

When I was first assigned to go down to Fort Hood to start this project up, the corporate managers were concerned that we wouldn't be able to find a workforce large enough in the Fort Hood area and that we'd have trouble finding qualified applicants for that workforce.

I said, "I don't believe we'll have any trouble at all. We've got a military installation with retirees and discharged veterans. I just don't think we're going to have any trouble."

They said, "We'll you're going to need 1,800 applicants to get 600 employees." That's the industry standard. I said, "Okay, we'll see what happens." I went down to Killeen.

We had a job fair and we didn't get 1,800 applicants; we got 1,100. Almost, I would say 90 percent of those were veterans. We ended up hiring the 600 right at 600 applicants.

Our workforce at Fort Hood is 68 percent veterans and 23 percent disabled veterans. (Applause) And I tell you, as a manager, you're only as good as your workforce and they make me look really good.

Across our eight contracts at eight different Army installations we have almost 1,700 employees. And just to give you some statistics we are about 66 percent vets at those installations. And we're overall about 17 percent disabled vets at those installations.

And again we just, we couldn't do it without them. Anyway, on behalf of myself and AKAL Security and as a fellow veteran, and from the bottom of my heart thank you for this award and thank you for your service and may God bless each and every one of you. (Applause)

MR. REESE: Although unable to attend, West Tech Company Police of Smithville, North Carolina, was selected as this year's Outstanding Small Employer of the Year.

While they are the recipients of the Small Employer of the Year Award their accomplishments are great. West Tech is a leader employing veterans in North Carolina.

The DAV is grateful for the personal diligence of these employment specialists and these companies on behalf of veterans. They go beyond what is considered their jobs. Their efforts are personal based on deep gratitude they have for the contributions of disabled veterans.

All of this year's employment award winners are helping improve the lives of disabled veterans and their families and in turn are reaping a great satisfaction for their dedication. Please join me again in giving them another round of applause. (Applause)

The Department of Veterans Affairs has thousands of dedicated employees who work to ensure better lives for disabled veterans and their families. This year the DAV is recognizing those VA workers who go beyond doing their jobs to excel on behalf of disabled veterans.

They are the ones who keep the system of healthcare benefits and burial rights going. The DAV is recognizing three outstanding VA employees with the National Commander's Outstanding VA Employee Awards.

Our first recipient is Nancy Resner, the Associate Director of Northern Florida/Southern Georgia Veterans Health System in Lake City, Florida. She is receiving the National Commander's Award for the Veterans Health Administration in appreciation for her compassionate and consistent advocacy for veterans using the VA healthcare facilities.

She is respected at the local, regional and national levels of VA and has made lives for thousands of veterans better. Ladies and gentlemen, may I present Nancy Resner. (Applause)

MS. NANCY RESNER: Good morning. Thank you, Commander. I am incredibly honored. If you think about the number of employees there are in the Veterans Health Administration it is even more humbling to me to be selected.

I started out as a job, as a little staff nurse on a general surgery unit in 1975. It became a career. It became a life quest for excellence for me to provide the best care we can to you, the veterans.

The last time I spoke to the DAV was at the Georgia State Convention. Are the Georgia guys back there? (Applause) I spoke to the Florida Veterans Affairs Convention. Are you out there, Florida? (Applause)

This is truly a crowd. I go to those and I think and then I come here and I'm like overwhelmed at the number of you and your commitment to ensuring that we provide the best care that we can.

I'm not a veteran. I come from a family of veterans. My father is a World War II veteran. My husband is from the Vietnam era. My brother just got back from Operation Iraqi Freedom. And I see it as what would I do for them as I provide healthcare.

Every day I think, "Would I do this for my father? How would I make it better for my husband? And how can I make sure that we are providing the best that we can for the returning soldiers like my brother?" And so it becomes a family affair for me.

Thank you all. Thank you. I am indeed honored to be here. Commander Sursely, other DAV members, thank you again. Good day. (Applause)

MR. REESE: Douglas B. Wadsworth is a Salt Lake City Regional Office Director. He will receive the National Commander's Award recognizing his outstanding performance as a member of the VA's Veterans Benefits Administration.

Douglas has consistently demonstrated extraordinary advocacy on behalf of more than 339,000 veterans in the states of Utah, Alaska and Montana. He epitomizes professionalism and dedication in service of veterans and their families. It is my pleasure to present this award to Douglas Wadsworth. (Applause)

MR. DOUGLAS WADSWORTH: Good morning. Well, like everybody else coming up here I've got to make sure that my delegations from Utah, where are they? (Applause) They're down there.

And Alaska? (Cheer) There he is. (Laughter) You have to understand it's a long way from Alaska. And of course my good friends up in the great state of Montana. (Applause) Good, thank you. Thank you.

Commander Sursely and all of the DAVers here, the general officers of the DAV, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today and accept this recognition.

As the Secretary pointed out yesterday, this is the 75th Anniversary of the VA and as I got up this morning I also learned that it was the 60th Anniversary of the end of World War II in the Pacific.

And what a great day for me to be here and to celebrate with you this great Convention. When President Ronald Reagan signed the bill making the VA a Cabinet he reminded us all that America's debt to those who would fight for her defense doesn't end the day the uniform comes off.

This Department, the Department of Veterans Affairs, with nearly a quarter million men and women serving in it, we all try to give daily expression of the gratitude that we have for all of you and your service to the country.

We try to do that with compassion, with understanding, sensitivity, and above all gratitude. A Medal of Honor recipient in World War II said, "Those of us who have lived have to represent those who didn't make it."

Our veterans do this by honoring the memory of fallen comrades and by giving the generation of Americans a lesson in the values of personal sacrifice, physical and moral strength, and of unselfish courage.

At its best the government services involve just not filling a job but keeping a special faith. And I think us in the VA have a special charge to keep that faith.

I'm proud of my association in the VA. I've been with the VA 37 years. And every day that I go to work I think of the folks that we serve and the opportunities that we have to deliver what our grateful nation has provided to us.

One thing I have learned as being the director for the Salt Lake Regional Office for over 23 years, just like in the military, what you accomplish as an individual is due to the efforts of others.

I have the opportunity to work with a tremendously talented group of people that take the veterans of our country to their heart. I also have an opportunity to work with some real great DAVers who are the National Service Officers that serve with me in helping deliver benefits and representing disabled veterans before the VA and before the Board of Veterans Appeals.

And I can tell you that they are looked upon as the most professional, well-trained and competent people I think that are serving our veterans today. (Applause)

Not only with the support of the DAV Service Officer but I have to take this opportunity to just pay a little respect to my wonderful wife and family for their support of me for over 37 years in the VA and in the military, because without your families — and you all know this — we could not accomplish anything in this life.

And on behalf of the VA employees in Alaska and Utah and Montana, Commander, I appreciate this opportunity and appreciate this award. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. REESE: The National Commander's Award for the Outstanding VA National Cemetery Administration Employee is being presented to Alan S. Sumitomo, a project director at the National Memorial Cemetery in the Pacific, in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Alan created the compensated work therapy program there to help veterans make adjustment back to the community workforce and further — excuse me, I'll try that one more time — and further contribute to society.

Through his personal mentoring of veterans he successfully developed the technical competency, the interpersonal skills of veterans so they could find permanent employment. I would like to present to the National Convention, Mr. Alan Sumitomo. (Applause)

MR. ALAN S. SUMITOMO: Good morning, DAV and aloha. It is a great honor to have been selected for this national award and invited to attend your DAV 2005 National Convention.

I work at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, also known as the "Punchbowl" in Honolulu, Hawaii. Besides my regular duties I also develop and train disabled American veterans who enter the VA's Compensated Work Therapy and Rehabilitation Program, known as CWT.

At the Cemetery we offer hands-on training to these young veterans to improve their technical skills, work habits, and to better their lives.

It gives me a good feeling that upon graduation of the CWT program when these young veterans are selected as permanent employees to work either with the VA or at other federal and state agencies.

The Punchbowl Cemetery promises to continue our support and the VA CWT program to build a better future for America's disabled veterans.

I would like to thank my wife Mona and my two best friends, Larry and Barbara Thornton, who supported me by being here today on this very special occasion. Larry is the cemetery foreman and he's responsible for keeping the Punchbowl Cemetery ever so beautiful.

I would especially like to thank my boss and leader Gene Kasigneti, the director of the Punchbowl, for nominating me and making today the greatest day of my life. Thank you so very much, DAV, and aloha. (Applause)

MR. REESE: Let's give them all another round of applause. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSLEY: Okay, thank you very much, Randy. Next up will be Ken Musselmann, Chairman of the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws. Ken.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Good morning. Can you hear me? Oh, there we go. I know what you're saying, "Here he goes again." (Laughter) This is just one of the things that we have to do to keep our organization strong.

Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Constitution and Bylaws was called to order for its first business session on August 14th, 2005, by Committee advisors, Kenneth Musselmann and Barry Jesinoski.

The first order of business was the election of a Convention Committee Chairman and Secretary. Kenneth Musselmann was elected chairman and Christine Childers was elected secretary.

The Committee then proceeded to review resolutions submitted and I will now report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption at this National Convention.

As always, this is the first reading of the Bylaw changes and there will be no discussion. Discussion will take place if its needed on Wednesday morning.

Resolution Number 217. Article 8, Section 8.4, Paragraph 1. In the twelfth line after the word "practice" insert the following sentence: "Upon request by the National Commander or the National Adjutant a department shall submit satisfactory evidence of the value of assets owned by the department or its affiliated entities as defined in Article 17.1 of these Bylaws" so that the amended paragraph will read as follows:

Paragraph 1. Each state department must keep a complete financial record of all monies received, expended and remitted. All assets of the department must be titled or held in the name of the department.

Fixed assets such as buildings, land and equipment must be maintained in a manner that will prevent waste and abnormal deterioration.

All other assets except for minimal amounts of cash on hand must be safeguarded or deposited in a manner appropriate to the asset and consistent with sound business practice.

Upon request by the National Commander or the National Adjutant, a department shall submit satisfactory evidence of the value of assets owned by the department or its affiliated entities as defined in Article 17.1 of these Bylaws.

Each state department shall have an audit committee composed of at least three members of the state department, excluding the state commander, state senior vice commander, state treasurer, state adjutant, and state finance committee chairman, who shall conduct an annual audit and submit a report of same to the national organization within 90 days after the close of the accounting year which shall be the membership year commencing July 1st and ending June 30th.

All reports will be accomplished on forms provided by national headquarters. All financial reports shall specify and itemize the precise source and expenditure of all funds of the state department during the reporting period.

Broad or general classifications will not be deemed acceptable and may subject the state department to the audit provisions of Article 15, Section 15.7, Paragraph 2, of these Bylaws.

Failure to file annual financial reports will be cause to suspend or revoke the charter of the state department.

If in the opinion of the National Organization a financial audit of the department is necessary and the National Commander authorizes it, such audit will be conducted by the National Organization at department expense.

Resolution Number 218, Article 9. Amend Article 9, Section 9.3, Paragraph 1, in the eleventh line after the word "practice" insert the following sentence: "Upon the request by the National Commander or the National Adjutant a chapter shall submit satisfactory evidence of the value of assets owned by the chapter or its affiliated entities as defined in Article 17.1 of these Bylaws" so that the amended paragraph will read as follows:

Paragraph 1. Each chapter shall keep a complete financial record of all monies received and expended. All assets of the chapter must be titled or held in the name of the chapter.

Fixed assets such as buildings, land and equipment must be maintained in a manner that will prevent waste and abnormal deterioration.

All other assets except for minimal amounts of cash on hand must be safeguarded or deposited in a manner appropriate to the asset and consistent with sound business practice.

Upon request by the National Commander or the National Adjutant, a chapter shall submit satisfactory evidence of the value of assets owned by the chapter or its affiliated entities as defined in Article 17.1 of these Bylaws.

Each chapter shall have an audit committee composed of at least three members of the chapter, excluding the commander, senior vice commander, treasurer, adjutant, or finance committee chairman, who shall conduct an annual audit and if the gross receipts, excluding dues, exceed $10,000 submit the report to the state department and the National Organization within 90 days after the close of the accounting year which shall be the membership year commencing July 1st and ending June 30th.

All reports must be filed on forms provided by National Headquarters. All financial reports shall specify and itemize the precise source and expenditure of all funds of the chapter during the reporting period.

Broad or general classifications will not be deemed acceptable and may subject the chapter to the audit provisions of Article 15, Section 15.7, Paragraph 2, of these Bylaws.

Failure to file annual financial reports will be cause to suspend or revoke the charter of the chapter.

If in the opinion of the National Organization or the state department a financial audit of the chapter is necessary and the National Commander or state commander so authorizes it, such audit will be conducted by the National Organization or the state department at chapter expense.

This provision shall not exempt a chapter from the requirement of filing an annual financial report with the state department.

Resolution 219 amend Article 14, Section 14.2, Paragraph 1. In the second line after the word "be" remove the word "formulated" and substitute the word "approved".

In the fourth line after the word "of" remove the word "proposed" and replace it after the word "budgets". In the seventh line after the word "the" remove the word "proposed". And in the eighth line after the word "budget" add the words "proposed for ratification".

In the eleventh line starting with the word "directions" remove the remainder of the sentence and substitute with the word "explanation" followed by a period and then the new sentence: "The Board of Directors shall approve a revised budget and resubmit it to the Convention for ratification and rejection."

In the last two lines of the paragraph remove the words "National Executive Committee" and substitute with the word "Board of Directors" so that the amended paragraph will read as follows. Now that you all understand that (Laughter) I'll read you how it is really going to sound.

Paragraph 1: This Organization shall operate on a budget which shall be approved by the Board of Directors before each National Convention after consideration of budgets proposed by all department heads.

This budget shall be submitted to the Convention for ratification or rejection as a whole. Copies of the budget proposed for ratification shall be given to each registrant upon registration.

In the event the budget is rejected it shall be returned to the Board of Directors with explanation. The Board of Directors shall approve a revised budget and resubmit it to the Convention for ratification or rejection.

In the event the National Convention should adjourn without approving the budget the Board of Directors shall determine the budget.

Resolution Number 220, amend Article 14, Section 14.9. Omit the title "Blanket Fidelity Bond" and substitute "Safeguarding DAV Assets" and omit the entire paragraph and substitute with new text so that the amended section will read as follows:

Section 14.9: Safeguarding DAV Assets.

It is the responsibility of departments and chapters to protect DAV assets from theft or conversion. This responsibility includes, without limitation, implementation of sound financial management practices and the purchase of insurance to cover theft losses.

In the absence of such insurance, the National Organization shall provide a mechanism by which departments and chapters may be reimbursed for theft or conversion of department or chapter assets by an elected or appointed department or chapter officer.

Such reimbursement shall be limited to $100,000 per occurrence and be subject to the deductible amount of $5,000. Such reimbursement shall be made only upon a full and final adjudication of theft or conversion by a court of competent jurisdiction.

Such reimbursement shall also be subject to the limits and conditions of the reimbursement program as determined by the Board of Directors. This amendment is effective January 1st, 2006.

Resolution 221, amend Article 17, Section 17.1. In the second paragraph after the words "affiliated entities" in the fourth line remove the word "shall" and substitute the word "may".

In the fifth line after the word "created" remove the words "and/or indirectly" and substitute the word "or". In the sixth line after the word "units" remove the remainder of the sentence, "or by persons who control subordinate units."

In the eighth line after the word "activities" remove the word "also" and in the ninth line after the word "unit" remove the word "are" and substitute the words "may also be" so that the amended paragraph will read as follows:

For purposes of this article, "subordinate units" shall include, without limitation, departments, chapter and auxiliaries.

"Affiliated entities" may include, without limitation, organizations created or controlled or supervised by subordinate units.

Entities whose names or activities suggest an association with a subordinate unit may also be 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 purpose.

Resolution 222, amend Article 19, Section 19.3. After the word "Bylaws" in the second line omit the words "or in the Rules of the Convention" and after the word "by" in the third line remove "Roberts Rules of Order, Revised" and substitute "Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised" so that the amended section will read as follows:

All matters of procedure not otherwise provided for in these Bylaws shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

And the last one. There we go. See. (Applause) Resolution 223, amend Article 19, Section 19.5. After the words "voting" in the third line omit the remainder of the sentence and substitute with the words "as prescribed by Convention Rule 21d" so that the amended section will read as follows:

These Bylaws may be amended at any National Convention by a vote of two-thirds of the delegates present and voting as prescribed by Convention Rule 21d.

Commander, that completes the first reading of the Bylaws and for information purposes these changes will be on your seats Wednesday morning for you to look at prior to the final reading of these national changes, these amendments to the Bylaws. Thank you, Commander. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Ken. And we'll hear the final report of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee at Wednesday's business session. Next up for the report on the Committee of Finance is their Chairman, Jerome Krejci. Jerome.

MR. JEROME G. KREJCI: Don't worry, my report is not as long as Ken's. (Laughter) Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Finance was called to order on August 14, 2005, by the Committee advisors, Bobby Williams and Richard E. Patterson.

The first order of business was the election of a Convention Committee Chairman and Secretary. Jerome Krejci, District 14, was elected as chairman and Al Church, District 4, was elected as secretary.

The Committee recommended no resolutions for adoption. The Committee next reviewed the proposed 2006 budget with the Committee advisors and with the assistance of Comptroller Anita F. Blum.

The proposed 2006 budget was referred to the National Convention Committee on Finance by the Board of Directors with the recommendation for adoption.

Following completion of the Committee's review the Committee voted unanimously to recommend to the National Convention adoption of the proposed 2006 budget.

The Committee then expressed its thanks to the Committee advisors, Bobby Williams and Richard E. Patterson, who were aided by Comptroller Anita Blum, for their assistance in performing the work of this important Committee.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Finance and I hereby move for the adoption of the report and ask that the Committee be discharged with the thanks of the National Convention. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Jerome. You have heard the motion. May I have a second?

MR. DONALD A. SIOSS: Mike 3.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 3.

MR. SIOSS: Past National Commander Don Sioss, DAV Chapter 76 New York seconds the motion.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Don. We have a motion and a second. 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; opposed. So ordered. Next up is the Chairman for the Committee for Legislation and Veterans' Rights, Dick Giese. Dick.

MR. RICHARD E. GIESE: Thank you, Commander, and put your mind at ease, I'm Army, not Marine Corps. (Laughter) Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Legislation and Veterans' Rights was called to order on August 14th, 2005, by the Committee advisors Joseph A. Violante and Brian E. Austin.

The first order of business was the election of a Convention Committee Chairman and Secretary. Dick Giese was elected as chairman and Raymond Richards of Massachusetts 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 3, ten-year protection for service-connected evaluations.

Resolution 4, support legislation to remove prohibition against concurrent receipt. Resolution Number 5, opposing any proposal that would offset payments of Social Security Disability Insurance benefits or any other federal benefit by VA compensation.

Resolution 6, opposing lump-sum payments for service-connected disabilities. Number 7, opposing the permanent rounding-down of COLAs in veterans' benefits.

Number 8, opposition to subjecting compensations to means testing. Number 9, oppose recommendations by the Veterans Disability Benefits Commission to balance the budget on the backs of veterans. (Applause)

Resolution Number 16, expanding POW presumptions. Number 17, support open-ended presumptive period for undiagnosed illnesses related to Gulf War veterans.

Number 23, oppose reduction, taxation or elimination of VA benefits. (Applause) Number 24, supporting legislation to repeal the prohibition against service connection for smoking–related illnesses.

Number 25, supporting a change in regulatory requirements for a temporary total rating under Section 4.30, Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations.

Number 26, support legislation to allow all veterans to recover amounts withheld as tax on disability/severance pay. Number 29, support repeal of funding fees for VA home loans.

Number 30, provide an open period to apply for service-disabled veterans insurance, RH. Number 31, mortgage protection life insurance for 100 percent service-connected veterans.

Number 32, exempt disability compensation in determination of eligibility for government programs. Number 33, supporting adequate funding for all VA programs. Number 34, extend space-available air travel aboard military aircraft to 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans.

Number 68, amend Section 143, 1, 4, of Title 26, U.S. Code to include veterans who served after January 1st, 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 88, disability compensation increase. Number 89, compensable rating for certain hearing-impaired veterans. Number 94, eliminate the delimiting date for eligible spouses and surviving spouses for benefits under Chapter 35, Title 38, United States Code.

Number 95, provide educational benefits for dependents of service-connected veterans rated 80 percent or more disabled. Number 102, redefine service in Vietnam to include service in the waters offshore.

Number 114, supporting legislation to provide service-connection to atomic veterans for all recognized radiogenic diseases. Number 116, to compensate Persian Gulf veterans suffering from illnesses circumstantially linked to their service in the Persian Gulf War.

Number 117, oppose redefining service connection. (Applause) Number 121 in support of legislation to provide that Special Separation Benefits or SSB not be withheld from VA disability compensation payments. (Applause)

Number 122, authorize automobile adaptive equipment eligibility to any veteran who has a service-connected disability that inhibits the ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. (Applause)

Number 123, increase the grant for autos or other conveyances available to certain disabled veterans and provide the automobile annual adjustments based on the increase in the cost of living.

Number 124, expand provisions to allow for clothing allowances where there is irreparable damage to clothing from prescription medication for service-connected conditions. (Applause)

Number 125, opposition to the imposition of time limits for filing compensation claims. Number 126, oppose reduction of the appeal period for Department of Veterans Affairs decisions.

Number 127, provide an increase in the specially-adapted housing grant and provide for annual COLAS. Number 128, increase the face value of service-disabled veterans insurance, RH.

Number 131, support legislation to ensure that military retirees receive all benefits which were promised them when they entered the armed forces. (Applause)

Number 149 -- we're getting there -- extend military commissary and exchange privileges and space-available air travel to certain service-connected disabled veterans.

Number 164, provide a temporary total rating for the period that an amputee has a new prosthetic device constructed; 171, oppose regional disbursion of the Board of Veterans Appeals.

Number 196, eliminate the requirements of estimated dose exposure for service-connected claims under the presumptive disease regulations for radiation-exposed veterans.

Number 197, restore protections against unwarranted awards of veterans benefits to third parties in divorce actions. Number 198, support change in law to provide for commencement of payment period for total ratings for compensation as of the date of entitling event.

Number 199, support legislation to require the Court of Appeals for veterans claims to decide cases by panels of at least three judges. Number 200, support legislation to reduce premiums for service-disabled veterans insurance consistent with current life expectancy.

Number 201, supporting legislation to provide for waiver of premiums for supplemental service disabled veterans insurance, RH. Number 202, seeking legislation to exclude veterans life insurance proceeds, dividends and cash value from countable income for purposes of eligibility to benefits and services under other government programs.

Number 203, support an increase in the Department of Veterans Affairs Burial Allowance for service-connected veterans and provide for automatic annual adjustments. (Applause) And, finally, 204, expansion of Chapter 35 educational benefits.

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 National Convention. (Applause)

(The above-mentioned resolutions follow:)

RESOLUTION NO. 003—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 004—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 005—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 006—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, opposes any change in law to provide for lump-sum payments of VA disability compensation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 007—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, opposes permanent rounding down of cost-of-living adjustments for veterans' benefits.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 008—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, opposes any scheme to means test disability and death compensation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 009—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE VETERANS DISABILITY BENEFITS COMMISSION TO BALANCE THE BUDGET ON THE BACKS OF VETERANS

WHEREAS, the fiscal year 2004 Defense Authorization Act passed by Congress has established the Veterans Disability Benefits Commission (VDBC), charged with conducting a study of veterans disability and death benefits; and

WHEREAS, this commission was established as part of negotiations that led to congressional authority for concurrent receipt of disability pay (CRDP) for military retirees and combat-related special compensation (CRSC); and

WHEREAS, the VDBC is heavily represented by former senior military officers from various branches of the Department of Defense due to the requirement that seven of the thirteen members be recipients of the Silver Star medal or higher military decorations; and

WHEREAS, any recommendations from VDBC aimed at cutting disability benefits will be construed as recommendations from "true American heroes," allowing them to become scapegoats for budget-balancing decisions unfavorable to disabled or retired military veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VDBC will be reviewing complicated matters of federal regulations relating to service-connected disabilities contained in title 38, Code of Federal Regulations and other matters of law and medicine; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, believes that promises made to veterans by congressional authority should be kept; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans insists that all meetings of VDBC be open to the public and transcripts of commission activities be provided to any veterans' service organizations that request them; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans vigorously opposes any recommendations by this commission to balance the federal budget on the backs of veterans receiving VA disability compensation, CRDP or CRSC through changes in the federal laws governing veterans' entitlements.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 016—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 017—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, urges that legislation be enacted to extend the presumptive period for service connection for ill-defined and undiagnosed illnesses indefinitely.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 023—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, vigorously supports the protection of veterans' benefits from taxation, cutbacks, and elimination.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 024—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports legislation to repeal the prohibition of service connection for smoking-related illnesses.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 025—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 026—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 029—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, urges Congress to refrain from further increasing the VA Home Loan funding fees and to repeal these fees as soon as possible.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 030—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 031—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 032—LEGISLATIVE

SEEKING LEGISLATION TO EXCLUDE VETERANS' DISABILITY COMPENSATION FROM COUNTABLE INCOME FOR PURPOSES OF ELIGIBILITY TO BENEFITS AND SERVICES UNDER OTHER GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, by virtue of their service and sacrifices, disabled veterans deserve special benefits that are separate and in addition to benefits the government provides to other citizens; and

WHEREAS, compensation for the effects of service-connected disabilities is counted as income in determinations of eligibility for other government benefits and programs, such as low-income housing through the Department of Housing and Urban Development; and

WHEREAS, the value of compensation is negated and its purposes are defeated when a veteran's receipt of compensation is used to reduce or deny entitlement to government benefits or services available to other citizens, and

WHEREAS, when a veteran's compensation is offset against other entitlements, it is in effect deducted from the programs generally available to other citizens, and the veteran really receives nothing additional for his or her disability and is thus not compensated; NOW

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, seeks legislation to exclude veterans' disability compensation from countable income for purposes of entitlement to benefits or services under other government programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 033—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; an

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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, seeks and strongly supports adequate funding for all VA programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 034—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 068—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 088—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 089—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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

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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 095—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 102—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, dioxins 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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports legislation to expressly provide that the phrase "served in the Republic of Vietnam" includes service in the waters offshore.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 114—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports legislation to provide presumptive service connection to atomic veterans for all recognized radiogenic diseases.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 116—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 117—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, opposes changes in current law so as to redefine or restrict service connection.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 121—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports legislation to clarify that SSB payments are not disability payments and therefore should not be recouped from VA disability compensation payments.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 122—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 123—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 124—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 125—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, opposes any change in law to limit the time for filing compensation claims.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 126—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, opposes any change in law to reduce the period for appealing VA claims decisions.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 127—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 128—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 131—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ENSURE THAT MILITARY RETIREES RECEIVE ALL BENEFITS WHICH WERE PROMISED THEM WHEN THEY ENTERED THE ARMED FORCES

WHEREAS, men and women who enter military service set aside their personal lives, goals, and opportunities to wear the uniform and bear the burdens of our Nation's defense; and

WHEREAS, these men and women were promised certain benefits, such as free medical and dental care for life, full retired pay based on longevity of service, and other benefits, to entice them to remain in the military and make it a career; and

WHEREAS, our Government has reneged on many of its promises to provide these benefits to military retirees; and

WHEREAS, our Nation has a compelling moral duty to honor its pledges to military retirees; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports legislation to require our Government to provide military retirees with all benefits promised them.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 149—LEGISLATIVE

EXTEND MILITARY COMMISSARY AND EXCHANGE PRIVILEGES AND SPACE-AVAILABLE AIR TRAVEL TO CERTAIN SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, disabled enlisted personnel who were discharged from military service prior to October 1, 1949—the effective date of the Career Compensation Act—are not entitled to disability retirement from the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, many service-connected disabled veterans have been deprived of the various benefits which all other disabled retired military personnel have enjoyed; and

WHEREAS, due to inflation, service-connected disabled veterans receiving Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) compensation as a sole source of income are experiencing difficulties in keeping pace with the increased cost of living; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports legislation which would extend military commissary and exchange privileges, as well as space-available air travel aboard military aircraft, to enlisted personnel who were discharged from active military service prior to October 1, 1949, for a service-incurred injury or disease rated by the VA as 30 percent or more disabling and who retained at least a 30 percent evaluation for a period of five years from the date of separation from active duty.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 164—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 171—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, categorically opposes any decentralization of the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 196—LEGISLATIVE

ELIMINATE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR DOSE ESTIMATES IN CLAIMS FOR SERVICE CONNECTION BASED ON RADIATION EXPOSURE

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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 197—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 198—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports legislation seeking an exemption of the temporary total ratings from this provision of section 5111 of title 38, United States Code.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 199—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 200—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 201—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 202—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 203—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 204—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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.

* * *

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Dick. We have a motion, may I have a second.

MR. FRANK J. DROGO: Drogo, Braintree 29, Massachusetts, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you. We have a second. We've got it at Mike 1. You've heard the motion and I do have a second. 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; opposed. So ordered.

MR. EDWARD L. SCURRY: Mike 3. Comrade Commander, Ed Scurry, Chapter 67, a point of personal privilege. I would like to commend the Committee for its actions.

However, we as delegates hamstring their activities when you look at the National report and you see that less then 2 percent of our members participate on the action e-list.

Until we start holding our Congressmen accountable for failing to support all these activities we're going to be here every year proposing resolutions that they're not going to support, as simply as that. Everyone in this room if they're not signed up as an e-member list should do it before they leave. Thank you.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you. That's a point well made and we appreciate that. (Applause) Again hearing none all those signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. Next up will be the Committee on Employment Chairman Terry Schow. Terry, excuse me.

MR. TERRY D. SCHOW: Thank you, Commander and good morning. As I listened to the Sergeant-Major this morning, it reminded me of the importance of the employment part of that piece and the fact that we help them with veterans benefits and there has been a fair amount of discussion about public assistance and food stamps and I was happy to hear that emphasis there.

The National Convention Committee on Employment was called to order on August 14th by the Committee advisors, Frank Cummings, Garry Augustine and Brian Lawrence.

The first order of business was the election of a Convention Committee Chairman and Secretary. Terry Schow of Utah was elected as chairman and Jenny DeRaffele was elected secretary from New Jersey.

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 purposes of saving time I will read only the number and purpose of the resolutions.

058, to support veterans' preference in state and local employment.

Number 59, support licensure and certification of active-duty personnel.

Number 60, provide adequate staffing, funding and permanency for veterans employment and/or training, including VETS, NVTI, SBA, DVOP, LVER, and homeless programs.

Number 64, support affirmative action for employment of disabled veterans by government contractors. And that's actually a merge. Sixty-three and 64 will be merged.

66, allow disabled veterans medically retired from military service to count service time toward Civil Service retirement.

Number 71, employment services for disabled military personnel on terminal leave.

Number 72, support outreach and employment of disabled women veterans.

Number 73, restore Servicemen's Occupation Conversion and Training Act or SMOCTA program.

Amend the definition, Number 100, amend the definition of "disabled veteran" for purposes of benefits administered under Chapter 42, Title 38, United States Code.

Number 144, provide vocational rehabilitation and counseling service staff with state-of-the-art equipment. Number 148, ensure guard and reserve members called to active duty are afforded retraining due to disabilities incurred as a result of their military service.

Number 212, support service disabled veteran-owned businesses.

Number 213, increase funding for the TAP and DTAP programs.

Number 214, support the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights or USERRA.

Number 215, support the new five-track system for vocational rehabilitation and employment, VR&E staff. Number 216, support the seamless transition of service members from military life to civilian life.

Comrade Commander, that completes the report of the Committee on Employment and I move the adoption of those resolutions and that the Committee is discharged and with a vote of thanks of the National Convention.

(The above-mentioned resolutions follow:)

RESOLUTION NO. 058—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports veterans' preference in federal, state, and local employment.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 059—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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 supports efforts to increase the civilian labor market's acceptance of the occupational training provided by the military.

RESOLUTION NO. 060—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, seeks and supports adequate funding and permanency for all veterans' employment and training programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 064—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED VETERANS BY FEDERAL AGENCIES AND FEDERAL CONTRACTORS

WHEREAS, federal agencies are required to have an affirmative action program to increase the employment of disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, private businesses fulfilling significant contracts for federal work are required to adhere to veterans' preference laws; and

WHEREAS, the percentage of disabled veterans employed by the aforementioned organizations falls far below the intended goal; and

WHEREAS, current regulations do not provide the necessary enforcement provisions to ensure the intent of Congress is implemented; and

WHEREAS, without proper incentive, federal agencies will continue to disregard affirmative action plans for the employment of disabled veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, urges Congress to enact legislation that provides enforcement measures to ensure that hiring officials fulfill existing veterans' preference laws and affirmative action plans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 066—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 071—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 072—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, urges Congress to establish special programs for disabled women veterans in need of employment assistance under the Workforce Investment Act.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 073—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 costs 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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, goes on record urging Congress to reauthorize SMOCTA and provide proper funding for this program.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 100—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 144—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 148—LEGISLATIVE

ENSURE THAT GUARD AND RESERVE MEMBERS CALLED TO ACTIVE DUTY ARE AFFORDED RETRAINING DUE TO DISABILITIES INCURRED AS THE RESULT OF MILITARY SERVICE

WHEREAS, National Guard and Reserve members who are called to active duty and subsequently become disabled are not entitled to vocational rehabilitation and employment (Chapter 31) if in the course of their military career they used the G.I. Bill and consumed the maximum of 48 months of education benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports legislation ensuring that those individuals called to active duty and subsequently disabled as the result of their service be entitled to education and employment benefits under Chapter 31 sufficient to return them to full employment.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 212—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT SERVICE DISABLED VETERAN OWNED BUSINESSES

WHEREAS, small business ownership is the backbone of our Nation's economy; and

WHEREAS, small businesses create approximately three-quarters of new jobs in any given year, according to the U.S. Census Bureau; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 300,000 service-disabled veterans are small business owners; and

WHEREAS, Congress enacted Public Law 106-50, the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999, to help improve opportunities for veteran-owned small businesses, and to establish the goal that all Federal agencies award at least 3 percent of both prime and sub-procurement contracts to such businesses; and

WHEREAS, no other category of business owner has contributed more to our Nation, and no other category of business owner is more deserving of special consideration for Federal contract procurement opportunities; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports the statutory requirements of Public Law 106-50 and future legislative measures supporting disabled veteran owned businesses.

RESOLUTION NO. 213—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 Program (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 of separations from active duty per year; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, urges Congress to make available additional funding to effectively provide vocational guidance to all separating military personnel.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 214—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 215—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT THE NEW FIVE-TRACK SYSTEM FOR THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (VR&E) STAFF

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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 216—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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.

* * *

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Terry, for that report. (Applause) You have head the motion, may I have a second.

MR. SIOSS: Mike 3.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 3.

MR. SIOSS: Past National Commander Don Sioss, 76, New York, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Don. We have a motion and a second and 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 signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Ladies and gentlemen, please rise and I will ask Chaplain Stump to lead us in a closing prayer.

CHAPLAIN STUMP: May the Spirit of the Lord go with you and bless you and may the spirit of the activities of this great organization continue to encourage us until we assemble again. In His Name we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Chaplain. The Convention stands in recess until 9:00 Wednesday morning. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 11:05 o'clock, a.m., August 15, 2005.)

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION

August 17, 2005

- - -

The Third Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans 84th National Convention reconvened in the Events Center of Bally's Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada, Wednesday morning, August 17, 2005, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by National Commander James E. Sursely.

COMMANDER SURSELY: The Convention will please come to order. Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Pledge of Allegiance)

COMMANDER SURSLEY: Chaplain Stump, will you please lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN STUMP: A word from the Lord to us all this morning, trust in the Lord and do good so thou shalt dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord and He shall give thee the desires of thy heart.

Our Father, we are excited about this Convention. We are excited about all of the things that have been happening. We're excited about the opportunity to come together again.

We invite and invoke Your presence with us, Your Spirit upon us and Your guidance to us. Bless our Adjutant, our Commander, our officers and staff. At this time of the Convention they need Your strength that they might complete the task that us set before us.

Bless us for Your glory. Bless every man and woman here in this Convention. Bless their families at home. When all has been said and done, give us safe passage home that we might continue the great work for disabled American veterans and their families. For God's glory and in his presence we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Amen. Thank you, Chaplain. I would like to 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, a delegate must state their name, chapter number and the state they represent. I will now call on the Credentials Committee for a partial report, Mary.

MS. BENCIVENGA: Good morning. National Commander, National Officers, staff, it's good to see you. The Credentials Committee met this morning in the Skyview Number 1 at Bally's Hotel.

Roll call showed 1,527 delegates, 57 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 August 16th, 2005.

At the present time we have 559 chapters, 47 departments, 32 National Officers, 12 Past National Commanders, for a total of 1,527 delegates and 57 alternates for a total vote of 10,758. This completes the partial report of the Credentials Committee, Commander.

COMMANDER SURSELY: I will now call on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and their chairman, Ken Musselmann. Ken.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Good morning. I know how excited you are to see me up here again. (Laughter) And that's kind of why I'm hiding over here from this section over here, so, you know. But you all have copies of your Bylaws. They were on your

(Responses of "No.")

MR. MUSSELMANN: What do you mean, no?

(Responses of "No.")

MR. MUSSELMANN: Does anybody have copies of their Bylaws? Well, there they are. Okay, look around. They're on seats. You're probably sitting on them. Look on the empty seats, on the floor.

(Responses of "No.")

MR. MUSSELMANN: Well, then listen hard and I'll read slow. (Laughter) Commander and delegates, I will now proceed with the second reading of the proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws which are recommended for adoption.

Resolution Number 217. Article 8, Section 8.4, Paragraph 1. In the twelfth line after the word "practice" insert the following sentence: "Upon request by the National Commander or the National Adjutant a department shall submit satisfactory evidence of the value of assets owned by the department or its affiliated entities as defined in Article 17.1 of these Bylaws" so that the amended paragraph will read as follows:

Paragraph 1. Each state department must keep a complete financial record of all monies received, expended and remitted. All assets of the department must be titled or held in the name of the department.

Fixed assets such as buildings, land and equipment must be maintained in a manner that will prevent waste and abnormal deterioration.

All other assets except for minimal amounts of cash on hand must be safeguarded or deposited in a manner appropriate to the asset and consistent with sound business practice.

Upon request by the National Commander or the National Adjutant, a department shall submit satisfactory evidence of the value of assets owned by the department or its affiliated entities as defined in Article 17.1 of these Bylaws.

Each state department shall have an audit committee composed of at least three members of the state department, excluding the state commander, state senior vice commander, state treasurer, state adjutant, and state finance committee chairman, who shall conduct an annual audit and shall submit a report of same to the National Organization within 90 days after the close of the accounting year which shall be the membership year commencing July 1st and ending June 30th.

All reports will be accomplished on forms provided by National Headquarters. All financial reports shall specify and itemize the precise source and expenditure of all funds of the state department during the reporting period.

Broad or general classifications will not be deemed acceptable and may subject the state department to the audit provisions of Article 15, Section 15.7, Paragraph 2, of these Bylaws.

Failure to file annual financial reports will be cause to suspend or revoke the charter of the state department.

If in the opinion of the National Organization a financial audit of the department is necessary and the National Commander authorizes it, such audit will be conducted by the National Organization at department expense.

Commander, I move for the adoption of Resolution Number 217.

COMMANDER SURSELY: We have a motion, do I hear a second? Mike 1. Is Mike 2 on?

MR. GARY A. CROSSLAND: Thank you, Commander, Gary Crossland, Past State Commander, Chapter 6, California, seconds.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you. We have a motion and a second, all those in favor, signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Resolution Number 218. Article 9, Section 9.3, Paragraph 1, in the eleventh line after the word "practice" insert the following sentence: "Upon the request by the National Commander or the National Adjutant a chapter shall submit satisfactory evidence of the value of assets owned by the chapter or its affiliated entities as defined in Article 17 of these Bylaws" so that the amended paragraph will read as follows:

Paragraph 1. Each chapter shall keep a complete financial record of all monies received and expended. All assets of the chapter must be titled or held in the name of the chapter.

Fixed assets such as buildings, land and equipment must be maintained in a manner that will prevent waste and abnormal deterioration.

All other assets, except for minimal amounts of cash on hand, must be safeguarded or deposited in a manner appropriate to the asset and consistent with sound business practice.

Upon request by the National Commander or the National Adjutant, a chapter shall submit satisfactory evidence of the value of assets owned by the chapter or its affiliated entities as defined in Article 17.1 of these Bylaws.

Each chapter shall have an audit committee composed of at least three members of the chapter, excluding the commander, senior vice commander, treasurer, adjutant and finance committee chairman, who shall conduct an annual audit, and if gross receipts, excluding dues, exceed $10,000, shall submit a report to the state department and the National Organization within 90 days after the close of the accounting year, which shall be the membership year commencing July 1st and ending June 30th.

All reports must be filed on forms provided by National Headquarters. All financial reports shall specify and itemize the precise source and expenditure of all funds of the chapter during the reporting period.

Broad or general classifications will not be deemed acceptable and may subject the chapter to the audit provisions of Article 15, Section 15.7, Paragraph 2, of these Bylaws.

Failure to file annual financial reports will be cause to suspend or revoke the chapter charter.

If, in the opinion of the National Organization or the state department, a financial audit of the chapter is necessary and the National Commander or state commander so authorizes it, such audit will be conducted by the National Organization or the state department at chapter expense.

This provision shall not exempt a chapter from the requirement of filing an annual financial report with the state department.

Commander, I move for the adoption of Resolution 218.

COMMANDER SURSELY: You've heard the motion. Do I have a second?

MR. CROSSLAND: Mike 1.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 1.

MR. CROSSLAND: Gary Crossland, Past State Commander, Chapter 6, California, seconds.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Gary. We have a motion and second. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Resolution 219, to amend Article 14, Section 14.2, Paragraph 1. In the second line after the word "be" remove the word "formulated" and substitute with the word "approved".

In the fourth line after the word "of" remove the word "proposed" and replace it after the word "budgets". In the seventh line after the word "the" remove the word "proposed". And in the eighth line after the word "budget" add the words "proposed for ratification".

In the eleventh line starting with the word "directions" remove the remainder of the sentence and substitute the word "explanation" followed by a period and then the new sentence: "The Board of Directors shall approve a revised budget and submit it to the Convention for ratification or rejection."

In the last two lines of the paragraph, remove the words "National Executive Committee" and substitute with the words "Board of Directors" so that the amended paragraph will read as follows:

Paragraph 1: This Organization shall operate on a budget which shall be approved by the Board of Directors before each National Convention after consideration of budgets proposed by all departments.

This budget shall be submitted to the Convention for ratification or rejection as a whole. Copies of the budget proposed for ratification shall be given to each registrant upon registration.

In the event the budget is rejected, it shall be returned to the Board of Directors with explanation. The Board of Directors shall approve a revised budget and resubmit it to the Convention for ratification or rejection.

In the event the National Convention should adjourn without approving the budget, the Board of Directors shall determine the budget.

Commander, I move for the adoption of Resolution 219.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, you've heard the motion, may I have a second?

MR. CROSSLAND: Mike 1.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 1.

MR. CROSSLAND: Gary Crossland, Past State Commander, California 6, seconds.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, we have a motion and a second. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Resolution Number 220, to amend Article 14, Section 14.9. Omit the title "Blanket Fidelity Bond" and substitute "Safeguarding DAV Assets" and omit the entire paragraph and substitute with new text so that the amended section will read as follows:

Section 14.9: Safeguarding DAV Assets.

It is the responsibility of departments and chapters to protect DAV assets from theft or conversion. This responsibility includes, without limitation, implementation of sound financial management practices and the purchase of insurance to cover theft losses.

In the absence of such insurance, the National Organization shall provide a mechanism by which departments and chapters may be reimbursed for the theft or conversion of department or chapter assets by an elected or appointed department or chapter officer.

Such reimbursement shall be limited to $100,000 per occurrence and be subject to the deductible amount of $5,000. Such reimbursement shall be made only upon a full and final adjudication of theft or conversion by a court of competent jurisdiction.

Such reimbursement shall also be subject to the limits and conditions of the reimbursement program as determined by the Board of Directors. This amendment is effective January 1st, 2006.

Commander, I move for the adoption of Resolution 220.

COMMANDER SURSELY: You have heard the motion, may I have a second? Mike 1.

MR. CROSSLAND: Mike 1, Gary Crossland, Past State Commander, California 6, seconds.

COMMANDER SURSELY: We have a motion and a second, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Comrade Commander.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 2.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Delegate from Chapter Number 1, Hawaii. Past commanders have no standing at this Convention. If they come to the thing, they must give their delegate from what chapter, period.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, go ahead, Ken.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Resolution 221, to amend Article 17, Section 17.1. In the second paragraph after the words "affiliated entities" in the fourth line remove the word "shall" and substitute the word "may".

In the fifth line after the word "created" remove the words "and/or indirectly" and substitute the word "or". In the sixth line after the word "units" remove the remainder of the sentence, "or by persons who control subordinate units."

In the eighth line after the word "activities" remove the word "also", and in the ninth line after the word "unit" remove the word "are" and substitute the words "may also be" so that the amended paragraph will read as follows:

For purposes of this article, "subordinate units" shall include, without limitation, departments, chapter and auxiliaries.

"Affiliated entities" may include, without limitation, organizations created or controlled or supervised by subordinate units.

Entities whose names or activities suggest an association with a subordinate unit may also be 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.

Commander, I move for the adoption of Resolution 221.

COMMANDER SURSELY: You have head the motion, may I have a second?

MR. VINCENT MORRISON: Mike 3.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 3.

MR. MORRISON: Comrade Commander, Vincent Morrison, Chapter 9, Houston, Texas, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, we have a motion and a second. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Resolution 222, amend Article 19, Section 19.3. After the word "Bylaws" in the second line omit the words "or in the Rules of the Convention" and after the word "by" in the third line remove "Roberts Rules of Order, Revised" and substitute "Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised" so that the amended section will read as follows:

All matters of procedure not otherwise provided in these Bylaws shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

Commander, I move for the adoption of Resolution Number 222.

COMMANDER SURSELY: You have heard the motion, may I have a second?

MR. CROSSLAND: Mike 1.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 1.

MR. CROSSLAND: Gary Crossland, Past State Commander California, Delegate, Chapter 6, seconds.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Gary. You have heard the motion and a second. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Finally, the last one. Yea. Me, too. Article 19, Resolution Number 223, to amend Article 19, Section 19.5. After the word "voting" in the third line, omit the remainder of the sentence and substitute with the words "as prescribed by Convention Rule 21d" so that the amended section will read as follows:

These Bylaws may be amended at any National Convention by a vote of two-thirds of the delegates present and voting as prescribed by Convention Rule 21d.

Commander, I move for the adoption of Resolution 223.

COMMANDER SURSELY: You have heard the motion, may I have a second?

MR. CROSSLAND: Mike 1, Commander.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 1.

MR. CROSSLAND: Gary Crossland, California, Past State Commander, Chapter 6 delegate, seconds.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, we have a motion and a second. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Commander, this completes the report of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, and I would like to give personal thanks to all those that served on this Convention Committee. I, at this time, would like the Committee dismissed with the thanks of the Convention and I so move.

COMMANDER SURSELY: You have heard the motion. May I have a second?

MR. MORRISON: Mike 3.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 3.

MR. MORRISON: Vincent Morrison Chapter 9, Houston, Texas, seconds that motion.

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

Next, we will have a report on the Committee on General Resolution and Membership, Tim Hammons chairman, Tim.

MR. TIM E. HAMMONS: Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on General Resolutions was called to order on August 14, 2005, by the committee advisors, Rick Surratt and Adrian Atizado.

The first order of business was the election of a Convention Committee chairman and secretary. Chester Wisnesky Jr. was elected as the chairman, and Sara Royse 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 this National Convention.

For the purpose of saving time, I will read only the number and purpose of the resolution. 035, support a strong national defense; 036, oppose any authorization of use of members of the armed forces for human experimentations without their knowledge and informed consent.

038, encourage all disabled veterans to become registered voters and vote. 041, support former POW slave labor claims against Japanese firms. 083, DOD eliminate designation of missing/captured and maintain the current designation of POW/MIA.

091, to urge DOD to provide full military honors for burials at national cemeteries. 133, condemn public desecration of the flag of the United States. (Applause)

205, seeking the immediate release of any American who may still be captive from World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. 206, support the American Veterans Disabled For Life Commemorative Coin Act.

207, support construction of a memorial to commemorate the sacrifices of American disabled veterans. 208, support the construction of a courthouse for the U.S. Court of Appeals for veterans claims.

209, support construction of an underground Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center. 210, support programs in our schools to educate children on the special contributions and sacrifices of veterans.

224, appreciation to National Commander James E. Sursely. 225, appreciation to all responsible for the success of the 84th National Convention. 226, appreciation to Bally's Las Vegas for the success of the 84th National Convention.

According to tradition, I will read Resolution Number 224, appreciation to National Commander Sursely, in its entirety.

Expressing appreciation to National Commander Jim Sursely. WHEREAS, Disabled American Veterans National Commander Jim Sursely, a native son of Minnesota, displayed the consummate level of courage and devotion while serving our nation in the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, Commander Sursely sustained catastrophic injuries on the battlefield in the Republic of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, Commander Sursely's indomitable spirit, which contributed to his early success and prevalence as a football player, carried him through months of extensive rehabilitative therapy; and

WHEREAS, Commander Sursely ascended beyond the liberating impact of his battlefield injuries and earned a Collegiate degree and established a successful professional career in real estate; and

WHEREAS, Commander Sursely utilized his innate talents and determination to fight the welfare and well-being of fellow disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, Commander Sursely's quiet confidence and leadership in numerous positions at all levels of our organization inspired countless others to strive to ensure that disabled veterans receive quality health care that adequate benefits; and

WHEREAS, Commander Sursely answered the call of more than one million members of the DAV to serve as National Commander and he did so with distinction and honor;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14 through August 17, 2005, expresses its members' profound appreciation and heartfelt gratitude to Commander Sursely for his invaluable assistance to the disabled veterans, their families, and the DAV; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we also salute and extend our special appreciation to Commander Sursely's wife, Jeannie, and their family for their support and sacrifices during his year as the DAV National Commander.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee of the General Resolutions, and I move to adopt these resolutions.

(The above-mentioned resolutions follow:)

RESOLUTION NO. 035—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, goes on record urging Congress to provide adequate funds for the defense of our Nation both at home and abroad.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 036 —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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, opposes any rule or provision that would authorize use of servicemembers for human experimentation without their knowledge and informed consent.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 038 —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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 041—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 083—LEGISLATIVE

TO OPPOSE REPLACEMENT OF "PRISONER OF WAR/MISSING IN ACTION" DESIGNATION WITH "MISSING/CAPTURED

WHEREAS, servicemembers either forcibly detained or interned by an enemy or foreign government, the agents of either, or a hostile force or servicemembers in a missing status and unaccounted for have been classified as a prisoner of war/missing in action (POW/MIA); and

WHEREAS, these terms are familiar to and carry special meaning for the American public, and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense has begun to use in the place of POW/MIA a "missing/captured" designation; and

Whereas, this missing/captured is not a status recognized for protections under the Geneva Conventions; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, urges the President of the United States and the Congress to take such action as necessary to ensure the Department of Defense maintains the designation POW/MIA and eliminates the designation of Missing/Captured.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 091—LEGISLATIVE

TO PROVIDE FOR FULL MILITARY HONORS AT ALL NATIONAL CEMETERIES

WHEREAS, many active and open National Cemeteries do not have the means to provide full military honors to our departed fellow comrades; and

WHEREAS, many of these active and open cemeteries do not have local veterans organizations in proximity to the cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, those National Cemeteries that do receive the support of local veterans organizations to provide military honors are beginning to experience a severe shortage of volunteers; and

WHEREAS, with the aging of our volunteer members who do perform military honors, the stress and strain of multiple burials outdoors in the elements and for long periods of time is taking its toll on our volunteer members; and

WHEREAS, younger active duty personnel who are trained in military protocol would be better suited to provide such military honors, the last tribute to our departed comrades, regardless of rank; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, urges the Department of Defense to establish a cadre of active duty personnel stationed near National Cemeteries to perform military honors.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 133—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 205—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 1,800 in Southeast Asia from the Vietnam War, one from the Persian Gulf War, who have not been forgotten; and

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans was extremely disappointed with the timing of our government's decision to normalize relations with the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV), prior to the fullest possible accounting of our POW/MIAs from Southeast Asia; and

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans believes that the SRV can increase its unilateral efforts to account for Americans still missing in action, especially those who were last known alive in captivity; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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 government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to increase its unilateral efforts to account for American POW/MIAs, including locating and making available remains of Americans last known alive in captivity that have not previously been returned.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 206—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 Disabled American Veterans 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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports and solicits the support of all members of Congress for enactment of, the "American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act."

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 207—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 Disabled American Veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 208—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT THE CONSTRUCTION OF A COURTHOUSE FOR THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS

WHEREAS, veterans and other persons claiming benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs have benefited substantially and materially from the jurisprudence of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims ("Court"); and

WHEREAS, the Court has existed for more than fourteen years; and

WHEREAS, the Courtroom, chambers, and other space is inadequate to meet the present and future needs of the Court and those it serves; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interests of veterans and their dependents that the Court be accorded the same respect enjoyed by other appellate courts of the United States; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, shall take such actions as may be necessary or advisable in support of legislation to authorize and fund the construction of a suitable and appropriate courthouse for the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 209—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT CONSTRUCTION OF UNDERGROUND VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER

WHEREAS, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund has worked for more than 25 years to bring honor and recognition to those who served and sacrificed in the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, the Memorial Fund has worked tirelessly for more than three years to pass legislation allowing for an educational facility to be built near the Memorial to enhance the visitor experience; and

WHEREAS, on November 17, 2003, President George W. Bush signed into law H.R. 1442, authorizing construction of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center; and

WHEREAS, the legislation stipulates that the Center be built "underground" and located "at or near the Memorial;" and

WHEREAS, the Memorial Fund commissioned the current Architect-of-Record for the Memorial, the original landscape architects and designers of Constitution Gardens to conduct a site analysis; and

WHEREAS, only one site—the open space in the roughly triangular land area between Henry Bacon Drive, 23rd Street, Constitution Avenue and the Lincoln Memorial—met all four of the mandatory criteria to: preserve critical views of the National Mall without intrusion; allow the Memorial and the Center to be mutually supporting; preserve the tranquility of the park's special quiet spaces within the Memorial grounds; and define a direct, continuous experience from the Center to the Flagpole Plaza; and

WHEREAS, the Memorial Fund will be responsible for raising the funds to build the Center, which will cost more than $50 million; and

WHEREAS, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center has the support of many prominent Americans, including former Secretary of State and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin L. Powell, USA (Ret.), who serves as Honorary Chairman of the Center's national fundraising campaign; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports the construction of the underground Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center on the land area between Henry Bacon Drive, 23rd Street, Constitution Avenue and the Lincoln Memorial.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 210—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT PROGRAMS IN OUR SCHOOLS TO EDUCATE CHILDREN ON THE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND SACRIFICES OF VETERANS

WHEREAS, a strong Armed Forces is vital to the continued strength, security, and prosperity of our great Nation; and

WHEREAS, we can maintain a strong Armed Forces only so long as young Americans understand the importance of military service and are willing to make the extraordinary personal sacrifices consequent to such service; and

WHEREAS, young Americans come to understand the essentiality of our Armed Forces only by having instilled in them patriotism, national pride, and a sense of the value of military service; and

WHEREAS, we can give them a sense of the value of military service only by educating them about the high costs of freedom paid by noble and brave veterans who were willing to give their lives or health in the defense of their Nation and by demonstrating that we pay those veterans the highest honors; and

WHEREAS, our schools provide the best resource for educating our children about veterans' special status and the debt we owe them; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports the deployment of programs in our country's schools to educate our children about the contributions and sacrifices of veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 224—ADMINISTRATIVE

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION TO NATIONAL COMMANDER JIM SURSELY

WHEREAS, Disabled American Veterans National Commander Jim Sursely, a native son of Minnesota, displayed the consummate level of courage and devotion while serving our Nation in the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, Commander Sursely sustained catastrophic injuries on the field of battle in the Republic of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, Commander Sursely's indomitable spirit, which contributed to his earlier success and prevalence as a football player, carried him through months of extensive rehabilitative therapy; and

WHEREAS, Commander Sursely ascended beyond the debilitating impact of his battlefield injuries and earned a collegiate degree and established a successful professional career in real estate; and

WHEREAS, Commander Sursely utilized his innate talents and determination to fight for the welfare and well-being of fellow disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, Commander Sursely's quiet confidence and leadership, in numerous positions at all levels of our organization, inspired countless others to strive to ensure that disabled veterans receive quality health care and adequate benefits; and

WHEREAS, Commander Sursely answered the call of the more than one million members of the DAV to serve as National Commander, and he did so with distinction and honor; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, expresses its members' profound appreciation and heartfelt gratitude to Commander Sursely for his invaluable assistance to disabled veterans, their families, and the DAV; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we also salute and extend our special appreciation to Commander Sursely's wife, Jeannie, and their family, for their support and sacrifices during his year as DAV's National Commander.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 225—ADMINISTRATIVE

APPRECIATION TO ALL WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 84TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the success of the 84th DAV National Convention convened in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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 Gerald Ogle; 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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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 Las Vegas, 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, Gerald Ogle, and his entire Committee for providing personalized assistance to our friends and delegates during our Convention stay.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 226—ADMINISTRATIVE

APPRECIATION TO BALLY'S LAS VEGAS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 84TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the excellent service and ambience of the Bally's Las Vegas Hotel contributed greatly to the success of the 84th DAV National Convention, convened in Las Vegas, 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 resort setting and numerous amenities helped make the 84th National Convention a truly memorable experience; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, expresses its deepest appreciation for the Bally's Las Vegas Hotel and to its entire staff for their friendly, personalized attention which helped make the convention a resounding success.

* * *

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Tim. You have heard the motion , may I have a second?

MR. MORRISON: Mike 3.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 3.

MR. MORRISON: Comrade Commander, Vincent Morrison, Chapter 9, Houston, Texas, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you. You have heard the motion. We have a second. In accordance with Rule 9, now is the time for any rejected resolutions to be read. Are there any rejected resolutions that you wish read? Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. Thank you very much, Tim, for that great report. (Applause)

Next, we have the Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services, Chairman Jimmie Snider. Jimmie.

MR. JIMMIE JOE SNIDER Comrade Commander and delegates, good morning. The National Convention Committee of Hospitals and Voluntary Services was called to order on August 14th, 2005, by the committee advisors, the lovely Delphine Metcalf-Foster and Joy Ilem.

The first order of business was the election of a Convention Committee chairman and secretary. Jimmie Snider was selected as chairman. Sal Uccello was selected as secretary.

The Committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted, and I will now report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption by this National Convention.

For the purpose of saving time, I will read only the number and the purpose of the resolution. Resolution 043, support legislation to make VA health care funding mandatory. Number 045, increase the amount allowed for fee-based care. 012, oppose means testing service-connected veterans for VA health care.

013, support objective of NASVH to receive a per diem payment from VA that equals 50 percent of national average providing care in state veterans homes; urge the President and Congress to pledge full support to the state veterans home program, as it is the most cost-effective nursing care alternative available to the VA.

044, ensure timely access to quality health care and services. 046, support equal medical services and benefits for women veterans. 187, support legislation to include dental care as part of the Veterans Uniform Health Care benefit package.

048, VA demonstration project for Alzheimer's facilities. 179, support enhancement of medical services through the Capital Assets Realignment for Enhanced Service process.

057, support separate appropriations for VA national rehab special events. 182, support repeal of copayments for medical care prescriptions provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

134, ensure service-connected veterans receive priority for care within the VA medical system. 184, to support disabled veterans 70 percent service-connected or greater to reside in state veterans nursing homes with VA covering the full cost of care.

Number 136, support the provision of comprehensive Department of Veterans Affairs health care services to entitled veterans.

137, support enhancement of long-term healthcare to service-connected veterans. Number 140, oppose VA recovering third-party payments for the treatment of a veteran's service-connected disability.

Number 141, urge the VA to impose guidelines to preclude inappropriate use of non-physicians for disability examinations. Number 153, CHAMPVA benefits to be extended to dependent children, if enrolled as full-time students until graduation.

Number 154, implement recommendations of VA advisory committee and assisted living housing for older veterans as a priority within the CARES program. Number 181, support the provisions of emergency health are in non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities to veterans enrolled in the VA health are system.

Number 183, support repeal of beneficiary travel pay deductible for service-connected disabled veterans and increase beneficiary travel reimbursement rates.

Number 190, 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 193, oppose recommendation that military retired veterans be prohibited from receiving healthcare from both Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs facilities.

Number 194, reduce catastrophic cap on CHAMPVA services. Number 195, support competitive salary and pay levels for Department of Veterans Affairs physicians, pharmacists, dentists and nurses.

Number 211, extend eligibility for free healthcare for combat veterans for conditions potentially related to their combat service from two years to five years; extend appreciation to Golden Technologies Veterans' Assistance Division for the success of the 84th National Convention.

Number 228, extend appreciation to the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System, Las Vegas, Nevada, for the success of the 84th National Convention.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee of Hospitals and Volunteer Services and I move the adoption of these resolutions and that the committee be discharged with the thanks from the National Commander and thanks to the secretary, Sal. (Applause)

(The above-mentioned resolutions follow:)

RESOLUTION NO. 012—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE MEANS TESTING SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE

WHEREAS, Public Law 104-262 requires noncompensable service-connected disabled veterans to be means tested in order to receive treatment in a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facility; and

WHEREAS, countless thousands of veterans have relied on the ability to receive care at VA medical facilities for decades and now face the possibility of losing access to VA medical care because of income levels, consequently causing them undue financial hardship, pain and suffering; and

WHEREAS, these noncompensable service-connected disabled veterans have been relegated to the lowest eligibility categories for care and, in some cases, below nonservice-connected veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports the exclusion of service-connected disabled veterans from the requirements of means testing for treatment or service received at VA medical facilities and the inclusion of noncompensable service-connected disabled veterans in Priority Group 3.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 013—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 119 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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 043—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* Service 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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 044—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, urges the VA to consider, as a top priority, the reduction of waiting times and timely access to patient care and medical services.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 045—LEGISLATIVE

INCREASE THE REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR FEE BASIS 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; and

WHEREAS, service-connected veterans, in some cases, must cover part of the cost of their care for a service-connected condition because of the limited rates of reimbursement through the fee basis program; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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 and to fully cover the cost of treatment approved through the fee basis program for a service-connected condition.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 046—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT EQUAL MEDICAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS FOR WOMEN VETERANS

WHEREAS, women now comprise 20% of new military recruits, 15% of active duty forces, and 17% of Reserve and National Guard forces; and

WHEREAS, women are among the fastest growing segment of new users in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system; and

WHEREAS, they represent new challenges to the design and delivery of health care, which has traditionally focused on men; and

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 by their service in Afghanistan and Iraq; and

WHEREAS, a United States Accountability Office report found that problems continue to confront women veterans when attempting to gain access to VA health care services; and

WHEREAS, VA still struggles to fully ensure privacy and a safe environment for women veterans at all VA facilities; and

WHEREAS, many women seeking VA health care find certain 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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, seeks to ensure the provision of health care services, inclusive of gender-specific services, by VA to eligible women veterans are provided 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 and safety issues relating to the treatment of women veterans and to proactively seek innovative methods to ensure women veterans receive the treatment and specialized services they so rightly deserve.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 048—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT AN ALZHEIMER'S FACILITY FOR VETERANS UNDER A CONGRESSIONALLY AUTHORIZED DEMONSTRATION PROJECT THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, based on national prevalence rates applied to the veterans population, it is estimated in 2005 that there are 538,625 veterans with dementia, including 240,460 enrolled for VA health care and 142,286 who receive VA health care services; and

WHEREAS, Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia accounting for at least 50 percent of cases; and

WHEREAS, a VA facility designated for veterans with Alzheimer's would address the limitations of VA's decentralized dementia program; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 057—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT CONGRESSIONAL FUNDING FOR THE CREATION OF A DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REHABILITATIVE SPECIAL EVENTS OFFICE

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, the VA currently has an office within the Office of Public Affairs tasked with oversight of the national rehabilitative special events; 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 of many severely disabled veterans and, as such, these events should be the responsibility of the Veterans Health Administration, not the Office of Public Affairs; 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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports legislation to create an office within the Veterans Health Administration to oversee these rehabilitative special events and 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. 134—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS PRIORITY ACCESS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) directives 2002-059 and 2003-062 outline policies and actions required in support of the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) commitment to providing priority access to non-emergency outpatient medical services and inpatient hospital care for veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 50% or greater or to veterans who require care for a service-connected disability regardless of the percentage of service-connected rating; and

WHEREAS, many VA facilities are struggling to fulfill this mandate because of budget pressures and increasing patient workloads; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports strict enforcement by network and medical center directors of current policies giving service-connected veterans priority access to care unless compelling medical reasons indicate otherwise.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 136—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports legislation that embodies the concepts and principles enumerated above and establishes entitlement to clearly defined VA health care services for veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 137—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM HEALTH CARE TO SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED 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 develop a strategic long-term care plan to invigorate and re-engineer the core of VA-operated services to meet the increasing demand for long-term care services; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention, assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports legislation to expand the comprehensive program of extended care services for service-connected disabled veterans regardless of their disability rating.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 140—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 the 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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 141—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 153—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO EXTEND CHAMPVA ENTITLEMENT UNTIL GRADUATION OF FULL-TIME STUDENTS

WHEREAS, children of certain veterans are provided medical care under the CHAMPVA program; and

WHEREAS, a child's eligibility, which otherwise terminates at age 18, continues to age 23 when such child is pursuing an approved full-time course of education; and

WHEREAS, while attending school, these children generally continue to be dependent upon the veteran or surviving spouse and are unable to provide for their own medical care; and

WHEREAS, continuing medical care eligibility under CHAMPVA until graduation would further the goal of aiding a veteran's child while pursuing an education and alleviate financial hardship that might otherwise interrupt a child's education; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports legislation to extend eligibility to CHAMPVA until an eligible child's graduation from an approved course of full-time education.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 154—LEGISLATIVE

PROVIDE ASSISTED LIVING PROGRAMS FOR OLDER VETERANS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has acknowledged that there is a great and growing need for long-term care services for elderly and disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, between 2004 and 2012, the total number of veterans enrolled in the veterans health care system aged 85 and older is projected to increase from 278,000 to over 681,000, an increase of 145 percent; and

WHEREAS, VA embraces the concept that long-term care services for elderly veterans should be provided in the least restrictive setting compatible with a veteran's medical condition and personal circumstances; and

WHEREAS, assisted living facilities provide help with activities of daily living in a residential setting for veterans who cannot live independently but do not require the more costly and restrictive 24-hour skilled nursing care provided in traditional nursing homes; and

WHEREAS, VA's report to Congress of its Assisted Living Pilot Program indicated high satisfaction and reduced cost through assisted living pilot programs in seven VA medical centers in four states; and

WHEREAS, the VA's Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) process was designed and executed to review projected needs for VA capital investments and has identified numerous structures and land not needed for bed-based health care; and

WHEREAS, VA's enhanced-use lease program can be utilized to establish assisted living facilities in close proximity to VA medical resources; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports legislation requiring VA to provide assisted living services for older veterans as a priority long-term care program on VA campuses.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 179—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 158 medical centers, 850 ambulatory care and community-based outpatient clinics, 132 nursing homes, and 42 residential rehabilitation treatment programs; 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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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 veterans service organizations informed throughout the implementation phase of CARES.

RESOLUTION NO. 181—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 182—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 in the recent past 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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, calls for legislation to repeal all copayments for veterans' medical services and prescriptions.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 183—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 (g)(1) 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 11 or 17 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 either 28.5 or 40.5 cents per mile; and

WHEREAS, in 2005 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 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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 184—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 119 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 in 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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 187—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, section 1712, to provide outpatient dental care to all enrolled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 190—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 193—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 194—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 a 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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, 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. 195—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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, seeks the enactment of legislation providing for competitive salary and pay levels for VA physicians, pharmacists dentists, and nurses.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 211—LEGISLATIVE

EXTEND ELIGIBILITY FOR FREE HEALTH CARE FOR COMBAT VETERANS FOR CONDITIONS POTENTIALLY RELATED TO THEIR COMBAT SERVICE FROM TWO YEARS TO FIVE YEARS

WHEREAS, troops continue to return from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF); and

WHEREAS, military personnel are exposed to conditions that are often distinct from those of the civilian population; and

WHEREAS, servicemembers serving in combat theaters often experience unique health care challenges related to military service; and

WHEREAS, veterans deserve access to a unique health care system and services such as those provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, the current law authorizes VA to provide combat veterans, including activated Reservists and National Guard members, two years of free health care for conditions potentially related to their combat service following release or discharge from military service; and

WHEREAS, veterans have provided a great service to our country; and

WHEREAS, we have an obligation to ensure that our newest generation of combat veterans has access to the highest quality of life possible when they return home and access to the best possible health care services and programs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, supports legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the period of eligibility for free health care for combat veterans for conditions potentially related to their combat service from two years to five years after discharge or release.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 227—ADMINISTRATIVE

EXTEND APPRECIATION TO GOLDEN TECHNOLOGIES VETERANS ASSISTANCE DIVISION FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 84TH 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, Golden Technologies has generously provided DAV members the use of over 130 motorized scooters during our 84th National Convention; and

WHEREAS, Golden Technologies has assisted many DAV members in overcoming mobility limitations and therefore contributed greatly to the success of the 84th National Convention; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, expresses its sincere gratitude and appreciation to Golden Technologies for the loaning of electric scooters to the delegates to this 84th National Convention.

*** * ***

RESOLUTION NO. 228—ADMINISTRATIVE

EXTEND APPRECIATION TO THE VA SOUTHERN NEVADA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 84TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the cooperation and professionalism extended to the delegates and guests of the 84th 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 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Southern Nevada Healthcare System, staffed and maintained a compassionate and high-quality outpatient clinic and prosthetic service within Bally's Las Vegas Hotel; and

WHEREAS, the medical care and prosthetic services rendered to the delegates to this 84th 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 Las Vegas, Nevada, August 14-17, 2005, expresses its sincere appreciation to the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System, Las Vegas, Nevada, for the professional and skillful medical care delivered to the delegates to this 84th National Convention and for contributing to the success of this Convention.

*** * ***

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Jimmie. You have heard the motion, may I have a second?

MS. ALFREDA ALEXANDER: Mike 3.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 3.

MS. ALEXANDER: Alfreda Alexander, Commander of Chapter 17, Department of Maryland, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you. In accordance with Rule 9, now is the time for any rejected resolutions to be read. Are there any rejected resolutions that you wish read? Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. Thank you, Jimmie. (Applause)

Will you please join me in welcoming Imperial Golden Rodent Joel Devenish, Imperial Red-Eyed Gnawer Paul Bailey and the Imperial Council of the National Order of Trench Rats. (Boos)

MR. MICHAEL A. STOKES: Good morning. Contrary to the announcement, I'm Michael Stokes, the Imperial Golden Rodent. Joel will be our newly installed Imperial Golden Rodent as of tomorrow.

I would like to, at this time, introduce our slate of officers that are currently in office, starting with Joel Devenish out of the state of California. (Boo)

Albert Sorrentino from the state of Florida (Boo) you must know him; Floyd W. Buell from Nevada; (Boo) Terrence Flick from Louisiana; (Boo) Robert Auchu – God bless you – from the state of Florida; (Boo)

Vernon W. Christian from New York; (Boo) Gerald Ogle from the state of Nevada; (Boo) Delbert Foster from South Dakota; (Boo) Paul C. Bailey from Pennsylvania; (Boo) Vinnie P. Reed, Jr., from Massachusetts; (Boo) Owen Emery from Massachusetts; (Boo) and William Baumann from Nevada. (Boo)

Our Executive Rats: James Bixby, Imperial Executive Rat 1 from Massachusetts; (Boo) Clifford Darfler from New York, Imperial Executive Rat 2; (Boo) Robert Wayss from New Hampshire; (Boo) James Strawder from D.C.; (Boo) Gerald Cool from Michigan; (Boo) Chad Vale from Illinois; (Boo) you've got friends out there, Chad;

Raymond Drake from Kentucky; (Boo) Elwood Krejci from South Dakota; (Boo) Steven Holsworth from my state of Missouri; (Boo) Michael O'Neal from California; (Boo) Arthur D. Jones from Nevada; (Boo) Timothy Hedgecock from Oklahoma. (Boo)

Now, I will introduce you to our Imperial Rodents, starting with Gerald W. Horton, Imperial Rodent 80 from Massachusetts; (Boo) Bernard L. Walkowiak -– and I can say it correctly -– from Pennsylvania; (Boo) Brother Frank Cummings, Imperial Rodent 78 from Louisiana; (Boo)

William Brzezinski from the state of Nevada, Imperial Rodent 77; (Boo) Larry A. Polzin, Imperial Rodent 76 from California; (Boo) Jimmie S. Foster, Imperial Rodent 75 from California; (Boo) Brother Paul C. Bailey, Imperial Rodent 70 from Pennsylvania; (Boo)

Brother Fred Sutton is not with us today, not doing well, from the state of Indiana; and unfortunately, as we are standing back there, Brothers George Zoscak has some medical problems, so let's keep him in our prayers.

Brother Oswald Pederson, Imperial Rodent 65 from Missouri; (Boo) Vincent P. Reed, Jr., from Massachusetts, Imperial Rodent 64; (Boo) still there; and I believe that's all the way down to Charles P. Merrifield, state of Kentucky, our grandfather. (Boo) Did I get everybody, hopefully? Okay.

I would like to now read the slate of officers for the coming year, and this will be under Brother Joel Devenish's year. Your incoming Golden Rodent will be Joel Devenish.

Incoming Silver Rodent will be Albert Sorrentino. Incoming Blue Rodent will be Floyd W. Buell. Turquoise Rodent, Terrence Flick. Bubonic Plague, Robert Auchu. Black Plague, Vernon Christian; Iron Claw will be Gerald Ogle.

Nightingale will be Roy Trahan. Hole-y Rodent will be Owen Emery. Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer, Paul C. Bailey. Bench Rat will be Vincent P. Reed, Jr. Historical Rat will be James Bixby, and Rendezvous Rat will be Mark Aaron.

Our Exec Rats for the coming year: Imperial Executive Rat 1 will be Robert Halpin. Imperial Executive Rat 2 will be Clifford Darfler. Imperial Executive Rat 3 will be Robert Wayss. Imperial Executive Rat 7 will be Paul Clamp. Imperial Executive Rat 10 will be Gerald Cool. Imperial Executive Rat 12, Chad Vale.

Imperial Executive Rat 13, Raymond Drake. Imperial Executive Rat 14, Elwood Krejci. Imperial Executive Rat 15, Steven Holsworth. Imperial Executive Rat 16, Michael O'Neal. Imperial Executive Rat 18 will be Brother Berman. Imperial Executive Rat 21 will be Timothy Hedgecock.

At this point, if I could have Commander Sursely come forward to have a presentation. There you are, Jim. Good to see you, by the way. I had the pleasure of visiting with Jim when he came to our state for Kansas City and the Cardinals baseball game, and he did an excellent job there, by the way.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Was that a strike do you think I threw?

MR. STOKES: That was a strike. That was definitely a strike, Jim. I'd like to at this time present a check to you, and we have several of them.

I'm probably going to do this out of order, but I'm kind of taking a little bit of liberty because I'm kind of proud of this fact, I'm going to present a check from the National Order of Trench Rats to the DAV in the amount of $2,000. At this point, that brings our total contributed to the DAV of over $312,000, and I take pride in that fact. (Applause)

Also, while you're up here, Jim, I would like to present you a plaque and it reads: James E. Sursely, Commander, Disabled American Veterans, 2004-2005, for your continued support, National Order of Trench Rats. Presented August 16th, 2005, Las Vegas, Nevada, Michael A. Stokes Imperial Golden Rodent, Paul C. Bailey Imperial Red Eyed Gnawer." (Applause)

One last thing, I know I've already given you a deck of my playing cards, and what better place than Vegas to have playing cards, but these are for officers. If you would distribute them, I would sure appreciate it.

They have an ugly rat on them, and hopefully, they will be put to some good use. There were only 300 of those made, and they will be collectors items.

I have some resolutions, and if you stay here, right after I read the resolutions, I will present you with some more money. I have two resolutions to read and I'm just going to read one because they're the exact same resolution, however, they're two individuals. The resolution reads as follows:

WHEREAS, God has seen in his infinite wisdom to call to the Great Beyond, Lee A. Henderson; and

WHEREAS, he did by his acts and diligence as an Imperial Officer help lead the National Order of Trench Rats to the prominent position it holds today in the service to disabled American veterans;

THEREFORE,BE IT RESOLVED, by the National Order of Trench Rats assembled at this 81st Rendezvous in Las Vegas, Nevada, that we recognize his outstanding service by contributing a sum of one hundred dollars 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 toward the maintenance of nationwide rehabilitation activities of disabled American veterans and their dependents;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That his name be inscribed on the memorial honor roll so that all may see and appreciate his sacrifice and devotion to the cause of the Disabled American Veterans as exemplified by Lee A. Henderson.

I have a similar resolution, I will not read the whole resolution, in the name of Werren B. Lone. And I will present to you those two checks in the amount of $100 each for a total of $200 in their names. (Applause) Good to see you, Jim.

I thank you all for having us here, and I thank my brothers for all that they do on behalf of disabled American veterans. At this time, I'm going to call Brother Devenish up in case he would like to say a few words. Shy today, huh? Okay, thank you all for having us and we — pardon me? You're going to vote for him again, okay. Thank you for having us, and we wish you a very successful Convention. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: At this time I would like to share with you one of the many highlights from my year as your National Commander. When I found out that I would be leading the DAV to the Experimental Aircraft Association's Air Venture in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, I knew it would be a special event.

And as you are about to see in this film what happened in those few short days exceeded my wildest expectations.

(Whereupon, a video was viewed.)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Believe me, that the hit of the Oshkosh air show as the DAV-sponsored B25 Bomber Panchito. If you ever get a chance to get out to an air show, please do so and take part in that activity.

I would like to at this time, the DAV National Service Office is a rare -- let me start over on that. The DAV National Service Officer is a rare individual, but within this group of outstanding individuals, there are many that rise to the top.

One of those individuals is Gary Burns, a combat-disabled Vietnam veteran who served with 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 disabled veterans as a National Service Officer beginning in January of 1970.

His career as an NSO spanned 30 years before his retirement in 2000. Gary served as Department Commander in 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 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 to present Mr. Gary Burns. (Applause)

MR. GARY BURNS: Thank you, National Commander, for that very kind introduction, very much appreciated. Good morning, National Adjutant Arthur Wilson, National Officers, delegates and guests.

National Commander James E. Sursely, once again, please, Vice President of the National Service Foundation, National Adjutant Art Wilson; Secretary Treasurer Dennis Joyner, and Directors that are here this morning Ken Musselmann, Sal Tornatore, Wally Tyson, and Alan Bowers, who serves as ex officio Chair of the DAV's Board of Directors, as well as I'd like to introduce also Administrator for the National Service Foundation, please, Nancy O'Brien.

Let me also take a moment, please, to remember another individual who was a key player in the Foundation. Bill Leach, who sadly passed away two weeks ago I believe today, actually, served on the Foundation's Board for 23 years. His insight and fiscal knowledge proved most valuable to the Foundation and we will miss him.

As American forces face combat on two fronts, we present this report at a meaningful time. Few troops in Iraq and Afghanistan have heard of the DAV National Service Foundation and fewer still believe such an organization will ever play a role in their lives.

Yet this year alone more than 103,000 veterans from these wars will seek care from the VA -- 103,000. This number dwarfs another figure on which some in Washington would prefer us to direct our attention.

They'd rather focus on the nearly 14,000 wounded in action since the invasion of Iraq. Counting the cost of war is not that simple, and it's not that inexpensive.

That's why our troops need you and me. It's why your National Service Foundation must help the DAV defend their interests in the current environment. It's why they need you and me to build a solid platform for the DAV's future.

This report shows that your Foundation performed very well on both of these fronts in 2004. For that, I thank you, our Board, DAV National Service Director Randy Reese and his team of NSOs all across this country.

NSOs are key players in the Foundation's initiatives. Last year, as a result of their steadfast commitment to excellence in service, they were responsible for contributions of more than $1 million for the third consecutive year. (Applause)

For that we recognize their role through the Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetting Performance Awards. Five divisions among the National Service Offices have been created. Each year the office leading its division is awarded a specially designed trophy.

I'll ask National Service Director Randy Reese to please at this time come forward and help with the trophy presentations. Are you ready, Randy?

It is difficult for me to announce that one of these divisions is not Maine this year, but I'm going to do it. I'm going to do this.

Division 1, please, Syracuse, New York, a first-year recipient, Scott Stamper accepting. (Applause)

MR. SCOTT STAMPER: Just real quick, I'd like to give this thanks to Paul Breuer who could not be here with us and especially to Mike Scholl and Jeffrey Sell out of the Buffalo Office that are continuing the service in the Syracuse Office as of right now. Thanks and the trophy is for them. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Division 2, Hartford, Connecticut, Supervisor, Allen Gumpenberger. This is the second year for Connecticut.

MR. ALLEN GUMPENBERGER: I'd like to say that it's an honor to be an NSO and Randy as the Service Director and staff there. You know, in my office we have a slogan, "to provide the best representation to every claimant we're privileged to represent".

That word "privileged" means a lot to me because that means to me that my heart is in it. I gave my heart to Connecticut and they seem to appreciate it. This tells me that they do, so thanks, Connecticut. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Division 3, St. Louis, Missouri, a nine-year winner, accepting the award is Len Harris, the Supervisor of that office. Len. (Applause)

MR. LEN HARRIS: This is an honor. This is my fifth year in a row for our office to win this award. It's also a chance and an opportunity for me to thank the Department of Missouri and all the chapters that support and assist us in achieving this goal.

I would be remiss not to mention that this year we'd like to honor the recognition of William Leach Jr. for this award for his dedication to both this Foundation and the Department of Missouri. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Division 4, Boston, Massachusetts, a nine-year record, and accepting the award for Boston is the supervisor of that office, Dan Stack, who incidentally also received his 30-year pin as a DAV National Service Officer, Dan Stack. (Applause)

MR. DAN STACK: Good morning. You know, in order to continually win this you must be able to have a good, strong team, and we have that kind of teamwork in Boston, and I'd like to thank the National Service Officers who work there: Mark Carpenter, my assistant, Leroy Canady, Bob Sinclair, Donald Horton and our recently-new NSO, not recently new, our NSO that just left and went to Rhode Island, Richard Vacarri.

Also, we would like to thank the department. The department is a big part of basically continually being able to gather money and bring it in to the National Organization.

In that regard, we'd really like to thank our Department Adjutant who has announced his retirement. Tom Daley has been a stalwart in support of the National Service Officer program in Boston. Tom, thank you very much, and we salute you for all you've done for us. God bless. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Division 5 is Los Angeles, California, and Scott Trimarchi, Supervisor of that office, accepting the award, please. (Applause)

MR. SCOTT TRIMARCHI: This is such an honor. I just want to take a moment to thank the Department of California, Department Service Officers and the jurisdiction of Los Angeles.

They did an excellent job, as well as the Department of California's Claims and Service Commission, which provided excellent support to this program. I would also like to thank the support staff in the Los Angeles National Service Office and of course, any and all National Service Officers who worked in our office during the year 2004 to make this possible. You all did a fantastic job. Thank you very much and I appreciate it. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Once again, please join me in thanking these offices and our entire NSO Corps for that matter for their outstanding performance and support, one more time, please. Thank you very much. (Applause)

It's through the claims work of our NSOs that veterans and their families come to see the immense value of DAV service. Their educational efforts in chapters and departments are essential in making sure awareness of the Foundation takes root and grows.

The past year clarified the need for this ongoing labor. As the weeks and months progressed, so did the number of casualties from Iraq. Casualties from Afghanistan are rising as well.

Yet, as our nation faced these realities, the VA struggled to survive on a limited budget. To get needed funding from Congress, the DAV had to mount a full-scale public campaign to gain the attention of some of our nation's leaders.

If this can happen in a time of war, what does the future hold? Clearly, we must build a secure future for all veterans, especially the troops now fighting overseas.

You're doing that through your DAV National Service Foundation. On December 31, 2004, the Foundation's net assets totaled $31 million, a growth of 4 percent over the past year. That's $31 million. That's 5 percent of the budget of the state of Maine. (Applause)

The net assets included: $19.1 million in the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund; $8 million in the General Fund; $1.3 million in the Colorado Trust Fund; and $201,000 in the National Order of Trench Rats Special Legislative Fund.

I am pleased to present to National Commander Sursely a check for $5,441, the amount earned on the National Order of Trench Rats restricted fund last year.

At the request of the Trench Rats, this gift is designated to support the DAV's National Legislative Program. Commander.

(Whereupon, Mr. Burns presented Commander Sursely with the check.)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Are you done? (Laughter) Gary, thank you for that report. May I have a motion to accept the report from President Burns for the National Service Foundation?

MR. BURNS: Oh, I'm sorry. I'm just done with the presentation of that check. I've got a couple more things to do. I'm sorry. (Laughter)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Okay, well, thank you very much for the check.

MR. BURNS: I closed the book up. What I was supposed to say was the presentation of the check to the Commander. Thank you. Don't lose that, Art, please. (Laughter)

Last year the Foundation continued its support for the DAV National Service Program in areas that impact all of our lives when we have claims before the VA.

The appropriations included: office furniture, equipment and resource manuals for our National Service Offices; and financial support of medical studies to help establish expert medical testimony in support of veterans' claims.

Another success involved the Colorado Trust, maintained within the Foundation as a separate fund. Distributions from the Trust are limited to programs that serve disabled veterans and their families.

The total support and revenue to the Trust in 2004 was $739,000. Nearly $1.6 million was disbursed as grants to needy department and chapters.

From the Trust's formation in 1996 to year end 2004, nearly $12 million was expended as grants to support the National Transportation Network, Hospital Service Coordinators, Department Service Programs and various other local and state service initiatives.

For that, I thank you as individual members, chapters and departments. You have changed the course of service in the Disabled American Veterans. I also thank the DAV's National Organization, which matched every dollar that you gave.

As I conclude — I'll get out of your way in just a second, Commander (Laughter) — let me draw your attention to the Foundation's Annual Report in its new format. That's this one right here.

It looks very different this year, much simpler and easier to read. There's a great deal more information about the Foundation's goals and work.

Pick up a copy at the Informational Booth and give it a good read, if you would, please. You'll gain a deeper understanding of the future we confront, not just our youngest veterans but all of us. You will also see the mighty role that your National Service Foundation plays in that future.

As I offer my gratitude for everything you've already done, let me stress that you, your chapter and departments are essential players in that future.

In an age when veterans can be forgotten, even in a time of war, all of our tomorrows depend upon you. Speaking of tomorrows, I'm reminded of the proverb, "Today is the first day of your life."

There is no better time than today to renew your commitment to the DAV National Service Foundation. So, Commander, as is our tradition, I will now very gratefully accept donations from the Convention floor, and donations received today and throughout the National Convention will be placed in the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund, the Colorado Trust or the Trench Rats as specified.

Allow me to begin by acknowledging a $2,000 gift from D. J.A. Lazzarini of Georgia, another gift from Ed Posada of Orlando, Florida, in honor of NSO Alex Martinez and $1,000 to the Colorado Trust from Chapter 13 in South Carolina.

I also was given a short time ago a check in the amount of $100 from Roger Sullivan from Lady Lake, Florida, in honor of St. Petersburg NSOs and also was given a check in the amount of $500 from Chapter 1 in Manchester, New Hampshire, in memory of Kevin Casey. That's $500.

Before I had a chance to ask you to do so, you lined up to my right which is what we wanted you to do. Thank you very much and we'll get started. Good morning.

DELEGATE: Chapter 51, the state of South Carolina, the state where we have the oldest Senator in the world, who said that his only complaint was he paid $100 to join the Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 51 gives $500 as its annual gift to the National Service Foundation in honor of the first female commander in our District, Marion Truscello, Mrs. Marion Truscello. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Thank you very much. Thank you very much, sir.

COMMANDER MARION TRUSCELLO: Marion Truscello, Commander of South Carolina Department gives $500 in honor of our National Service Officers. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Thank you. Good morning.

MR. MARVIN F. CHANEY: Good morning. I'm Marvin Chaney from Chapter 2 in South Kansas City, the great "Show me" state. In recognition of our service officers, I'd like to present a check for $15,000 to the National Service Foundation.

MR. BURNS: Fifteen thousand?

MR. CHANEY: Yes, sir.

MR. BURNS: Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. SALVATORE LoSAURO: I'm Sal LoSauro from Chapter 15, New Jersey. The great state of New Jersey proudly gives a check of $250 from the chapter.

MR. BURNS: Thank you.

MR. PERRY JOHNSON: Perry Johnson, Commander, Department of Virginia. The department donates $1,000 to the Service Commission.

MR. BILL WIGGINS: Bill Wiggins, delegate, Chapter 19 in Danville, Virginia. We would like to contribute $1,000 in honor of James Crane who served as our Chapter Adjutant for over 20 years. One major problem with his retirement, he left the job to me. Thank you.

MR. DAVID STONE: State Commander David Stone, state of Florida, we'd like to present a department check for $2,500 to the National Service Foundation and $100 from our Immediate Past State Commander Silva Royer, and $100 from myself, all for the Service Foundation.

MR. BURNS: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. AL LINDEN: Gary, on behalf of the Department of Florida, I'm Al Linden, the adjutant, I would like to present a check for $7,500 to the DAV LIFE Memorial Foundation.

MR. RICHARD E. BAMBERGER: Richard Bamberger, acting commander with the state of Maryland in place for George Mitchell, who is coming through with major surgery. I would like to present you with two checks, one for $500 to the Colorado Trust and one for $500 for the National Service Foundation.

MR. BURNS: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

MR. ROGER L. ANDAL: Gary, Roger Andal, State Commander from South Dakota. I have a check for $250 from Chapter 1 for the Foundation and another one from the state department for $500 in honor of our two National Service Officers, Larry Bouska and Fred Wagar and also a $500 check from Chapter 1 for the Disabled Veterans LIFE Memorial Fund.

MR. BURNS: Thank you, Roger.

MR. JIM D. ROOS: Jim Roos, commander, Pasadena Chapter 194, National Service Officer, please accept this check of $500.

MS. BARBARA BRUSSARD: Barbara Brussard, Exalted Golden Cat, National Order of Alley Cats, I have this check for the Foundation for $1,000.

MR. GILBERT G. BROWN: Gil Brown, adjutant of Florida, Greater Daytona Chapter 84, a check to the National Service Foundation for $1,600.

MR. BURNS: Thank you sir, I appreciate that.

MR. JOE HARRIS: Joe Harris, Department Commander for the great state, the Garden State and home of the Jersey Tomato State, I would like to make a donation of $1,000 to the Colorado Trust.

MR. WILLIAMS: Bobby Williams, Ninth NEC representing Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, the home of Wally Tyson, $2,000, Colorado Trust.

MR. RUSS SPAULDING: Russ and Joanne Spaulding from Chapter 20, Michigan presents $500 in memory of Past Commanders Oliver Meadows and Ed Heath.

MR. CROSSLAND: Gary Crossland, Past State Commander, California, I have four personal checks out of my pocket. I'd like to see everybody in here take a dollar out of their pocket, and we can have $1.3 million with all the DAVers.

I've got one for DAV National Service Foundation in honor of Michael Walsh for all the hard work he does for us. I want to give $100 to the National Service Foundation for my National Service Officers, Mr. Dan Contreras, and I've got two checks for the American Veterans Disabled for LIFE Memorial Fund, $100 in honor of Art Wilson and all the hard work he does, and another $100 in honor of Ken Musselmann for all the hard work he is doing for our memorial. Thank you. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER JACKSON: Comrades, this is a very important event for all of our disabled veterans, and it seems as if we're not giving enough attention to what is going on up here, so we would appreciate it very, very much. It's for all of us. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. LOU GYSIN: Good morning. Lou Gysin, Commander for the Department of California. It is my honor to give the National Service Foundation a check from our department for $25,000. (Applause)

MR. JOSEPH H. FIDURA: Joseph Fidura, Commander, Department of Oregon. I'd like to give $1,000 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. FRANCIS P. REDING: Francis Reding, Commander of Department of Idaho. We're a small state population-wise, $200 for the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. KENNETH E. CAMELL: Ken Camell, Department Commander for Colorado, continuing our tradition, $5,000 to the Colorado Trust Fund. (Applause)

MR. CHUCK DICKERSON: Chuck Dickerson, Commander, Chapter 7, Colorado, I present a check for $5,000 to the Colorado Trust. (Applause)

MR. VERNON V. CARDOSI: Gary, good morning to see you.

MR. BURNS: What's that hat?

MR. CARDOSI: I'm going to show you in a second. I'm Vernon Cardosi, Past National Commander, from Newburyport, Massachusetts, and I have my commander, Ralph Barrett, of 23 years he's been our commander and he's starting to do a good job.

By the way, Commander, last year I inadvertently meant to say we're from Massachusetts, the home of the World Champion New England Patriots. They're still the World Champion New England Patriots. But inadvertently I happened to mention World Championship Red Sox and everybody started to laugh.

I know Art Wilson was giving me the business. Alan Bowers was giving me the business. But I wonder who is laughing now because we are the World Champions in baseball. I know they're not laughing in New York. How are you doing? (Laughter)

Also from Massachusetts, I'd like to give you a little check of $3,000 for the Colorado Trust and $1,000 for the Foundation. (Applause) Oh, by the way, I know you're a Red Sox fan, also.

I can't give you the shirt off my back right now, but I'd love to present this hat that I'll never wear again to your lovely mother. Would you do that for me?

MR. BURNS: Thank you very much, sir.

MS. A. J. JONES: A. J. Jones, Senior Vice Commander, Oakleaf Chapter 32 from Dallas, Texas, $150. (Applause)

MR. DAVE THOMASON: Dave Thomason, Chapter Service Officer, Salem Vietnam Vets Chapter Number 14, a check for $1,000.

MR. FRANK TENTLER: Frank Tentler, Department of Nebraska, $100, National Service Foundation.

MR. DENNIS KRULDER: Dennis Krulder from the great and generous state of New York. I present a check for the Colorado Trust in the amount of $25,000 (Applause) and for the National Service Foundation a check in the amount of $1,000. (Applause)

MR. ROLAND A. PAQUETTE: My name is Roland Paquette, Chapter 20 from the great state of Texas. Our chapter would like to donate $150 to the Disabled for LIFE Fund, and I would also like to personally donate $100. (Applause)

MR. KEN L. MORRIS: Ken Morris, Department of Nevada Treasurer. We have a $100 memorial for Earl "Bud" Moon, Department Past Commander, and $100 for Stanley Speiler, Department Past Commander, and $100 from the Department of Nevada.

MR. BURNS: Thank you, sir. I appreciate it.

MR. SUEY M. LEE: Commander Suey Lee, on behalf of the Dick Cosgriff Chapter 2, San Diego, California, I would like to present two checks; to the Colorado Trust $1,500; to the National Service Foundation $500. (Applause)

MR. DON GALLAGHER: Don Gallagher, Chapter 47, Nebraska, I would like to make a presentation of $100 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. FRANKLIN C. BERQUIST: Frank Bergquist, Kansas Chapter 4, $25 in honor of the marriage of Ken and Rilda Ketcham.

MR. GEORGE E. BALCH: George Balch, state commander, Department of North Carolina, $1,000 to the Colorado Trust.

MS. JANE B. OVREY: Good morning. I'm Jane Bunker Ovrey, the commander of Black Mountain Chapter 12, which is the home chapter of your National Convention Chairman, Jerry Ogle.

I would like to present -- or the chapter would like to present $300 to the National Service Foundation, and this is also in honor of a very dedicated DAVer of our chapter, Faye Johnson. We have $500 for the National Memorial Foundation, and this is in honor of all our present chapter members and in memory of all our past chapter members.

MR. BURNS: Thank you, ma'am. I appreciate that. (Applause)

MR. STEVE HENRY: I'm Steve Henry, commander of the Department of Kansas. I would like to present you with this check for $250.

MR. BURNS: I appreciate that, sir, thank you.

MS. ELIZABETH A. BRANDT: I'm Liz Brandt, Senior Vice, Minneapolis Chapter 1, Minnesota, with a check for $5,000 for the Charitable Trust. (Applause)

MR. LEW SNOWBECK: Lew Snowbeck, Minneapolis Chapter Number 1, $100 to the Foundation, $100 to the Charitable Trust.

MR. BURNS: Thank you, Lew.

MS. DOROTHY M. PRIDMORE: Good morning. I'm Dorothy Pridmore. I'm the senior vice for Chapter 70, Escondido, California, $500 for the National Service Foundation.

MR. BURNS: Thank you, Madam.

MR. GORDON THOMPSON: Gordon Thompson, Chapter 117, California, $200. (Applause)

MR. DUANE B. PICHELMAN: Duane Pichelman, Commander of Chapter 20, Des Moines, Iowa. On behalf of the Chapter I'd like to present a check for $1,000 to Colorado Trust and also a check for $1,000 for NSO Foundation.

MR. CLIFFORD W. DILLARD: Cliff Dillard, Commander, Chapter 4, Wichita, Kansas, we have $500 for the Service Foundation.

DELEGATE: On behalf of the members of Chapter 17 and Unit 17, Decatur, Illinois, I'd like to give you a check for the National Service Foundation for $5,000. (Applause)

DELEGATE: Senior Vice from the State of Wisconsin and the Green Bay Packers, the check's in the mail for $1,500. Thank you.

MR. BURNS: Thank you, sir.

MR. HAROLD E. HUMPHREY: I guess I don't have to introduce myself, then. I'm the past commander of the Blind Chapter and would like to donate this check --

MR. BURNS: Your name, please.

MR. HUMPHREY: Eddie Humphrey.

MR. BURNS: Thank you. And how much is it? One hundred dollars.

MR. KEVIN D. NOEL: Kevin Noel, Department of Maine, just to let you all know we're very proud of what Gary does. I present to you a check for $500, and we're being nice because when we go home we still have to spend time with him. (Laughter)

MR. BURNS: Thank you very much.

MR. SLOAN HOOPES: Sloan Hoopes, Commander of H.H. McKenzie Chapter 3, Virginia, presents a check for $1,000 to the Service Foundation in memory of our deceased members. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Thank you very much.

MR. JEFFREY A. REED: I'm Jeff Reed, Department Commander of the greatest little state in the Union, Vermont, and I'd like to donate $1,000 to the National Service Foundation.

MR. DAVID TANNENBAUM: Dave Tannenbaum from the great state of Florida, a personal donation in honor of the St. Petersburg National Service Officer Andy Marshall, supervisor.

MR. FRANK WILLIAMS: Frank Williams, Past Department Commander and current State Adjutant for the Department of Ohio. I have a check here for the Colorado Trust for $15,000. (Applause)

DELEGATE: On behalf of Commander Paul Snider, the Department of Ohio presents a check to the Jesse Brown Memorial Scholarship Fund in the amount of $5,000.

MR. MARK M. AARON: Mark Aaron, Department Commander for Illinois and Senior Vice for Chapter 1, Peoria, Illinois, I would personally like to present you a check for $100 in memory of my father, who was an avid DAV member, service officer, for quite a while.

Also, we have a check in the mail for the National Service Foundation. My adjutant forgot the checkbook. We were going to give $500, but because he forgot the checkbook, we're going to up that to $1,00. Thank you.

MR. BURNS: All right, leave it home next time. Thank you.

MR. HERMAN M. WISCHMANN: Mark Wischmann, Department Commander for the state of Delaware and Senior Vice for Chapter 1 in Dover. In memory of PDC Reese Phillips, we're giving a check for $200 and in memory of PDC Bill Meredith another check for $200. (Applause)

MR. PAUL V. LARDIZZONE: Paul Lardizzone from the Department of Delaware, Department Service Officer, I'm giving a check for $200 in memory of our NSO Supervisor, Jim Wyatt.

MR. WALLACE J. BROWN: I'm Wallace J. Brown from Chapter 21 of Vallejo, California. I'm proud to present a check of $300 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. RAYBON L. WINDHAM: Leo Windham, the Commander of Chapter 11, Jackson, Mississippi, gives $1,000 for our NSO, and Leo Windham the Commander of the Department of Mississippi also would like to give them $1,000 from the department.

MR. BURNS: Thank you, sir.

MR. TIMOTHY J. DUNN: I'm Tim Dunn, Commander of the Department of Pennsylvania, and on their behalf, I'm pleased to present to the National Service Foundation a check in the amount of $1,000.

DELEGATE: I would like to present a check for $500 in memory of Jim Wyatt.

MR. BURNS: That is who, sir?

DELEGATE: Jim Wyatt from Chapter 115.

MR. BURNS: Chapter 115 in memory of National Service Officer Jim Wyatt; 115 from the state of Pennsylvania. Thank you very much.

DELEGATE: You're welcome. (Applause)

MR. KIRBY LINDSEY: Kirby Lindsey, NEC from the state of Pennsylvania. I'd like to make a $100 donation to the National Service Officer from Tony Sifone -- it's a personal donation. I'd like to make another donation from Robert Johns Chapter 73 of Pennsylvania, from Erie, the National Service Foundation.

Both of these are in honor of Jim Wyatt, which we and the rest of the country, I believe, thinks he was one of the National Service Officers best people that they've ever had helping veterans. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. JOHN E. OGOZALY: Good morning, my name is John Ogozaly. I'm also from the state of Pennsylvania, and I have two checks here also in memory of Jim Wyatt. One is for $150 from myself, and one is from Chapter 11 and Gary Heller in Vixen City, mid-valley, also in Pennsylvania. Thank you.

MR. ROBERT WAYSS: Good morning, how are you. My name is Robert Wayss. I'm the Department Commander from the White Mountain state of New Hampshire, and we're going to donate $500 to the National Service Foundation and $500 to the California Trust.

MR. BURNS: Colorado Trust. Now, that's actually the Gary Burns Grandson Trust Fund. No, it says Colorado Trust. Thank you very much.

MR. HERMAN HARRISON: I'm Herman Harrison and I'm donating $300 for the memory of my wife, Frances, to the Foundation.

MR. BURNS: In memory of whom?

MR. HIRSCHMANN: My wife, Frances Harrison. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Thank you, sir.

MR. BARRY VERGA: Barry Verga, Chapter 154, Brooklyn, New York. We are donating $1,000 to Colorado Trust Fund. (Applause)

MR. TOM INGRAM: Tom Ingram, Past Chapter Commander, 154, Brooklyn, New York, wishes to donate, in honor of our members, $1,000 to the National Service Foundation.

MR. HERBERT HENN: I'm Herbert Henn, commander of Chapter 32 in New Jersey, Northern Valley Chapter 32. I'd like to present this check from my chapter for $500 to the Colorado Fund. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. DAVID E. BLUE: I'm David Blue, Chapter 81 California, donating this check for $100 to the National Service Foundation.

MR. BURNS: Thank you, sir. (Applause)

MS. LUZ A. BERRIOS: Luz Berrios from Chapter 5, Puerto Rico, $200 for the National Foundation and $300 for the Colorado Trust Fund, a personal check for $100.

MR. BURNS: A personal check from whom?

MS. BERRIOS: Myself.

MR. BURNS: Thank you.

MR. SILAS J. DAWSON: Good morning, Silas J. Dawson from South Carolina, past commander of Chapter 5, $100 to the National Foundation. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Thank you very much.

MR. GREG KOTANCHICK: Greg Kotanchick on behalf of the National Service Office in Seattle, Washington, I'd like to contribute $250 to the National Service Foundation and issue a challenge to the other National Service Officers to do the same.

MR. BURNS: Thank you, Greg. (Applause) Good morning, Wally.

MR. WALLACE E. TYSON: Good morning, Mr. President. It has been my honor to serve on the Board of Directors of the National Service Foundation. This morning I want to give my personal donation of $500, in honor of the National Service Officers in North Carolina: Ron Hope, our National Area Supervisor; Charles Ryder, the Assistant Supervisor; Wes Spencer, Leandra Houston, Pace Ashworth, our support staff members, Etta Rattlidge and Wendy Corren.

To all the NSOs in this organization, I want you to know you have my deepest appreciation and utmost respect for everything you do for all our veterans every day. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Good morning.

MR. KEN DREW: Good morning. Ken Drew, adjutant from the great state of Georgia. I have two checks here I want to present to you, sir. One is $500 for the Colorado Trust Fund and for the National DAV Service Fund, another $500.

I want to let you know, sir, starting next year we're going to start matching this fund. It's a great organization that we have, and I just want to say, hasn't he put on a great conference here in Las Vegas? (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Thank you.

MR. HAMMONS: Tim Hammons, commander, state of Georgia, and I want to thank Mr. Sursely. He has a friend that he grew up with and he was in Vietnam with. They are in the banking business and Steve Scowe and Integrity Bank has given Georgia over $20,000 in funds to buy vans, and I want to thank the Commander. Moses McIntosh is going to present him with a check for $1,000.

MR. BURNS: Thank you, guys. Thank you, Jim. (Applause)

MR. CLARENCE BROWN: Clarence Brown, Chapter 44, South Carolina, HSC from Augusta, Georgia, gives $100 to the Colorado Trust Fund.

MR. BURNS: Thank you, sir. (Applause)

MR. DAN MURALATTA: Good morning. Dan Muralatta from Illinois, a personal donation of $100 to the National Service Foundation on behalf of two outstanding National Service Officers, Frank L. Calderala of Illinois and Don Breezy from New York.

MR. BURNS: Thank you. (Applause)

MS. SUZANNE CARDNER: Hi, Suzanne Cardner from Chapter 78, New Port Ritchie, I have $50 for the Colorado Trust in honor of Grady Richarde.

MR. BURNS: Thank you.

MS. CARDNER: Thank you. (Applause)

MR. RAY BLACK: Ray Black, Chapter 21, Denver, Colorado, $200, Colorado Trust in honor of Caroline Mason.

MR. BURNS: Thank you. (Applause)

MR. PARRY JOHNSON: Parry Johnson, commander, Department of Virginia, $500 for the Disabled Veterans Memorial.

MR. BURNS: Thank you, sir. (Applause)

MR. JIM TONELLATO: I'm Jim Tonellato. Bally and I are making a donation for my wife's memory, Betty, of $300.

MR. BURNS: I appreciate that. Thanks. (Applause)

MR. DENNIS WEBER: Hello, I'm Dennis Weber, NEC, 16th District. I would like to donate $100 in memory of Hank Villette, past state commander and a former NSO from California, $100 to the National Service Foundation. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Thank you.

DELEGATE: Aloha from Hawaii and Chapter Number 1. On behalf of them, I donate $100. (Applause)

MR. BURNS: Thank you, sir.

MR. KEITH TURNER: Hi, my name is Keith Turner, and I'm from New Orleans, Louisiana. I'm here celebrating my birthday in Vegas and I'm going to donate — I didn't bring my checkbook, but my secretary I'm going to advise I'm donating $777.77 from my own personal funds to the National level of Louisiana in New Orleans. (Applause)

MR. KIRBY LINDSEY: Kirby Lindsey, NEC from Pennsylvania. I have a challenge to make. I have $100 personal donation for the National Service Officers for any marine to come up here and match it and give Jim another kiss. (Laughter)

MR. BURNS: Correct that in the record.

(Whereupon, Commander Sursely was kissed again by Marine Bradley S. Barton.)

MR. BURNS: That concludes the report. Thank you. Anyone else? Thank you very much. It was much appreciated. (Applause) Thank you, Commander. I'm out of your way.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Gary, are you done now? (Laughter) Let me take this opportunity, first of all, on behalf of the Department of Minnesota and the chapter out of Detroit Lakes, Minnesota -- when I was the National rep to their convention this year they presented to me from that chapter and a generous donor in the area of Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, a check for $123,000. So, a big applause for the Department of Minnesota and that chapter. (Applause)

Gary, and thank you for that outstanding report. May I have a motion to accept the report from President Burns for the National Service Foundation? Mike 3. Mike 2.

MS. BENCIVENGA: Mike 2, Mary Bencivenga, state of New Jersey, representing Chapter 24 as a delegate, I'd like to make that motion to accept his report.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Mary. Mike 3.

MR. MORRISON: Comrade Commander, Vincent Morrison, Chapter 9, Houston, Texas, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER SURSELY: We have a motion and a second. All those in favor, signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. Again, thanks for all those fantastic contributions to all the chapters and departments and individuals. (Applause)

And, Brad, thanks for that kiss, too. (Laughter) Do I get any part of that money or -- (Laughter)

Disabled American Veterans National Service Foundation

Financial Statements for the Years Ended December 31, 2004 and 2003 and Independent Auditors' Report

Deloitte.

Deloitte & Touche LLP
250 East Fifth Street
Suite 1900
P.O. Box 5340
Cincinnati, OH 45201-5340
USA

Tel: +1 513 784 7100
www.deloitte.com

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, 2004 and 2003 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 consideration of internal control over financial reporting as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Foundation's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, 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, 2004 and 2003, 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 17, 2005

Member of
Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 2004 AND 2003

ASSETS	2004	2003
CASH (including $97,369 and $156,266 relating to The Colorado Trust in 2004 and 2003, respectively)	$ 425,226	$ 274,976
INTEREST AND DIVIDENDS RECEIVABLE	113,485	123,805
PREPAID EXPENSES	72,885	48,928
INVESTMENTS—Marketable securities (including $1,289,552 and $1,973,599 relating to The Colorado Trust in 2004 and 2003, respectively)	30,577,474	29,544,622
TOTAL	$31,189,070	$29,992,331
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
LIABILITIES:		
Due to DAV	$ 135,869	$ 97,456
Due to DAV legislative program	5,442	4,663
Other liabilities	81,625	137,520
Total liabilities	222,936	239,639
NET ASSETS:		
Unrestricted net assets:		
General	8,029,697	7,515,549
The Colorado Trust	1,334,845	2,098,187
Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund	19,138,973	17,657,475
Accumulated net unrealized appreciation of investments	2,261,825	2,282,187
Total unrestricted net assets	30,765,340	29,553,398
Permanently restricted net assets—National Order of Trench Rats DAV Legislative Fund	200,794	199,294
Total net assets	30,966,134	29,752,692
TOTAL	$31,189,070	$29,992,331

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004 AND 2003

	2004				2003			
	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	$ 1,481,498	$ 727,050	$ 1,500	$ 2,210,048	$ 1,990,321	$ 719,540	$ 2,500	$ 2,712,361
Net assets released from restrictions	738,561	(738,561)			1,316,433	(1,316,433)		
Revenues:								
Interest and dividend income—net	661,001	11,511		672,512	531,665	16,271		547,936
Gain on sale of investment securities	311,587			311,587	78,548			78,548
Total revenues	972,588	11,511	-	984,099	610,213	16,271	-	626,484
Total public support and revenues	3,192,647	-	1,500	3,194,147	3,916,967	(580,622)	2,500	3,338,845
EXPENSES:								
Program:								
Grants and expenses in accordance with The Colorado Trust	1,583,727			1,583,727	2,616,714			2,616,714
Transfers to DAV National Headquarters and other organizations	199,987			199,987	536,303			536,303
Total program expenses	1,783,714	-	-	1,783,714	3,153,017	-	-	3,153,017
Management and general	139,020			139,020	139,722			139,722
Fundraising	37,609			37,609				
Total expenses	1,960,343	-	-	1,960,343	3,292,739	-	-	3,292,739
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS BEFORE CHANGE FOR NET UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	1,232,304		1,500	1,233,804	624,228	(580,622)	2,500	46,106
CHANGE IN NET UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	(20,362)			(20,362)	3,989,190			3,989,190
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS AFTER CHANGE FOR NET UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	1,211,942		1,500	1,213,442	4,613,418	(580,622)	2,500	4,035,296
NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	29,553,398		199,294	29,752,692	24,939,980	580,622	196,794	25,717,396
NET ASSETS—End of year	$30,765,340	$ -	$200,794	$30,966,134	$29,553,398	$ -	$ 199,294	$29,752,692

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004 AND 2003

	2004				2003			
	Program	Management and General	Fundraising	Total	Program	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
EXPENSES:								
Allocations to charitable programs	$1,700,143	$ -	$ -	$1,700,143	$3,078,880	$ -	$ -	$3,078,880
Grant proposal processing	81,824			81,824	73,466			73,466
Administrative charges		81,824	6,412	88,236		73,466		73,466
Travel		9,762		9,762		10,639		10,639
Printing, stationery and supplies	1,747	16,843	25,440	44,030	671	20,489		21,160
Professional fees		10,700		10,700		6,825		6,825
Insurance		4,253		4,253		4,183		4,183
Registration fees		4,548	5,290	9,838		4,969		4,969
Awards		10,611		10,611		18,081		18,081
Miscellaneous		479	467	946		1,070		1,070
TOTAL EXPENSES	$1,783,714	$139,020	$37,609	$1,960,343	$3,153,017	$139,722	$ -	$3,292,739

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004 AND 2003

	2004	2003
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Change in unrestricted and temporarily restricted net assets	$ 1,211,942	$ 4,032,796
Adjustments to reconcile change in unrestricted and temporarily restricted net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Change in unrealized appreciation of investments	20,362	(3,989,190)
Gain on sale of investment securities	(311,587)	(78,548)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Interest and dividends receivable	10,320	12,362
Prepaid expenses	(23,957)	34,477
Due to DAV	38,413	32,319
Due to DAV legislative program	779	(788)
Other	(55,895)	(97,017)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	890,377	(53,589)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Purchases of investments	(19,792,600)	(26,498,960)
Proceeds from sale of investments	19,050,973	25,393,872
Net cash used by investing activities	(741,627)	(1,105,088)
CASH FLOW FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES—		
Contributions of permanently restricted assets	1,500	2,500
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH	150,250	(1,156,177)
CASH—Beginning of year	274,976	1,431,153
CASH—End of year	$ 425,226	$ 274,976

See notes to financial statements.

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. $1,334,845 and $2,098,187 of total unrestricted net assets were designated by the Board for The Colorado Trust at December 31, 2004 and 2003, 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 2004 and 2003, respectively, The Colorado Trust received $51,025 and $52,270 in contributions which were matched by DAV.

Permanently Restricted Net Assets—Contributions by the National Order of Trench Rats for the DAV Legislative Program are permanently restricted. Investment income of $5,442 and $4,663, in 2004 and 2003, 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 at December 31 are summarized below:

2004	Cost	Market	Unrealized Appreciation
Cash Equivalents	$ 2,119,527	$ 2,119,527	$ -
Corporate Bonds	7,935,730	7,954,298	18,568
U.S. Treasury Notes	2,947,824	2,926,213	(21,611)
Common Stocks	13,828,803	15,965,302	2,136,499
Common Stock Funds	1,483,765	1,612,134	128,369
Total	$28,315,649	$30,577,474	$2,261,825
2003			
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

Investment income is composed of interest and dividend income of $708,851 and $573,778, net of fees paid to trustees of $47,850 and $42,113, in 2004 and 2003, respectively.

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 programs, management and general and fundraising. 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 2003 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 $170,060 and $144,333 in 2004 and 2003, respectively, for personnel services. At December 31, 2004 and 2003, the Foundation owed $135,869 and $97,456, respectively, for personnel services and administrative charges. Facilities and equipment are provided by the DAV at no charge.

In 2004 and 2003, respectively, the DAV Charitable Service Trust made a $625,000 and $615,000 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 $51,025 and $52,270 to The Colorado Trust in 2004 and 2003, 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 2004	2003
Grants to DAV chapters and departments in accordance with The Colorado Trust:		
Hospital Service Coordinator Program	$ 393,294	$ 300,000
National Transportation Network Van Program	1,106,862	2,184,177
Other Grants to Service Programs		58,400
Miscellaneous expenses	1,747	671
Grant proposal processing	81,824	73,466
Total	$1,583,727	$2,616,714

In 2004 and 2003, the Colorado Trust's grants and expenses totaled $1,583,727 and $2,616,714, respectfully. In 2004, temporarily restricted net assets of $738,561 and designated, unrestricted net assets of $845,166 were used. In 2003, temporarily restricted net assets of $1,316,433 and designated, unrestricted net assets of $1,300,281 were used. The temporarily restricted net assets used, of $738,561 and $1,316,433, are shown as "Net assets released from restrictions" in the accompanying Statement of Activities for 2004 and 2003, respectfully.

Net assets are released from restrictions by incurring expenses to satisfy the restricted purposes or by occurrence of other events specified by donors.

* * * * * *

COMMANDER SURSELY: Our next guest is someone who really needs no introduction.

Dick Marbes, who lost his right leg in military service, served as DAV National Commander in 1993-94. An Air Force veteran, he lost his right leg in military service.

For more than three decades, this 1978 Wisconsin Disabled Veteran of the Year has been active in DAV. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm DAV welcome to Mr. Dick Marbes, Chairman of the DAV Charitable Service Trust. (Applause)

MR. RICHARD E. MARBES: Good morning, DAV. Thank you, Commander Sursely, for that kind introduction. On behalf of the Board of the DAV Charitable Service Trust, I offer appreciation to you, to National Adjutant Wilson, to our National Officers, delegates and guests.

As Chairperson, let me introduce the Trust's governing board. They are: National Commander Jim Sursely; Vice Chairman, National Adjutant Art Wilson; Secretary-Treasurer Lew Snowbeck from Minnesota; Dennis Nixon from Texas; Jerry Steelman from Minnesota; and David Tannenbaum of Florida.

With the support of these directors, I present the Trust's annual report for the year ended December 31, 2004. Throughout that year, America witnessed a constant flow of troops coming home sick and injured from Iraq and Afghanistan.

In turn, the role of the DAV Charitable Service Trust became even more essential. Many of these veterans survived horrible wounds that would have killed troops in wars as recent as the Persian Gulf.

They now face new and unexpected challenges in lives they never anticipated. But thanks to you and the American people, the Charitable Service Trust is here for them.

We've been coming through for all of our country's profoundly disabled veterans since 1986. That's when DAV leaders created the Trust to fill gaps left by shortfalls in government spending.

They also wanted to advance needed and worthy initiatives that aren't traditionally offered by the veterans' service organizations. It's true, we cannot do everything government fails to do.

But we have stepped in when funding cuts threatened serious harm to rehabilitation and therapy programs for disabled veterans. We've funded some wonderful, innovative projects in rehabilitation.

Principally, we raise funds through workplace giving campaigns like the Combined Federal Campaign, United Way and the employee matching gift programs.

We also offer charitable gift annuities to members of the DAV, Auxiliary and others. In 2004, our total revenues rose to nearly $2.2 million. That's a growth of 8.6 percent over the preceding year and far exceeding inflation.

That compares very favorably with other charities, and you can take pride in this achievement. But the true measure of the Trust's effectiveness is the programming it supports.

Here we have a story to tell. During 2004, 93 percent of the DAV Charitable Service Trust spending went directly to programs of service to disabled veterans. Just 5 percent went to management and general expenses. And at 2 percent, our fundraising costs were amazingly low.

Efficiency, however, tells only part of the tale. We find the deeper story in the quality of programs the Trust funded as it met the challenges faced by disabled veterans in a time of war.

For example, working with the Achilles Track Club in New York City, the Trust brought an exceptional opportunity to Iraq War amputees. Through a worldwide network of physically disabled runners, Achilles is building a model that brings veterans' therapy from the hospital to their hometowns.

We continue to work with the therapeutic "First Swing" program of the National Amputee Golf Association. This program offers much more than a way to get needed physical exercise. It brings new hope and confidence for life.

So does the Hypotherapy Program at Quantum Leap Farm in Florida where veterans with traumatic brain injuries ride horses. The high number of brain injuries among veterans in Iraq and Afghanistan prompted Trust support of this program.

Combat amputees still on active duty used adaptive equipment to water ski, cycle, scuba, sail, canoe and rock climb, all thanks to a partnership between the Trust and Disabled Sports USA. Paralympics coaches taught them how to run on prosthetic legs.

As the Trust worked with California Pools of Hope, aquatic therapy brought new mobility and strength to veterans with brain and spinal injuries, neurological diseases, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis and a variety of other physical maladies.

Thanks to the Trust and Creative Alternatives of New York, theatrical programs facilitated therapy for veterans suffering mental illness or substance abuse.

To promote awareness and appreciation for the sacrifices of veterans by educating the public about the effects of war, we continued our support of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall — I'm sorry, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund's "Wall That Heals," a traveling replica of The Wall and Museum Exhibition Center that is displayed in communities across the country.

Because Outward Bound programs have proven their worth time and again as part of an overall therapeutic approach to PTSD, the Trust once again funded the participation of a number of veterans.

We helped the National Amputation Foundation expand an important outreach program aimed at amputee veterans throughout the nation. The Trust assisted our NSOs by funding leadership and management training. We also invested in the DAV's National Transportation Network.

Homeless veterans have always ranked high among the Trust's priorities. During 2004, we funded a wide range of initiatives aimed at their needs and long-term rehabilitation.

It's simply essential that we take care of the immediate concerns of these, our brothers and sisters, very many of whom have psychological problems rooted in wartime experiences. We must also offer them the hands of fellow veterans as they strive to rebuild their ruined lives.

The Charitable Service Trust is also working to improve life for veterans as they receive treatment for disabilities at VA medical centers and state veterans' homes. That commitment bore fruit in a number of funded programs during 2004.

In a unique partnership with the Trust, the American Pain Foundation is developing a new Internet information and outreach strategy aimed specifically at veterans who suffer chronic pain.

Now, that's quite a list. Great things are happening. But most of all, I hope you see how the Trust gives substance to the phrase, "Support the Troops" at a time when substance is badly needed.

So let me repeat that slogan as I thank our wonderful National Service Officers, Transition Service Officers and Hospital Service Coordinators.

When you return to your offices, remember that you work side by side with the government employees and military people who form the Trust's most important audience.

Help them understand how they can "Support the Troops" through the DAV Charitable Service Trust. Please carry that message all year long, but especially during the upcoming Combined Federal Campaigns and the United Way campaigns.

As I offer my gratitude to you, our DAV members and guests at this Convention, let me extend a challenge as well. There is much you can do in your chapter, your department and as individuals who care.

Just spread the word about how to "Support the Troops" through the United Way and the CFC. Let me close by telling you about a young soldier, wounded just weeks ago, when his vehicle ran over a mine outside of Kabul, Afghanistan.

His face took the brunt of the blast and one arm was shredded. Many among you know about such wounds. You know this soldier will need the best the VA can provide.

But you know he will need something else, something no government can provide. Throughout the rest of his life, he'll need the love and respect of his brothers and sisters, you and me.

When I needed it most, I received that compassion from my friends in the DAV. I want to reciprocate by passing it along to the next veteran who needs that care and devotion.

I tell this story because the DAV Charitable Service Trust is much more than a vehicle for funding services. It's one of the important ways in which our organization passes abiding friendship from one veteran to the next, from you to that young soldier, whose face and arm were destroyed in Afghanistan.

That's why I'm so grateful for your support of the Trust and its work. I thank you in the name of every veteran, whose life we touched last year.

Let me, at this time, acknowledge Trust Administrator Nancy O'Brien and her staff back at the National Headquarters for the marvelous job that they do in guiding our Board of Directors in their decision making. It is a very, very important part of the DAV. Thank you all. God bless and enjoy the rest of the Convention. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Dick. May I have a motion to accept that wonderful report.

MR. SEYMOUR GITLIN: Mike 3.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 3.

MR. GITLIN: Sy Gitlin, Chapter 76, National Amputation Chapter, makes that great motion.

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Charitable Service Trust

Financial Statements for the Years Ended December 31, 2004 and 2003 and Independent Auditors' Report

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT	1
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS OF AND FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004 AND 2003:	
Statements of Financial Position	2
Statements of Activities	3
Statements of Functional Expenses	4
Statements of Cash Flows	5
Notes to Financial Statements	6-8
Schedule of Allocations to Charitable Programs for the Years Ended December 31, 2004 and 2003	9-10

Deloitte.

Deloitte & Touche LLP
250 East Fifth Street
Suite 1900
P.O. Box 5340
Cincinnati, OH 45201-5340
USA

Tel: +1 513 784 7100
www.deloitte.com

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 (the Trust) as of December 31, 2004 and 2003 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 consideration of internal control over financial reporting as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Company's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, 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, 2004 and 2003 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 17, 2005

Member of
Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 2004 AND 2003

ASSETS	2004	2003
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	$ 998,331	$1,096,792
ACCRUED INTEREST AND DIVIDENDS RECEIVABLE	34,413	26,606
CAMPAIGNS' PLEDGES RECEIVABLE, Net of allowance for assessment fees and uncollectible pledges of $330,519 in 2004 and $300,125 in 2003	269,816	259,230
PREPAID EXPENSES AND OTHER	17,890	14,300
INVESTMENTS	6,970,809	5,366,103
TOTAL ASSETS	$8,291,259	$6,763,031
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE—DAV	$ 48,741	$ 52,848
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE—OTHER	406	5,843
ANNUITY PAYMENT LIABILITY	3,648,328	2,906,145
TOTAL LIABILITIES	3,697,475	2,964,836
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	4,543,784	3,798,195
TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS	50,000	
TOTAL NET ASSETS	4,593,784	3,798,195
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	$8,291,259	$6,763,031

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV)
CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004 AND 2003

	2004			2003		
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:						
Contributions, net of assessment fees and provision for uncollectible pledges of $363,994 in 2004 and $268,764 in 2003	$ 1,295,562	$ 50,000	$ 1,345,562	$ 1,292,462	$ -	$ 1,292,462
Contributions of charitable gift annuities	670,002		670,002	647,787		647,787
Investment income—net	162,578		162,578	65,971		65,971
Total support and revenue	2,128,142	50,000	2,178,142	2,006,220	-	2,006,220
EXPENSES:						
Program services	1,330,913		1,330,913	1,139,497		1,139,497
Management and general	79,453		79,453	70,655		70,655
Fundraising	25,396		25,396	16,636		16,636
Total expenses	1,435,762	-	1,435,762	1,226,788	-	1,226,788
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS BEFORE UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	692,380	50,000	742,380	779,432		779,432
CHANGE IN UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	53,209		53,209	253,265		253,265
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	745,589	50,000	795,589	1,032,697	-	1,032,697
NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	3,798,195		3,798,195	2,765,498		2,765,498
NET ASSETS—End of year	$ 4,543,784	$ 50,000	$ 4,593,784	$ 3,798,195	$ -	$ 3,798,195

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV)
CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004 AND 2003

	2004				2003			
	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
EXPENSES:								
Allocations to charitable programs	$1,288,306	$ -	$ -	$1,288,306	$1,097,599	$ -	$ -	$1,097,599
Grant proposal processing	26,141			26,141	30,449			30,449
Administrative charges		17,427		17,427		20,299		20,299
Travel		19,028		19,028		13,560		13,560
Advertising		25,959		25,959		25,307		25,307
Printing, stationery and supplies	8,183	8,183	25,396	41,762	5,178	5,179	16,636	26,993
Professional fees	6,658	6,658		13,316	4,795	4,794		9,589
Insurance	1,625	1,625		3,250	1,476	1,476		2,952
Registration fees		573		573		40		40
TOTAL EXPENSES	$1,330,913	$79,453	$25,396	$1,435,762	$1,139,497	$70,655	$16,636	$1,226,788

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004 AND 2003

	2004	2003
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Change in net assets	$ 795,589	$ 1,032,697
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Change in unrealized appreciation of investments	(53,209)	(253,265)
(Gain) Loss on sale of investments	(23,055)	34,321
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Interest and dividends receivable	(7,807)	(2,702)
Campaigns' pledges receivable	(10,586)	(17,779)
Prepaid expenses and other	(3,590)	3,674
Accounts payable	(9,544)	14,042
Net cash provided by operating activities	687,798	810,988
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Purchase of investments	(6,765,711)	(5,850,863)
Proceeds from the sale of investments	5,237,269	4,806,935
Net cash used in investing activities	(1,528,442)	(1,043,928)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:		
Proceeds from contributions restricted for investment subject to annuity agreement	1,280,389	720,799
Payments to annuitants	(538,206)	(415,245)
Net cash provided by financing activities	742,183	305,554
NET (DECREASE) INCREASE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	(98,461)	72,614
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS—Beginning of year	1,096,792	1,024,178
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS—End of year	$ 998,331	$ 1,096,792

See notes to financial statements.

1. ORGANIZATION

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Charitable Service Trust (the 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 is 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 2004 and 2003, 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, 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 $126,452 and $103,426 in 2004 and 2003, respectively, for excess income recognized by MVPSOA in 2003 and 2002.

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.

Temporarily Restricted Net Assets—In 2004, the Trust received a $50,000 grant from an anonymous donor. The gift was restricted to care for and support members of the Armed Services injured in Iraq and Afghanistan and their families.

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 at December 31 are summarized below:

2004	Cost	Market	Unrealized Appreciation (Depreciation)
Cash equivalents	$ 236	$ 236	$ -
Money market investments	1,422,232	1,422,232	
U.S. treasury notes and corporate bonds	2,975,234	2,958,798	(16,436)
Common stock and equity funds	2,363,524	2,589,543	226,019
Total	$6,761,226	$6,970,809	$209,583

2003	Cost	Market	Unrealized Appreciation
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

Investment income is composed of interest and dividend income of $164,683 and $121,895, realized gains (losses) on the sale of securities of $23,055 and $(34,321), net of fees paid to trustees of $25,160 and $21,603, in 2004 and 2003, respectively.

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 $43,568 and $49,916 in 2004 and 2003, 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 2004 and 2003, respectively, the DAV Charitable Service Trust made a $625,000 and $615,000 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 2004 and 2003, 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%.

* * * * *

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV)
CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

SCHEDULE OF ALLOCATIONS TO CHARITABLE PROGRAMS
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004 AND 2003

	2004	2003
ALLOCATIONS TO CHARITABLE PROGRAMS:		
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care, Domiciliary Care & Transitional Housing Programs for Homeless Veterans	$ 33,800	$ 10,000
Brown County Chapter of The Armitage - Transitional Housing and Training Program for Homeless Veterans	20,000	25,000
Hoosier Veterans Assistance Foundation - Drop-in Center for Homeless/Needy Veterans	30,000	30,000
Applied Behavioral Rehabilitation and Research - Mental Health, And Substance Abuse Treatment, Life Skills Counseling and Vocational Training for Homeless Veterans	25,000	
Central City Concern - Optical and Dental Care Programs for Homeless/Needy Veterans	50,000	
Indiana University - Vision Screening Program for Homeless/Needy Veterans	16,000	
Jobs For Homeless People (JHP) - Employment Assistance, Counseling and Support Services for Homeless Veterans	25,000	
Mental Health Systems - Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program	40,000	
North Charleston Community Interfaith Center - Emergency and Transitional Housing for Homeless Veterans	10,000	
Serenity House of Volusia - Emergency Housing and Rehabilitative Services for Homeless Veterans	20,000	
Veteran Hospice Homestead - Specialized Convalescent Care For Homeless/Needy, Terminally Ill Veterans	40,000	
Erie United Methodist Alliance - Counseling and Rehabilitative Programs for Veterans suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	5,600	
Lutheran Social Services - Emergency Housing and Transportation Services for Homeless/Low Income Veterans	15,000	
VetSpace - Transitional and Permanent Housing for Homeless Veterans	25,000	
Iowa Coalition for Housing and the Homeless - StandDown for Homeless/Needy Veterans	2,500	
Joseph House - Counseling and Rehabilitation Treatment Program for Homeless Veterans		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
Disabled American Veterans National Transportation Network Van Grant Program	625,000	615,000

(Continued)

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

SCHEDULE OF ALLOCATIONS TO CHARITABLE PROGRAMS
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004 AND 2003

	2004	2003
ALLOCATIONS TO CHARITABLE PROGRAMS:		
Creative Alternatives of New York - Therapeutic Workshops for Veterans Suffering From Mental Illness, Spinal Cord Injuries & Substance Abuse	$ 10,000	$ 8,000
National Amputee Golf Association - Therapeutic/Rehabilitative Programs for Disabled Veterans	10,000	7,500
Achilles Track Club - Rehabilitation Program for Amputees and Seriously Disabled Veterans of Iraq War	25,000	
California Pools of Hope - Aquatic Therapy for Veterans Suffering Brain and Spinal Injuries, Neurological Diseases	12,500	
Disabled Sports USA - Rehabilitative Services for Members of the Armed Forces Injured While Serving in Iraq	21,000	
Quantum Leap Farm - Hippotherapy Program for Veterans Suffering Traumatic Brain Injuries	10,000	
Outward Bound - Rehabilitative Programs for Veterans Suffering From Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	32,320	
Missouri State Veterans Home - Cape Girardeau - Medical and Healthcare Equipment to Aid in the Care of Veteran Residents	20,000	21,705
American Pain Foundation - Informational Programs Designed to Assist Veterans in Pain Management	15,900	
Wesley Community Services - Services for Low Income and At-Risk Veterans in Poor Health to Maintain Healthy Living Environment	10,000	
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center - St. Petersburg Career Resource Center to Assist Disabled Veterans with Job Training and Employment Assistance	36,250	
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund - Informational Programs Designed to Educate the Public About the Sacrifices of Veterans	50,000	50,000
Hospital Hospitality House of Richmond - Lodging and Support for Veterans and their Families in Times of Medical Crises	30,000	
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
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
New Mexico State Veterans' Home - Protective Medical Equipment and Supplies for Veteran Residents to Aid in Reducing Falls and 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 Renal Center		26,906
Missouri Veterans Home - St. James - Medical Equipment and Supplies to Address the Specialized Treatment and Mobility Needs of Veteran Residents		20,000
Miscellaneous	22,436	23,548
TOTAL	$ 1,288,306	$ 1,097,599

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Sy. May I have a second?

MR. NORMAN RESNER: Mike 1.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 1.

MR. RESNER: NEC for the Twelfth District, Norm Resner, seconds that.

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

Will you please welcome John Gilpin of Massachusetts, the newly elected President of the Commanders and Adjutants Association for 2005-2006. John. (Applause)

MR. JOHN F. GILPIN, JR.: Well, I have some tough acts to follow here. But I'll try to do my best. Commander Sursely, National Adjutant Wilson, Sandy, who helped me out a lot while I was NEC, National Officers, Immediate Past National Commander Alan Bowers, members and guests, my name is John Gilpin. I'm from the great state of Massachusetts and the Red Sox World Series. I had to get that in.

It is an honor to stand before you today as the President of the State Commanders and Adjutants' Association for 2005-2006. We affirm our support for the DAV and its goals.

Before I go on with my little speech, and it's going to be short, I just have to say, I've been a life member of the DAV since 1973. I've been in the DAV since '73. Five years later I became a life member.

When I became state commander in Massachusetts in 1990-91, I got involved with the C and A, and I started out at the different, lower part of jobs. One of my jobs was sergeant-at-arms at the door.

You know, these little stickers we sell at the registration, you know, you have to register in order to get into the meeting. So I was at the door and at that time Ernie Balcom -- you all remember Ernie Balcom. He said, "Nobody gets in this room unless they have this orange sticker or red sticker", whatever sticker it was at that time.

So I'm standing at the door and my good friend, Arthur Wilson, came in, and I said, "Where's your sticker?" And he said, "I don't have it." I said, "You can't get into the meeting." But anyways, I let Arthur in.

I went up the chairs of the C and A, and I became Vice President. As I say, at that time -- I became Vice President in 1996, and the C and A, maybe, at that time, was running at a different drum beat.

As Vice President, I was in communication by telephone. I didn't have e-mail or a computer, but I was on the telephone with David Tannenbaum quite a bit to set this record straight.

But as it came, not at a different drum beat, and we didn't have a full deck, as they'd say in Las Vegas. So the election came and I was out, so I can say I am the President that was Vice President twice.

So I went to boot camp at Paris Island, and the DI said, "You never give up." So, I stuck it out, and I came back. So I am now your President, and I do work for the Boston Red Sox. If any of you guys come down there, I work at the gate so if any of you guys come down and want to see a Red Sox game, I'll try to get you in. (Laughter) All right, I maybe shouldn't say that. Whatever is said in Vegas stays in Vegas.

The accomplishment of the DAV mission of building better lives for our nation's disabled veterans and their families requires a commitment and dedication to the service on the part of our membership.

Underpinning the commitment is a need to have effective and coordinated leadership to all levels of the DAV. The State Commanders and Adjutants Association fully subscribes to the DAV mission statement and supports the training of our department leadership through the annual orientation at the National Headquarters.

In addition, we sponsor the learning seminars conducted at the DAV Mid-Winter Conference. On behalf of our membership, I can state to our standing national leadership and members of the DAV that the State Commanders and Adjutants Association will continue –– and I underline continue –– our efforts to bring the knowledge and training to those who seek to serve the DAV. This I promise and I underlined that.

At this time I would like to read for the record our C and A leadership for 2005-2006. Now, I'm from Massachusetts, out of Boston, and my pronunciation is a little different from normal people so: vice president from Florida, Richard Giese; Executive Committee, Rita Aberegg from Virginia; Lee Ewing, Kentucky, Jim Bogan, California, Dave Brader, Kansas, Gerald Gowan, Texas, Bill Novak, New York; secretary-treasurer – what is his name –– Dave Tannenbaum; our secretary-treasurer, Sloan Hoopes from Virginia. By the way, Dave was from Virginia, but now he's from Florida. He insists on that. (Applause)

Judge Advocate who was an excellent past president of the C and A and I follow in his footsteps, Jimmy O. Stewart from South Carolina. Chaplain who is always behind me, Bill Brzezinski from Nevada. Immediate past president, who I hope to fill her shoes, but she wears high heels and I'm not used to the high heels, wearing them, so, Khristine Childers from Nebraska.

Sergeant-at-arms, John Skyler of New York. Resolutions Committee: Roger Hamel from Massachusetts, Sarah Royse from Washington, Jeff Martin from Virginia. Audit Committee: Tim Hammons from Georgia, Jim Fox from New Jersey; Irvin Eddy from Oklahoma, Joe Costa from Massachusetts.

Constitution and Bylaws: Joe Harris from New Jersey, Mark Aaron from Illinois, Wilbert Forbes from Maryland –– now I'll pronounce this right because I've got it written in my language underneath, Marina Imani from Nevada.

Special Projects: Dave Stewart, California; Joseph Conley, Michigan; Bill Newby, Tennessee; and, last but not least, Shirley Scofield of Idaho. I now ask these individuals, if they're in the audience, to please stand and be recognized. (Applause)

Now, before I finish -- I didn't do it when they were going up for the Foundation -- I was going to go up with a few checks, but I'd like Arthur Wilson and our National Commander Jim Sursely to come up to the podium, please.

I think I have two checks. This is one check for the National Service Foundation for $1,500. (Applause) This is another check from our past president, a donation from Khristine Childers, $100. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, John.

MR. GILPIN: I just want to thank you very much, and I want to thank the state of Massachusetts for their support. I want to thank all the C and A members for their support. I'll try to do the best job possible that I can for the Disabled American Veterans. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: John, thank you very much and congratulations to all the newly-elected officers with C and A.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Ladies and gentlemen, if you will please rise, I will ask the Chaplain to lead us in a closing prayer.

CHAPLAIN STUMP: Our Father, we ask as we recess now and we want to thank You for the lunch we are about to receive. May it nourish us and fill us to prepare us for the continued business. Go with each and every one, we ask, O Holy Spirit. Amen.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Amen. Thank you, Gerald. The Convention stands in recess until 1:00 this afternoon.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 11:18 o'clock a.m. August 17, 2005.)

FINAL BUSINESS SESSION

August 17, 2005

The Final Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans 84th National Convention reconvened in the Events Center of Bally's Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada, Wednesday afternoon, August 17, 2005, and was called to order at 1:08 o'clock p.m. by National Commander James E. Sursely.

COMMANDER SURSELY: The Convention will please come to order. In opening this afternoon's business session, it is fitting and proper that we render the respect due to the flag. Hand salute, two. We will now be led in prayer by Chaplain Stump.

CHAPLAIN STUMP: Our Heavenly Father, we thank You for our short recess and rest. We thank You for all the activities of the morning, for the incredible generosity to this great organization.

We look forward to this afternoon, for the election and all the business to be transacted there and pray that all things would be done with decency and order and that You will receive the glory and this great organization receive the benefit which in His name we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you Chaplain Stump. 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, a delegate must state their name, chapter number and the state they represent. It gives me great pleasure at this time to introduce Bill Taylor, the chairman of the Interim POW/MIA Committee, for a special presentation. Bill.

MR. BILL TAYLOR: Thank you, Commander. Commander, ladies and gentlemen and distinguished guests, this afternoon I would like to present a flag, an honored flag, to Mr. Arthur H. Wilson.

This flag was received to the POW/MIA Committee from a Mr. Paul Clamp, Chapter 76 --78, I apologize. I thought he said 76. You know what happens when you get old. (Laughter)

This flag is an honored flag and should be placed, we feel, in our National Organization Museum in Cincinnati, Ohio. We shall never forget 9-11, that tragic day that killed many, many Americans, and many Americans died trying to save the ones that were left. At this time, Mr. Wilson.

(Whereupon, the flag was presented to Arthur H. Wilson.)

MR. TAYLOR: This flag consists of thousands of names from the Twin Towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. (Applause)

ADJUTANT WILSON: Thank you, Bill. We will proudly display this flag in a special place of honor in our Visitors Center at National Headquarters. Thank you very much.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Bill, thank you.

MR. JOSEPH M. CONNELLY: Commander, Mike 1.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 1.

MR. CONNELLY: Commander, Joe Connelly, Past Department Commander of Michigan. I was on the first National POW Committee we had back in '91 -- '92. I attended that meeting yesterday. The Committee and the Advisor, Joe Violante, did an outstanding job. There was a great attendance.

The first Committee meeting we had in '91 -- '92, rather, in Reno, only a handful of people were there. Yesterday, there were at least 150-200 people and congratulations to that Committee.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Well, thank you very much for that comment. (Applause) We certainly do appreciate the Committee's hard work. I want to announce at this time that the registration of delegates is closed, and we will call on a final report of the Credentials Committee. Mary.

MS. BENCIVENGA: Good afternoon. National Commander, National Officers, national staff, delegates and guests, this is the final report for the Credentials Committee and reflects the total registration as of 11:00 a.m. on August 17th, 2005.

At the present time we have 559 chapters, 47 departments, 32 National Officers, 12 Past National Commanders, for a total of 1,527 delegates and 57 alternates. That gives us a total vote of 10,758. Once again, the total vote is 10,758.

At this time, I would like to extend my thanks to the Committee members and the advisors. Comrade Commander, this completes the final report for the Credentials Committee, and I move for its adoption.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Mary. We have a motion. We need a second.

DELEGATE: Mike 2.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 2.

DELEGATE: Delegate from New Jersey, Chapter 15, second the motion.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you. We have a motion and a second. All those in favor, signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. Next, we'll call on the chairman of the Nominating Committee for his report. Dennis.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you, Commander. Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Nomination of National Officers was called to order for its first business session on August 14th, 2005, by the Committee advisors, Gene A. Murphy and Richard E. Marbes.

The first order of business was the election of a Convention Committee chairman and secretary. Dennis Joyner was elected chairman and Michael Whelihan was elected as secretary.

The Committee met two more times. During the times of our meetings, we interviewed ten candidates. The following candidates are the candidates that the Nominating Committee has recommended to the National Convention:

For the office of National Commander: Paul W. Jackson, Colorado;

For the office of National Senior Vice Commander, Bradley S. Barton, Oregon;

For the office of National First Junior Vice Commander, Robert T. "Rob" Reynolds, Virginia;

For the office of National Second Junior Vice Commander, Raymond E. Dempsey, Illinois;

For the office of National Third Junior Vice Commander, Roberto "Bobby" Barrera, from Texas;

For the office of National Fourth Junior Vice Commander, Wallace E. "Wally" Tyson, North Carolina; (Applause)

For the of office National Chaplain, the Reverend Ed Bastille from California;

For the office of National Judge Advocate, Michael E. Dobmeier of North Dakota.

Comrade Commander this completes the report of the Committee on Nomination of National Officers. I move the adoption of this report and that the Committee be discharged with the thanks of the National Convention.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Dennis, for a job well done. I will now call for a second to that report from the Committee on Nomination of National Officers be adopted and that the Committee be discharged.

MR. MORRISON: Mike 3.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Mike 3.

MR. MORRISON: Comrade Commander, Vincent Morrison, Chapter 9, Houston, Texas, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER SURSELY: We have a motion and a second. All those in favor, signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

You have heard the report of the Committee on Nomination of National Officers and they have nominated Paul Jackson for National Commander. Here to second the nomination is Mike Terry of Colorado. Mike.

MR. MIKE TERRY: Thank you, Commander. National Commander Sursely, National Adjutant Wilson, National line officers, ladies and gentlemen. Leadership and dedication to the DAV is synonymous to Paul. Paul served honorably and with distinction in the United States Marine Corps and United States Army and retired in 1973.

During his military service, he was awarded the Korean Service Medal with Three Stars, two Bronze Stars, four Army Commendation Medals, earned the Air Medal by volunteering to participate in more than 25 aerial flights in support of combat ground forces in Vietnam.

He spent one tour in Korea with the Marines, two tours in Vietnam, one with the First Infantry Division and the second with the First Airborne Division.

Mr. Jackson has been a life member of the Disabled American Veterans since 1985, past commander of Chapter 7, held all department elected offices, at the national level, chaired the National Voluntary Service Committee, 1998, appointed to the National Employment Committee, 1999 and chaired the National Employment Committee in 2000.

Mr. Jackson was elected National Fourth Junior Vice Commander at the 2000 National Convention, advancing thereafter to his current position. Paul asks that I mention his best friend, who also is his wife, "Mean Jean," (Applause) who not only stood by his side but has been an active participant in that statement "building better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families."

Both are committed to the cause of this great organization. Paul told me his desire is that his life will represent the statement by Ralph Waldo Emerson, "To laugh often and much, to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children, to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends, to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others, to leave the word a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition, to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived, this is to have succeeded." This is Paul's hope.

Commander Sursely, delegates to the 84th National Convention, on behalf of the members of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming, I am extremely proud and honored to second the nomination for the office of National Commander of the Disabled American Veterans 2005-2006, Paul W. "Action" Jackson. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Paul wanted to rush right up to the mike, but we figured we'd probably better get him elected first. (Laughter) I know I'm on my way out, but let's not hurry this thing along any. (Laughter)

The Chair will now call for any further nominations for the office of National Commander. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations?

If there are no further nominations, I close nominations and declare Paul W. Jackson 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 Paul W. Jackson for the office of National Commander. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER SURSELY: The Nominating Committee has nominated Brad Barton for the office of National Senior Vice Commander. I will now call for any further nominations for National Senior Vice Commander.

Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Brad Barton elected as National Senior Vice Commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Rob Reynolds for the office of National First Junior Vice Commander. I will now call for any further nominations for National First Junior Vice Commander. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations?

If there are no further nominations, I will close the nominations and declare Rob Reynolds elected as National First Junior Vice Commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Ray Dempsey for the office of National Second Junior Vice Commander. I will now call for any further nominations for National Second Junior Vice Commander.

Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I will close the nominations and declare Ray Dempsey elected National Second Junior Vice Commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Roberto "Bobby" Barrera for the office of National Third Junior Vice Commander. I will now call for any further nominations for National Third Junior Vice Commander.

Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Roberto "Bobby" Barrera National Third Junior Vice Commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Wallace Tyson for the office of National Fourth Junior Vice Commander. I will now call for any further nominations for National Fourth Junior Vice Commander.

Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I will close the nominations and declare Wallace Tyson elected as National Fourth Junior Vice Commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Michael Dobmeier for the office of National Judge Advocate. I will now call for any further nominations for National Judge Advocate.

Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Michael Dobmeier elected as National Judge Advocate. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Ed Bastille for the office of National Chaplain. I will now call for any further nominations for National Chaplain.

Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Ed Bastille elected as National Chaplain. (Applause)

I will now instruct the National Adjutant to cast one unanimous ballot for these offices.

ADJUTANT WILSON: I, Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant of the Disabled American Veterans, cast one unanimous ballot for: Bradley Barton for National Senior Vice Commander; Robert Reynolds for National First Junior Vice Commander; Raymond Dempsey for National Second Junior Vice Commander; Roberto "Bobby" Barrera for National Third Junior Vice Commander; Wallace Tyson for National Fourth Junior Vice Commander; Michael Dobmeier for National Judge Advocate; and Reverend Ed Bastille for National Chaplain. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Art. I would like to ask the newly-elected officers and their wives to be escorted to the podium if they would, please. I will now call on Paul Jackson to make his acceptance speech. Paul.

COMMANDER-ELECT PAUL W. JACKSON: Thank you, thank you, thank you. I missed the guy in the last row. Would you come up, I want to hug you, too, please. (Laughter)

Thank you very much. Thank you again. National Commander Sursely, National Adjutant Art Wilson, department, chapter commanders, honored guests, friends and delegates to the 84th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans, let me begin by telling you how humbled I am that you've chosen me to represent the DAV as your National Commander in the coming year.

I thank you for the confidence you have placed in me, and I tell you I will do all in my power to be worthy of this truly great honor. Thank you. (Applause)

I would be remiss if I didn't thank a few people who helped make this day possible: Murphy Borelli Klumker Chapter and Unit Number 7; my friend, my cohort, my brother, whatever, Director Mike Terry, Department of Colorado and his great support staff, Karen Rosa, Marilyn Opie, and we've got a transplant from there, Barb Taylor, who now works in the NSO Office here in Las Vegas; Rob Lougee and his staff at the DAV National Service Office in Denver; our Past National Commanders in Colorado, Peter L. Dye, Billy O. Hightower, and we have an Auxiliary Past National Commander Pauline Wright and the entire staff in the departments of Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Wyoming, DAV and Auxiliary for all your continued support and your confidence.

Actually, that includes all the chapters as well. Would the Seventeenth District please stand and be recognized and be loud like the Seventeenth District is noted for. (Applause)

Thank you. At this time, I want to proclaim that I could not have done it without all of you, and I am sincerely grateful for what you do.

Because of the leadership, vision and dedication of Mr. Wilson, our professional staff in Cincinnati and Washington has made the DAV the unquestioned leaders among the veterans service organizations. We owe all of you, Art, our sincere thanks and appreciation. Thank you very much. (Applause)

Please allow me to introduce my family. I think she was introduced a little bit, but first and foremost my wife. As I say, most of you know her by "Mean Jean." (Applause)

If I could describe her importance to me, to my success, I guess I would probably say, "Friends, don't take her, she's all I've got. She's everything in life I'll ever need." Thanks, Jean, for all you did for me. (Applause)

I also want to introduce the rest of my family that's there: my oldest son, Charles. I don't know whether he got back or not. Is he back? Charles. Stand Charles, would you please? (Applause) My oldest son is also a veteran. He spent about 12 years and then he decided to get out of the military.

My daughters, Ethel, we call her "Pie"; (Applause) is Jeanine and Aida here? (Applause) There are Jeanine and Aida all the way over there. They couldn't get to here. (Applause)

My grandson, little Mikey, who is -- you know, we lost my son in April. He is the son of my deceased son. My nephew, Monte Jackson, and I'll tell you something about Monte, since we were talking about football. Monte was a defensive back for the Oakland Raiders when they played in the last Super Bowl. Monte, would you stand up, please. (Applause)

I feel very lucky to have so many friends who came to Vegas to share this special event with me: the Cunninghams, the Youngs, the Garlingtons, the Hancocks, the Winchesters, Patricia Kemp, I think she's here, Cynthia Cain, the Schapps, and Bevans, all from Colorado Springs. Will you please stand, please? (Applause)

Then I have a couple of people from my investigative friends at the Welfare Fraud Regime, Davis, Nichols and McKai, and their wives, Juanita Davis and Donna McKai. Would you guys stand, please? Stand up Dennis. Stand up.

I want to tell you something. In my opinion, there are certain requirements and qualifications a leader should possess in order to lead an organization such as this of 1.3 million members.

I will tell you what I think they should have. I believe they must have that humble touch, that down to earth approach to problems and people, and the desire to help people must run deep in the grain of their personality and beliefs.

My friend, Commander Sursely, and comrade, again, it's my opinion you are such a person. (Applause) I will tell you, I am so proud to have you for a friend now and forever.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you.

COMMANDER-ELECT JACKSON: I take the liberty to thank you for all the members of the DAV this year for your commitment and your service. (Applause) May your life be filled with love and joy, Jim, sufficient for you to live in contentment and peace.

May your successes be many and your failures just enough to maintain your humility. May your companions be true friends and your friends loyal allies. Lastly, I wish for you, my friend, all the things in life that I wish for myself. (Applause)

It is an honor and a privilege to stand before you today, because no other organization can match your dedication to the men and women whose service and sacrifice have kept America strong and free.

We share a very strong commitment to serving our fellow veterans and their families, and I will tell you the reason why, because we have such a common bond.

We draw tremendous strengths from those bonds, as we remain focused on the goals of this great organization. So, believe me, nobody does it better than the DAV when it comes to service to veterans and their families. (Applause)

As I thought about that, I am reminded of what the late friend of us all, Jesse Brown, said in one of his speeches, I remember. I think he said, "We all stand on common ground. We have one common creator and that's God. We have one common experience and that's war; one common bond, our disabilities; one common commitment, fairness; and one common hope, justice for all our disabled veterans." (Applause)

You know, when I first joined the DAV some 20 years ago, I could not have guessed that the path would lead me here today. I had no idea there would be so many wonderful people that I've met and worked with all this time.

I want to thank you for being who you are and for the love and kindness that you have shown Jean and me. But somewhere along the line I think you should know that somehow or another, Jerry Steelman, who is from Colorado, started calling me "Action Jackson," such a name as that, I just don't know why.

But guess what? I really think the name suits me just fine. (Laughter) In fact, I think I'm going to put it to work setting the tone for the coming year. We're going to call it "Service and advocacy in action." Please allow me to repeat that, "Service and advocacy in action." That's right. (Applause)

You know, I'd like to see all of us dedicate ourselves to really re-energizing our organization's grassroots, to become more, even more involved in making a real difference in the veterans arena.

We need to focus on taking an active part, both individually and collectively, in direct service to our veterans. We need to redouble our efforts to build awareness and support for our veterans programs, both in Washington and among the American public.

As we all know, a big part of having a successful grassroots program is building an even stronger active membership. I think that people have talked a little bit about membership every day that we've been here.

But speaking of membership, I think we now have a confirmed membership of 1.3 million disabled veterans. That is quite an accomplishment by itself.

What's more, I think that we have within our grasp, the ability to achieve a goal we've been working on for a long time, and you know what that is.

I'm talking about one million full-paid life members, one million. I think that we can do that. I know it's a goal that can be achieved probably in a matter of months.

So why don't you join me and a guy that you know, my good friend, Coy Hennis, and all the other recruiters that help make this goal happen. Can we do that? (Applause) Let me ask you one more time, can we count on you to make it happen? (Applause)

The reason why it's important, we need to achieve that goal, not only to strengthen our organization internally, but it translates into added clout in Washington.

As you know, it takes a lot of hard work on the part of our legislative team and our grassroots organization to show Congress that there is a groundswell of support for disabled veterans and their families.

I'll tell you what we've got to do. We've got to remind them that Washington, as our first President, plainly stated that, "The soldiers returning from war had purchased liberty with the price of their blood."

He went on to urge the fellow citizens and the government to care for those returning from the war. He reminded America's leaders that such was a sacred duty, a common debt. He called it a "debt of honor."

Service and advocacy in action, that's what an active grassroots movement is all about, getting our lawmakers to act in the best interest of our veterans.

I'll tell you, we have a tremendous organization and an extraordinary opportunity to build an even stronger team by reaching out to our young veterans, such as those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

I'll tell you why we need younger veterans, my friends, because the fight we are in, and it is a fight. It's not a sprint. I tell you, it's a marathon. We need young runners. So let's try and embrace our young veterans and bring them into the fold.

Service and advocacy in action also means chapter and department leaders need to take an active role themselves. A lot of times we don't do this, but we must lead by example.

We've got to be mentors to inspire newer members to become active and stay active. We really need, as I said before, to embrace these younger disabled veterans. I'll tell you, you should know this, they are needed to help ensure our future. (Applause)

I think many of you know that I've been active in the National Disabled American Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. In fact, it's one of my favorite volunteer activities.

I'll tell you something, I've seen the amazing transformation that takes place in the lives of these younger and older disabled veterans. But the other remarkable thing about these men and women is that many are being introduced by your and my DAV National Service Officers, Transition Service Officers and even some of you who regularly visit our hospitals.

I'll tell you something else, our NSOs and our department and chapter Service Officers continue the outstanding tradition of service. They are dedicated and talented people who have put your interests first.

I am proud of the jobs they do; they are most deserving of our support. In fact, they are the caretakers of our future. (Applause) As far as I'm concerned, they are true examples of service and advocacy in action.

So I'm asking you, would those of you who can stand -- I know some of you can't -- would you please stand and give our NSOs, Chapter Service Officers and Department Service Officers a standing ovation. (Standing Ovation)

Thank you. Thank you. You know our Volunteer Service Program continues to set new records year-in and year-out. Our HSCs and our volunteers in the Transportation Network donate thousands of hours to make sure sick and disabled veterans get to their medical appointments.

We have one of the largest groups of volunteers in our VA facilities. And you know what? They have set the standards for service to others. I'll tell you, they can be an excellent mentors for young volunteers.

Service and advocacy in action means we can also expand opportunities for volunteering in our communities. I'll tell you the reason why, because the need is so great.

As I was thinking about that, I am reminded of a speech by National Commander Robert Marx and that was at the second National Convention the 27th of June 1922, when we talk about volunteering.

He said, "The foremost purpose of the DAV is to go out into the no-man's land of governmental neglect and popular indifferences, to go into the homes, to go into the hospitals and bring relief to our wounded and disabled comrades and to carry them back from suffering and distress to health and happiness." So you see, there are plenty of ways every one of us can put DAV service and advocacy in action. I'm urging all of you to get onboard and be an active part of the greatest veterans service organization in the world. (Applause)

I want to share with you an experience I had on my first assignment. When I was elected the National Fourth Junior Vice Commander, my first assignment was in Augusta, Georgia.

It was with, and I think is that the Fourth District? Is that the Eighth District? Ninth District. It was the Ninth District. I had a hard time getting there. I'm not going to talk about that. We had a really hard time getting there.

But once we got there, the hospitality was great. I was nervous. Mean Jean was to my right as I was presenting my speech to the delegation. After I thought that I was complete, I thought I did a pretty good job, I was about to close and sit down when Jean grabbed my coattail and said to me, "Don't you dare sit down without acknowledging the Auxiliary." (Laughter)

Apparently, I'm about to sit down, so I particularly want to say thanks to our DAVA partners who share in the successes of this great organization. (Applause)

You know, we have a proud legacy passed on from all our great leaders, from Judge Marx on down. I pledge to uphold those legacies. Again, I tell you I'm honored, I'm humbled to have been given this opportunity to lead this prestigious organization.

But I know, I know, that I can count on all of you to help me along the way as we put DAV service and advocacy in action for today, and for tomorrow.

Before I close, let me say just a little something to you because I know I'm in my chapter, I'm in my department. Every now and then you get disgusted, you look around at your fellow comrades, and you don't think that they are doing enough.

You want to quit. You want to just throw it in. But let me remind you of something, and I want you to try to remember this. When you get to that point, you always say to yourself, "I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something for this organization."

May God bless America, God bless the DAV and God bless all of you. Thank you all very much. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Paul, first of all, let me say thank you for those warm and genuine compliments that you paid to me. On behalf of our organization, we certainly congratulate you again on being elected our new National Commander 2005-2006. We'd like to present you with this hat. Congratulations, Paul. (Applause)

All right, next, we'll call on our newly-elected National Senior Vice Commander Brad Barton for his comments. Brad. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER BRADLEY S. BARTON: Good afternoon. It's hard to follow a class act like this gentleman, a fellow Marine, one outstanding individual, and I'm looking forward to working with him.

First of all, I would like to thank Arthur Wilson for his dedication to our organization, its principles and mission. Over 30 years of service to this great organization. Thank you, Art. (Applause)

I'd like to thank the director of our National Legislative and Service Headquarters in Washington, D.C., Dave Gorman. I'm praying Dave has a very healthy baby and it arrives very soon.

I'd like to thank Rick Paterson and his staff at National Headquarters in Cold Springs, Kentucky, for all the great work they do and our fundraising efforts. They do an outstanding job. I understand Rick had a little health problem, and I hope he's feeling much better.

Sandy Buchanan, you're a sweetheart. You're the most valuable asset we have at National Headquarters. Thank you. (Applause)

Jim Sursely, boy he gave us one outstanding year, didn't he? (Applause) In fact, I'm going to kiss him again later (Laughter) just to tell him how much I appreciate his service to our great organization. Thank you, Jim.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Brad. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-ELECT BARTON: To our incoming commander, Commander Jackson, whatever you need, whatever you want me to do, I'm there. You're going to have one successful year. (Laughter) Maybe you're going to have one successful year. (Laughter)

No, he is going to have one successful year. He's an outstanding individual. Whatever I can do to help in that effort, please ask. To my fellow line officers, Rob, Ray, Bobby, thank you very much, Mike, Jerry, you guys do an outstanding job. Thank you very much.

I'd like to recognize the Nineteenth District and the four departments of Alaska, Washington, Idaho and Oregon. Would you please stand and be recognized? (Applause) This department has been very supportive of my candidacy and I appreciate that.

I have here with me, at this Convention, thirteen of Brad's supporters from DAV Portland Chapter 1. I'd like to thank them for their efforts on my behalf at this Convention and for their endearing support, friendship.

They are: Dwayne Adams, John Almon, Mike Ashton, Bob Asiello, Stan Barton, Clarence Compton, Greg Georgoff, LaFayette Keaton, Henry Odum, Cas Tie, Bruce Young and Jay Woodbury. You guys stand up and take a bow. Thank you. (Applause)

The greatest love of my life, my biggest supporter, my best friend, I would like to introduce you to my wife, Donna Barton. (Applause) I have here another family member with me. I don't know if he has brought his grandson or not, but I would like him to stand and be recognized, my brother, Ozo Barton. (Applause)

My champion in this organization, my mentor, my best friend, I would like to recognize him for his efforts on my behalf and thank him and his wife for their love and encouragement: Greg and Brenda Reed, please stand. (Applause)

Most of all, I want to thank the members of this great organization for your confidence in my leadership, and I promise you I will do everything in my power to improve and lead this organization to a great future. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Brad. Next, we'll call on our newly-elected National Second Junior Vice Commander Rob Reynolds from Virginia. Rob. (Applause)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-ELECT ROBERT REYNOLDS: Thank you. I am deeply humbled to be honored to serve this year as your National First Junior Vice Commander.

To our National Adjutant Art Wilson, thanks for all you do, your leadership and making the DAV what it is today. To our National Executive Directors, Rick Patterson, Dave Gorman and their staff, thank you for what you do every day that ensures we are the premiere veterans service organization.

To Sandy Buchanan, thank you for everything you do. You know, it's always a pleasure to talk with you on the phone.

To our National Service Officers and our Transition Service Officers, I can't thank you enough for what you do day in and day out to ensure our nation's men and women receive their earned benefits. Thank you. (Applause)

Just as importantly is each of you out there, from your departments, from your chapters, who work in your communities to ensure that the Disabled American Veterans remains the premiere veterans service organization and focuses on building better lives for our nation's disabled veterans and their families. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. (Applause)

This could not be possible without the support of my local chapter, Arlington-Fairfax Chapter 10 and my department, Department of Virginia, if you would please stand. (Applause) Also, just as important, the Sixth District, if you would please stand. (Applause)

National Commander Sursely, thank you for an outstanding year. You are terrific. You are a great human being. To National-elect Jackson, if there is anything I can ever do, don't hesitate to call on me. I wish you the best year along with the other National Officers.

To my wife, Jennifer, and my little son, R.J., (Applause) thanks for always being there when I'm on the road. As I close, I wish each of you a safe journey home. May God bless each of you. May God bless our men and women who remain in harm's way. And may God bless America. Thank each of you. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Rob. And next would be our newly-elected National Second Junior Vice Commander, Ray Dempsey of Illinois. Ray. (Applause)

SECOND JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-ELECT RAYMOND E. DEMPSEY: Anticipation. I first want to thank everyone in this audience, every DAVer for all you do for us. We thank you. We know it really starts at the chapter for anything we get done at the National level, so thank you every so much for what you do.

To all my buddies, budettes, comrades, and all friends, thank you. Budette is female buds. (Applause) I certainly have to congratulate our present Commander, still, Jim Sursely, for what a wonderful job he has done.

He has reigned his year with integrity and compassion. I think there is nobody you could see more as a role model, not only for the DAV but a role model for any individual, so thank you, Jim. (Applause)

We are ever so happy to have Commander-elect Paul "Action" Jackson. (Applause) Paul is the kind of guy that will lead us as a colleague. As any of us know, you don't have to be a National Officer.

Anybody Paul knows will -- he will give you a call any time day or night, afternoon, you never know what's coming. But Paul will give you a call, not to just talk about business.

Paul will give you a call to say, "Hey, how are you doing? How are you feeling? Is everything going all right?" He is going to be one great leader because of that compassion he already has.

A little story about Paul -- I always have a story about whoever comes in. We were kind enough -- Rob Reynolds took a number of us around Washington one day. It was Jim Sursely, Rob, Paul and myself.

Well, to make a long story short, we were traveling through Washington. He took us on a tour of the city and we happened to be walking down the street. Now, I don't feel with my right hand, so I'm walking down the street and every time I put my hand in my pocket, I'd pull it out, and change would fall out.

Well, this happened once and twice. Every time Paul went down there and he picked it up, and he said, "Here, Ray." You know, Paul was so nice, he picked it up again.

Well, this came out so Rob and Jim were up in front and they heard the change falling, and they said, Ray, again, again. I said, yes. Well, I'm going to show you what a great leader he is.

Now, he would keep doing things and getting things better. When I got back to the room, I had more change in my pocket than when I started. (Laughter) So that's Paul. (Applause)

I do want to thank National Adjutant Art Wilson for the great leadership he gives us. I would also like to thank both our National Executive Directors.

We have Rick Patterson and of course, Dave Gorman, whom I wish could hear this personally. They really keep our organization exactly what we are, the premiere veterans organization there is.

Of course, again, I have to say to my girl, Executive Secretary Sandy Buchanan, what a job she does. It's funny. Sandy and I will talk on the phone. The first ten minutes is Cubs and Reds, then we get to DAV business. But I still love her even though they beat us up bad two weeks ago.

I want to thank my Twelfth District, the district of Dick Marbes, one of the greatest leaders ever. Dick, we love you and I love my district. That is Wisconsin and Illinois.

In Illinois, I'd like to thank the commander, Mark Aaron, who has been a great leader. This is his second year as commander. I want to thank Al Reynolds, who has great vision in our department and is leading us so well. He is the man.

Of course, my buddy, my campaign manager, my best friend since nine years old, Norman J. Resner, Jr., who also, as I said, is PDC and the Twelfth District NEC.

Also, I would like to thank my second home, my second chapter that helps and supports me and has guided me the last five years as a member which is Black Mountain 12, Henderson, Nevada, right here. Thank you for all the help you give me, too. (Applause)

If I didn't say this, I'd be remiss, but I want to introduce you to truly one person I love, one person I truly respect and one person that will always be behind me, my friend for 36 years, married 31 years, my wife, Patricia. (Applause)

I took the liberty of bringing my two sons up, Timothy and Chris. Tim, Chris, stand up. (Applause) Everyone knows when you have disabilities, things may be very difficult.

These two boys make my life a dream. Anything dad wants, they jump to. It just warms my heart to have a family that is as close as we are. So thank you to my family for all the years of support.

In closing, I love and respect all of you. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you again. I will serve you, anytime, anywhere, anyplace because that's what the DAV does — anytime, anywhere, anyplace. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Ray. Next will be our newly-elected National Third Junior Vice Commander, Bobby Barrera of Texas. Bobby. (Applause)

THIRD JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-ELECT ROBERTO "BOBBY" BARRERA: Thank you so much. Art and the entire DAV staff, thank you so much for having the faith in selecting me, in re-electing me.

To the entire line officers, thank you for a beautiful year. We each in our lives come across heroes, and one of my biggest heroes is right behind me. Commander Sursely, thank you for a beautiful year. Thank you for everything that you've done for the DAV and for veterans throughout this country. Thank you. (Applause)

I want to thank all the new friends that I developed here in this first year of service to the DAV, people in Oregon, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Vermont. You made me feel right at home. Thank you so much for that.

I also want to thank the people, the men and women of the Department of Texas, District Twenty. Would you all please stand? (Applause) Thank you. Their untiring support was extremely beneficial and helpful to me.

I also want to thank a few individuals: Eldon, Duke, Bruce, Albert. Thank you for the undying loyalty and the assistance that you've provided to me as we went through this one year. I thank you so much. (Applause)

I also want to thank the person responsible for all the successes in my life, the person responsible for making me the person that I am today, my wife, please. (Applause)

Finally, I want to thank my Creator for giving me the strength and selecting me to live his promise, his promise of a bright future, a bright hope, and for allowing me to live that on a daily basis. Thank you so very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Bobby. Now for the new kid on the block but certainly no stranger to the DAV, Wally Tyson of North Carolina, our newly-elected National Fourth Junior Vice. Wally. (Applause)

FOURTH JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-ELECT WALLACE TYSON: You know, last year's convention I found out ten minutes before I was representing someone in front of the National Nominating Committee that my first grandson was born. I was totally tongue-tied. I should probably stay that way right now and go sit down. (Laughter)

But first and foremost, I, like the others, have some people to thank. My department of North Carolina and the Ninth District, we've grown together.

Will you please stand and be recognized? (Applause) In particular, I want to thank three gentlemen, Bobby Williams, our immediate past commander, Rodney Tucker and our NSO Supervisor Ron Hope.

Also, for those of you who may not have met him, we have a great commander coming in and that being George Balch. Thank you guys, I appreciate everything. (Applause)

I also want to thank the National Nominating Committee. There was some tough questioning, you may have heard. If you believe they were tough, then perhaps, maybe, we aren't doing our job.

We should know the answers to these questions. Again, seriously, I really want to thank you because these are things that I will continue to learn and grow upon.

I want to recognize the job and the leadership of Commander Sursely, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Gorman, Mr. Patterson. I want to thank, once again, as I did earlier today, the National Service Officers, the support staff, the Transition Service Officers, the Department Service Officers, and never, never let us overlook the Chapter Service Officers. That may be the first contact we have with these new potential members coming in.

I want to recognize the job done by the VAVS and the volunteer drivers. Again, another initial point of contact that I believe is going to be key to, as Commander Jackson has said, reaching that somewhat elusive one million full-paid life member goal.

I want to thank several of the Past National Commanders and others who have mentored me through the years. I appreciate your guidance, your support and your suggestions.

Most of all, I thank you for your friendship and your professionalism on behalf of the one, true service organization for veterans in this nation.

I am humbled by this opportunity, and I truly look forward to continuing to learn and grow, and I can't think of a better place to be than in line behind each of these gentlemen right here. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: All right, thank you, Wally. And next will be our newly-elected National Chaplain, Ed Bastille from California. Ed. (Applause)

CHAPLAIN-ELECT EDWARD BASTILLE, JR.: I want to thank you for your support and your vote, and I pledge to you that I will try to continue the traditions of Chaplain Stump and the many other chaplains that have served you in the past. Thank you Chaplain Stump. (Applause)

I need to introduce to you my wife, a very special person, a person who knows when to call 9-1-1 when I get in trouble, a person who can hold me by the hand, a person who is working on her doctorate, a person who is pastor of a church in San Mateo, my soul mate, Louise. (Applause)

Thanking someone for being elected, I need to talk to the people in California. (Applause) Would the folk in California please stand up. Ken Musselmann is a powerhouse and, Ken, thank you very, very much for your support.

From California, I have a story. (Applause) A commander on the scaffold was painting the building when he dropped the paintbrush. As he leaned over the rail to watch the brush fall, he yelled, "Quack, quack, gobble, gobble." Below, a man walking under the scaffold was hit by the brush.

"Why didn't you warn me?" the man yelled up at the painter? "I did" the painter replied. "I yelled 'quack, quack, gobble, gobble.'" "What does that mean?" the man hollered angrily. "Duck, turkey." (Laughter)

Our commander, newly-elected, is a team leader, and I think this year is going to be a fantastic year. As your chaplain, my first advice I would give to you, a sincere bit of advice, duck, turkeys. (Laughter) Quack, quack, gobble, gobble. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Chaplain. Next, certainly, again no stranger to any of us in the DAV, our National Judge Advocate Michael Dobmeier from North Dakota. Mike. (Applause)

JUDGE ADVOCATE-ELECT MICHAEL E. DOBMEIER: You're going to make me follow a tough one, huh? (Laughter) Well, I'm going to do this a little bit backwards. First of all, I'm going to introduce you to my wife of 30 years, Sandy. (Applause)

Then I'm going to tell you that I'm going to share her with all of you, because this morning she was elected the newest line officer of the DAV Auxiliary. (Applause) And we're very proud of her.

At the C and A the other day I kind of made a little joke and put a few people on alert. I said something that probably wasn't correct in the situation, and if you know me, you know that the opposite is true.

What I did is I said, "I haven't done anything; I'm not going to do anything, and if you elect me again, you're crazy." That woke a few people up. But I can promise you that the opposite is true, that I love this organization.

I'm honored and humbled to have retained your confidence once again. I can tell you, Commander Paul, that I have your back, that this whole line has your back.

We all are very well aware that this term is one year. We're going to do the best we can for the DAV, and we're going to do the best we can to start the next ten years of excellence. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Mike. Needless to say, with the line up of folks that were elected here today, the DAV is certainly in great hands for the upcoming year, 2005-2006, with all of our newly-elected officers. Give them one more round of applause if you would, please. (Applause)

We will continue with the unfinished business of the Convention. The Chair entertains a motion to discharge the Credentials Committee. Don't everybody get up at once, now. We're just about done. Mike 2.

MR. ALBERT H. LINDEN, JR.: Al Linden, delegate, Gator 90, Florida, I make a motion that we discharge the Credentials Committee with a vote of thanks for their good work.

MR. MORRISON: Mike 3.

COMMANDER SURSELY: We have a motion. Do I hear a second? Mike 3.

MR. MORRISON: Vincent Morrison, Chapter 9, Houston, Texas, seconds that motion, sir.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you. We have a motion and a second. All those in favor, signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. I will call on our National Adjutant to read the list of newly-elected members of the National Executive Committee. Art.

ADJUTANT WILSON: NEC First District, James Tanner, alternate Joseph Costa; NEC Third District, Anthony Karam, alternate, Wilfred Noel; NEC Fifth District, John Ogozaly, alternate Darlene Bielecki; NEC Seventh District, Edward Barnshaw, alternate Roger Sullivan; NEC the Ninth District, William Coward, alternate Julia Small; NEC Eleventh District, Harlan Plummer, alternate Frank Williams; NEC Thirteenth District, Jim Huff, alternate, Jim Balmer; NEC Fifteenth District, Franklin Bergquist, alternate John Bickerton; NEC Seventeenth District, Floyd Watson, alternate Frank Maughan; NEC Nineteenth District, Albert Buster, alternate, Ernest Hume; NEC Twenty-first District, Irvin Eddy, and alternate Timothy Hedgecock.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Thank you, Art. We'll call on the Chairman of the POW/MIA Committee Bill Taylor for a presentation to the Commander-elect Jackson. Bill.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Commander, and ladies and gentlemen. Commander-elect Jackson, would you step forward, please. On behalf of the National POW/MIA Committee for the Disabled American Veterans, we would like to present you with a POW flag and ask that you fly this flag proudly at your home. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Commander-elect Jackson was presented with the POW flag.)

COMMANDER-ELECT JACKSON: Thanks.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Believe it or not, that concludes today's agenda.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Chaplain Stump, will you please lead us in a closing prayer.

CHAPLAIN STUMP: We have such a glorious and wonderful set of officers to lead us into the future. In days of old, they would bless their leaders. I invite you to join me now by symbolically raising your hand in blessing and join me as we bless these officers for this future year ahead of us.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank You for the joy that is ours to serve our fellow veterans. We thank You for the wisdom of the Nominating Committee and this great Convention in selecting out from our midst these leaders.

We ask, Spirit, that Your hand be upon them, that You go with them. God, You being the author of wisdom, we ask that You give that to them in time of need.

Strengthen them when they are tired and weak. Guide them when the road seems confused. And through it all, may You bring glory and honor to yourself, to this great nation, and to American veterans and their families. For God's glory we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER SURSELY: Amen. Thank you, Chaplain Stump. I will now ask the Department of Massachusetts Honor Guard to retire the colors.

(Whereupon, the colors were retired.)

COMMANDER SURSELY: Once again, let me thank the Color Guard from the Department of Massachusetts for a job well done. (Applause) Thank you, gentlemen. Ladies and gentlemen, the 84th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans is now adjourned. (Applause)

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 2:33 o'clock p.m. August 17, 2005.)

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
83RD NATIONAL CONVENTION
Bally's Las Vegas Hotel Las Vegas, Nevada
AUGUST 15-17, 2005
August 15, 2005
MONDAY MORNING SESSION
- - -

The Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Grand Ballroom Platinum of the Bally's Las Vegas Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, Monday morning, August 15, 2005, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by National Adjutant Maria M. Tedrow.

ADJUTANT MARIA M. TEDROW: National Sergeant at Arms, instructs the Assistant Sergeant at Arms to present the national colors.

(Whereupon, the national colors were presented.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: National Sergeant at Arms, directs that the national colors be posted.

(Whereupon, the national colors were posted.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Now, if the National Sergeant at Arms would dismiss the color bearers.

(Whereupon, the color bearers were dismissed.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: We will now have the prayer by our National Chaplain, Melva Matlack.

MS. MELVA MATLACK: Now is the time we're going to separate ourselves from everything except why we are here. Let's bow our heads, close our eyes and we're going to go to our Lord.

Heavenly Father, we invite you into this meeting that we have here. We have business that needs to be taken care of so that we can care for the people that we have dedicated our lives to. We ask that you give us the knowledge, the skills and the intent to do only for the good of them and for this organization.

We ask you to honor the promises that we had in our vows that we gave when we joined this great, great organization. We ask that you put us all at the foot of your cross on even ground so that there is no one better, no one less, no one more, but we're all here equal to ask for your strength and ask for your patience with us and the time, that we're here be spent for the reason that we are here.

We thank you, Heavenly Father, for all the mercies and all the graces that you bestow upon us every day, ones that we don't even notice, but because of your great love, you just pour and pour and pour out upon us.

We ask that you give us strength in our weaknesses so that we can carry on day after day to complete the great, great, great purpose of our own individual lives, doing everything that we do, say and think to the honor of our Heavenly Father. Amen.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: The Pledge of Allegiance will be lead by the National Americanism Chairman, Kay Egan. Following that, Nancy Coulombe will play the National Anthem.

3RD JR. VICE COMMANDER KAY EGAN: Please stand at attention, put your right hand over your heart, and say with me.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance is recited and the National Anthem is performed.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Please be seated and turn the cell phones off. It is very distracting when you're trying to get through meetings, and we want to get through this morning as quickly as possible with very little problems, so turn them off.

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 83rd National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans

Auxiliary be convened in Las Vegas, 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.

At this time, and this one of my favorite times of the national convention because it gives me great pride, and it is an honor to introduce to you the lady that you selected as your National Commander and leader last year, National Auxiliary Commander Gertrude Tidwell.

COMMANDER GERTRUDE E. TIDWELL: Good morning. Let's have a hearty, Oklahoma Howdy, You All! Thank you. We're going to start off on a fun convention, and we're going to conduct the work that needs to be done. I do appreciate each and every one of you that has attended this morning and the chairmen that worked so diligently yesterday and their committees.

I'm going to start on a fun, really light note. What went wrong with your morning this morning? You know the first thing I did after I got down here? I walked into the men's bathroom.

I would not have told you that, but I had witnesses. Anyway, we're going to have a fun convention, and I would like to call Helen Parcelle as National Convention Chairman to bring greetings.

MS. HELEN C. PARCELLE: Good morning, everyone. National Commander Gertrude, National Adjutant Maria, national officers, past National Commanders, members, and honored guests of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary, I would like to welcome you all to Las Vegas, Nevada.

This year is our one-hundredth anniversary of our great city. We old timers have seen many changes that have transformed a small town into an exciting entertainment capital of the world that it is today. It is a pleasure to see so many smiling faces here and to share with you information on the many amenities our city has to offer.

Las Vegas is the home of the famous Running Rebels basketball team. Down on the strip, you will find a collection of casinos, some old and some new, just waiting for you to entertain their doors. If you ladies are inclined toward ancient times, there is Caesar's Palace, the Luxor, and the Medieval Excalibur, famous for knights in shining armor.

For those with more romance in their souls, there's the Venetian with their gondola rides and their gondoliers with their wondrous voices to serenade you as you glide along the canals of Venice.

Let's not forget the Paris Hotel, with the fabulous food of Gay Paree. For the child in all of us, there is Circus Circus, Treasure Island. For those of the sophisticated taste, there is Caesar's Forum, a wonderful shopping experience; New York, New York; Mandalay Bay; and the Bellagio. Last, but not least, the new kid on the block, the Wynn, a hotel that opened this year at the top of the strip.

Just remember what we tell all visitors. If you leave a little green here, don't despair. In Nevada, all gaming revenue goes to educate Nevada's school children.

One hour east of town is Hoover Dam, one of the seven wonders of the modern world. Tours are available to take you on an informative trip inside the dam. Northwest of the city is Red Rock Canyon. The park is famous for many walking trails. The scenic beauty of the surrounding mountains is worth the trip out there. We also have Lake Mead for swimming and boating, a cool spot in the middle of the desert.

About two hours from here is Laughlin, Nevada, a well established area with plenty to do. It's seated right on the Colorado River.

At this time, I would like to thank my dear friend, Evelynne Dunn, who has been a great help to me, and the wonderful ladies of Nevada. Would you all please rise? (Applause) Thank you all.

Maria, I want to say to you, thank you for the six years you chose me as your National Convention Chairman. It has been a wonderful experience and a pleasure to serve you and your staff at National Headquarters. Auxiliary members, enjoy your stay

here. If there is any way I, or my team, can assist you, please let us know and we will do our utmost to help. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Thank you, Helen. I'm sure that some of us are going to leave a lot of money here to educate their children and some of us are not. We'll have fun anyway.

Now I would like to introduce the Past National Commanders one more time and thank them for their past services and for their help in mentoring me up through the chairs: Lucille McCarthy, Dorothy VanHoy, Mary Beth Schulze, Betty Hall, Rose Marie Schilpp, Shelia Allred, Jane Troutman, Margaret Hass, Evelynne Dunn, Evelyn Dorsey, Paula Raymond, Carol Gray, Renee Jones, Linda Trulio, and I know you all think I missed Maria, but I didn't. I wanted to say a special thank you to her. (Applause) Past National Commander Carol Gray, would you like to come and bring greetings?

MS. CAROL GRAY: Good morning. On behalf of all of our thirty Past National Commanders, we wish you a great convention. We know you've had a good year. Your theme, "love isn't love until you give it away" has worked.

You've probably got as much back as you've given and you've given an awful lot, and to thank you for your service, we have a gift for you. (Applause) Thank you and have a great convention.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Would the Credentials Chairman please come forward?

MS. IRIS BRZEZINSKI: Good morning, ladies. National Commander, National Adjutant, National Line Officers, Past National Commanders, members, guests, and everybody, the Credentials Report is as follows: total units registered, 256; total departments registered, 45; total 301. Delegates registered, 543; alternates registered, 47; guests, 98; total of 688. Total unit votes: 1,606. Total department votes: 45. National Officers: 7. Past National Commanders, 12. The grand total vote is 1,670.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: At this time, do I hear a motion to accept the preliminary report of the Credentials Committee?

MS. RENATE OGLE: Madam Commander, I make a motion to accept the credentials report. My name is Renate Ogle, Unit 12, Nevada, District 18.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Do I hear a second, please?

MS. GWENDOLYN HARRELL: Gwendolyn Harrell, I second the motion.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Gwendolyn Harrell seconds the motion. All those in favor; any opposed. The motion is carried. Gwendolyn, do you have your badge on? We need another second.

MS. BEATRICE ALBANESE: Beatrice Albanese, New Jersey, Unit 81, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Thank you, Beatrice. Again, all those in favor; any opposed. The motion is carried. The first order of business is the adoption of the national convention rules. Printed copies of the convention rules have been furnished to all registered delegates. The chair will now entertain a motion to adopt these rules.

MS. GERTIE RICHARD: Madam Commander, Gertie Richard, Louisiana Unit 17, I move that the standing rules be adopted.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Do I hear a second?

MS. SANDRA SCHULMAN: Sandy Schulman, New Jersey, Unit 26, I second the motion.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: The motion has been made and seconded. All those in favor; any opposed. The motion carried. At this time, may I have a motion to accept the agenda, subject to change?

MS. CARLA L. MCLAUGHLIN: I make the motion to accept the agenda, subject to change. My name is Carla McLaughlin from Montana, and I'm in Unit Number 3.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Do I hear a second?

MS. DORIS MARTELLI: Doris Martelli, Unit 18, New Jersey, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: The motion has been made and seconded. All those in favor; any opposed. The motion carried. At this time, I would like to turn the chair over to the Senior Vice Commander.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER JUDY M. STEINHOUSE: At this time, it's my distinct pleasure to call on our National Commander, Gertrude Tidwell, to give us her report of her year. (Applause)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Thank you, Judy. National officers, National Adjutant Maria, Assistant National Adjutant Judy, Past National Commanders, NECs, alternates, delegates, members and guests of the 2005 National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary, I was honored to be elected National Commander in Reno, Nevada, August 3, 2005.

My travel as National Commander began with Fall Conference at the Marriott Gate in Lexington, Kentucky. We all enjoyed the programs presented by the chairman of our committee. September the 9th, I traveled to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to take a cruise for hospitalized veterans, which was sponsored by Sharing and Caring Incorporated. The river was almost at flood stage, and we had to wait for quite a while on the ship before they would let us sail up and down the river.

We had a wonderful lunch, and every veteran attending had a one-on-one volunteer with them. They gave all the veterans gifts of all kinds. Boy, did Commander Jim make a haul.

November the 9th, I traveled to Birmingham, Alabama, for the National Veterans Day Parade and World Peace Luncheon. It rained and it rained. We had the luncheon and afterwards, it quit raining for only about two hours. They put Senior Vice Commander Jackson and Jean in one car and I in another, in classic Cadillac convertibles with the tops down. We got through over half of the route and it started to mist rain.

The further we went, the wetter we got. We had to quit after a while, we were getting so wet, but it was a very awesome experience, and to add a note to that, I would like to go again sometime when I can sit and watch this parade.

On November the 19th through the 21st, I attended Fall Conference in Williamsburg, Virginia. This time, we had beautiful weather, no snow, a good conference and lots of fun.

January saw me in Florida, where they held Winter Conference. We had fun as well as a good workshop. There were lots of laughs at the auction and fashion show. I received a frog ring from the ladies working white elephants, their fundraiser. It seems Kay thought if I kissed the frog that I would get a prince. They must have given me the wrong frog. I kissed it and no prince appeared.

From Florida, I had the honor of attending several functions in Washington, D.C. for the presidential inaugural events. We had snow and due to the streets being closed off, we never made it to the VFW reception for the Medal of Honor recipients, although I had the honor to sit with ninety of them at the theater for their recognition with Past President Bush and his wife and the current President Bush and Laura attending.

Winter came to Oklahoma in February, but I was honored again to go to Florida for our National DAV Commander's testimonial in Altamonte Springs. They had rain and warm temperatures.

My testimonial was held in March in Oklahoma City, and several officers and Past National Commanders attended, as well as the National DAV Commander Jim Sursely and his wife, Jean, National Adjutant Art Wilson, and Dave Gorman and Rick Patterson and NSO David Reeves and several other members of the DAVA from Oklahoma and other states.

My state presented me with a nice quilt, and Maria presented me my National Commander's Ring. I want to say thank you to M. Sue Hollingsworth for her helpers and my family, because everyone made my day extra special. Thanks.

I traveled to Salt Lake City, Utah, for their spring luncheon. Their commander met me at the airport and we had breakfast with other members, both DAV

and DAVA. Then we were supposed to go for a drive in the mountains, but it was snowing and so we visited the VA hospital and met the hospital service coordinator, Heidi, and some of her drivers, toured the hospital, visited Commander Helen's home and met her beautiful dog.

Then out to dinner they took me. The next day I attended a wonderful luncheon with several members from Utah DAV and DAVA, and I really enjoyed their entertainment. From there, I went to Cincinnati for a finance meeting and then home.

I am sorry to have missed the winter sports clinic, but I had to go to Arkansas for visitation. Arkansas DAVA and Past National Commander Lunita Shumaker are very special to me. Lunita was supposed to hold the visitation, but she was not able and so they canceled the visitation.

On April the 22nd, I went on my way to Alma, Arkansas, for a District 21 meeting. We had a good turn out and a productive meeting with lots of good food, but we were all saddened to learn that Past National Commander Lunita Shumaker had passed away in the morning. I lost a good friend and a mentor, and I'm sure she touched others as well.

The 28th of April saw me on my way to Sheraton, Wyoming. I arrived in Denver in a snowstorm and then into Sheraton in a small plane, and there was no snow in Sheraton, but it spit snow off and on all weekend, but we had a good convention.

May the 10th, I went to Deadwood, South Dakota, and it started snowing before I got off the plane. The chaplain, Joyce Jefferson, and her husband met me and drove me to Deadwood from Rapid City, all the time in the snow, nine inches before it quit, but we did not let it keep us from having a good time, a good convention and an extra fun auction.

I won one of the DAV raffle prizes. They even let me draw for it and guess what? I drew my own name. I asked them before I drew, what if I draw my name because I have a ticket, and they said that was all right. That money looked good to me, I'm sorry guys. I promised them, and I didn't put this in my report, but I promised them that I would spend that money on veterans, and I have.

I was to go to Denver on May 18th, but I was too sick to go with bronchitis. Too much snow, maybe. I went to Oklahoma City on June 2nd, still a little ill, but we made it through. We had a good convention. Fun Night saw the men dressed as women for a fashion show to raise money. Each man raised money for something different. NSO David was the lady for my program. Thanks, David.

From Oklahoma to San Juan, Puerto Rico, for their convention. As you know, I do not speak Spanish, but they gave me a wonderful lady for an interpreter. We had lots of good food and music, and it's a beautiful place to visit.

On the 23rd of June, I was on my way to Honolulu, Hawaii. Commander Lorna met me at the airport. My plane was late because of something to do with the leveling of the load. Maybe I was too heavy. We sat on the runway in Denver for forty-five minutes and then back to the gate for an hour and then finally, on our way. Such a beautiful island. To see it from the plane was really awesome.

It was a good convention for the DAVA department. The commander took National Commander Jim and I and Jeannie to see the U.S.S. Arizona and the museum before I had to leave on Sunday. I must add a footnote that Hawaii had a good convention, and this is their first year to have a set convention as a department. I'm proud of them. (Applause)

I had to cancel going to New York because I stayed over in Hawaii longer than I first expected that I would. Maybe next year, New York.

Without the help and support of my family, National Adjutant Maria, Assistant National Adjutant Judy Hezlep, the line officers and staff at National Headquarters, I could not have done this much traveling. Thank you, members, for all the love and support wherever I traveled. Remember, love is not love until you give it away. (Applause)

SR. VICE COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Thank you, Gertrude, for that beautiful report and all your wonderful travels through the year. The last couple of

years, we haven't had snow in North Dakota, so you'll have to come to North Dakota and bring it with you. At this time, I will entertain a motion to accept the National Commander's Report.

MS. MARNA BARNSHAW: Marna Barnshaw, Florida, Unit 18, I make a motion that we accept the Commander's report.

SR. VICE COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: The motion has been made. Do I have a second?

MS. LOUISE BARILE: Louise Barile, New Jersey, 73, I second the motion.

SR. VICE COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: The motion has been made and seconded to accept the National Commander's report. Any further discussion? If not, all in favor, please say aye; those opposed. The motion carried. Thank you, Gertrude. (Applause)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Could I now have the Finance Committee Chairman, M. Sue Hollingsworth, bring forth the Budget Report, please?

MS. M. SUE HOLLINGSWORTH: National Commander Gertrude, National Adjutant Maria, national officers, Past National Commanders, delegates, alternates, members, guests, I'm glad you're all here.

The Finance Committee met on April 11th, 2005, at the Radisson Cincinnati Riverfront Hotel in Covington, Kentucky, for the purpose of setting the budget for the year 2006. Those present without vote included: Judy Steinhouse, Senior Vice Commander; Judy Hezlep, Assistant National Adjutant; and Maria Tedrow, National Adjutant. Those present with vote were Gertrude Tidwell, National Auxiliary Commander; Catherine Watkins, NEC 5th District; Lorene Penermon, NEC 10th District; LeeAnn Karg, NEC 14th District; and myself, Sue Hollingsworth, NEC 21st District, as Chairman.

I would like to thank these ladies for their service to this committee and for their hard work in preparing this budget. Copies of the final budget have been distributed. You should all have a copy. At this time, Madam Commander, I would like to move for the adoption of that budget.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Do I have a second?

MS. LORENE PENERMON: Lorene Penermon, Metro 1, Detroit, Michigan, I second it.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Is there any discussion? All those in favor; any opposed. The motion carried. At this time, I would like to dismiss the Nominating Committee, and I would also like to announce to the body that I have appointed Past National Commander Paula Raymond to act as advisor to that committee, since that should have fallen to the immediate Past National Commander. Thank you, Paula.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: All the candidates are to let their sponsors know where they are at all times as long as the Nominating Committee is in session. All candidates are to let their sponsors know where they are at all times. All candidates are to let -- I would say their district who they consider their sponsor -- know where they are at all times. In other words, don't leave this hotel or you're in trouble. Okay? Thank you.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: May we have the Chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws for the first reading of the Constitution and Bylaws?

MS. LUCITA E. CHRISTIAN: National Commander Gertrude, National Adjutant, national officers, Past National Commanders, delegates and guests of the 83rd National Auxiliary Convention, the National Convention's Constitution and Bylaw Committee met in Vegas 6 at 1:30 P.M. on August the 14th, 2005.

Serving as advisor was National Judge Advocate Sheila Allred, and Barbara Williams was elected Secretary. Please hold your applause until all members serving on the Nominating Committee are recognized: District 1: Sandra Fincel from Massachusetts; District 2, Lucita Christian from New York; District 3, Ann Young from New Hampshire; District 4, Marjorie Fleming from New Jersey; District 5, Chattie Kiser from Pennsylvania; District 6, Evelyn Dorsey from District of Columbia; District 7, Lucille McCarthy from Florida; District 8, Susan Marie Henry from Tennessee;

District 9, Barbara Williams from Georgia; District 10, Gloria Boozer from Michigan; District 11, Jacqueline Hansen from Ohio; District 12, Donna Vale, Illinois; District 13, Geneva Walker, Kentucky; District 14, Faye Litzinger from North Dakota; District 4, Rose Marie Schillp from Missouri; District 16, Josephine Benner from California; District 17, Cora Crossley from Utah; District 18, Evelynne Dunn from Nevada; District 19, Annie Rose Cameron-Adams from Washington; District 20, Betty Hall from Texas; and District 21, Linda Stake from Arkansas. Thank you, ladies. (Applause)

At this time, the 2005 Convention Constitution and Bylaw Committee have no amendments to present at this 83rd National Convention. (Applause)

Therefore, Madam Commander, since there are no other amendments, we will not have a second reading, and I request that the Convention Constitution and Bylaw Committee be discharged. (Applause)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Thank you, I will discharge this committee and thank you for all your hard work. We will now go into our awards program in the various categories.

Monetary awards are given in each category of each program to the first place winning unit. Checks will be mailed from the National Headquarters after convention. Membership Awards, Donna Tanner.

1ST JR. VICE COMMANDER DONNA TANNER: Good morning. We know there were a lot of changes this year, and I see a few men in the audience. If you're a delegate or an alternate delegate, can you rise if you're here for your first convention, and you're a gentleman? (Applause) Thank you and welcome.

Group 1, 10 to 50 with a twenty-member increase, Joe McCain Number 56 of Oklahoma. (Applause) Group 2, 51 to 100, with a thirty-eight-member increase, Byron-Morris Number 3, Vermont. (Applause) Group 3, 101 to 200, with a seventy-three member increase, Caesar-Rodney Number 3 of Delaware. (Applause) Group 4, 201 and over, with a 158-member increase, Henry County Number 155, Kentucky. (Applause)

Now, the new unit with the most new members is twenty-two new members, Stephenville, Number 234, Texas. (Applause) The department with the largest percentage increase is the Department of Delaware with a thirty-two-and-a-quarter percent increase. (Applause) The department with the largest numerical increase with a 160-member increase is the Department of Kentucky. (Applause)

Top Membership Recruiter, Alice Armstrong of Number 42 in Texas with twenty-four new senior members. (Applause) While we're waiting for our top recruiter, I just want to say thank you very much to all of you for your hard work in recruitment this year.

We did a good job and it was a great year, and it was changing for us in welcoming some new members in and I thank you for your hard work. (Applause)

Just to reiterate, as the Commander said, after the convention, your monetary awards will be mailed to you and thank you again. (Applause)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Now, we will have Americanism and Kay Egan is the chairman and she's our National 3rd Junior Vice Commander.

3RD JR. VICE COMMANDER EGAN: Good morning, ladies. I had a great time being advisor to the Americanism Committee, and we had a great bunch of ladies and I thank all of you.

We had a fifteen-year veteran of Americanism judging in the persona of Monica Stroud from North Carolina, and it was kind of fitting that she be our chairman. Monica, would you come up to the podium, please?

While we're waiting for Monica, I wanted to tell you, also, that Micki Kraft from the State of Wa-Wa was our secretary and that's Washington for the uninitiated.

I am going to be beaten by a sugarcane or a rice patty, but Monica is from South Carolina. That's very important if you're from South Carolina.

MS. MONICA STROUD: National Commander, National Adjutant, national officers, Past National Commanders, delegates and guests of this 83rd National Auxiliary Convention, the National Americanism Convention Committee met in the Las Vegas Room Number 1 at 1:00 P.M. on August 14, 2005.

Our advisor was Kay Egan, and our secretary was Micki Kraft. She was appointed, of course. The following units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Americanism Awards: Group 1, 10 to 50 members, Unit 7, Paducah, Kentucky; Group 2, 51 to 100 members, Unit 5, Sanford, North Carolina; Group 3, 101 to 200 members, Unit 48, Washington, North Carolina; Group 4, 201 members or over, Unit 120, Kenmore, New York. (Applause)

Our special Americanism awards: Group 1, 10 to 200, was Unit 7, Paducah, Kentucky; Group 2, 201 members and over, Unit 120, Kenmore, New York. (Applause)

The committee submitted the following recommendations. The first one I would like to talk about, you noticed when the chaplain came up and she was praying by herself that never one time did I hear her say I, I, or I, but you heard her say we, we.

What we couldn't understand was how units could have two-hundred-plus members, but I did this and I did that. We are a team, the entire Auxiliary body. When you write your reports, remember always that we did it.

The other recommendation we had is to be more specific when you are filling in your Americanism program on the back of it. Please clarify if you have sponsored or are you only participating. There's a big difference when it is judged.

Now, I would like to tell you who was on this committee, and please forgive me if I say your names wrong: District 1, Susan Palsky; District 2, Theresa Skyler; District 3, Aura Lee Nicodemus; District 4, Mary Wischmann; District 5, no show; District 6, Barbara Forbes; District 7, Judy Clamp; District 8, Marcia Pruitt; District 9, Monica Stroud; District 10, Renee Lawton; District 11, Ann Offutt; District 12, Sandy Fear; District 13, Carolyn Vogel; District 14, Robyn Kenney; District 15, Lettie Warchola; District 16, Ann Stewart; District 17, Ernestine Bennett; District 18, Carol Goodman; District 19, Micki Kraft; District 20, Patricia Hendershot; and District 21, Vera Hendrickson. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Community Service, Donna Stinnett. She's our National 4th Junior Vice Commander, and I'm promoting everybody today and so we're all going to go up one, and I'm going right out the back door.

4TH JR. VICE COMMANDER DONNA STINNETT: My chairman is on her way, so it will just be a second.

MS. JUDY LENHART: Good morning. National Commander, National Adjutant, national officers, Past National Commanders, delegates and guests of this 83rd National Auxiliary Convention, this National Community Service Convention Committee met in the Las Vegas Ballroom Number 1 at 3:05 on August 14th.

Our advisor was Donna Stinnett, and our elected appointed secretary was Bonnie Martin. The following units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Community Service Awards:

Group Number 1, 10 to 50 members, Davie County Unit 75 of North Carolina;

Group Number 2, 51 to 100 members, Huntsville Unit 26 of Alabama; Group Number 3, 101 to 200 members, Pendleton-King Unit 10 of Georgia; Group 4, 201 members and above, Roll of Honor Unit 120, New York. (Applause)

The committee submitted the following recommendations. One, the professional trade specify the profession and expand in more detail. More detail they want in this category.

Number two, itemize in correct category. Some of these were not under the categories that they should have been in and so that needs to be a little improved.

Typing or writing needs to be on the line, double spaced, itemized by number in black ink only. We had some that were in four different colors of ink, and it was a little hard to read and so neatness counts, people.

Next, show an example of an excellent format for attachments. This was just a suggestion that maybe someone could do this at the fall conference, show a good report.

There also needs to be a clarification on church donations and attendance, monetary donations, as to how this is put in this report. That was rather confusing for our ladies.

Now, those on the committee, please stand: District 1, Nancy Mooney of Massachusetts; District 3, Irene Karem, New Hampshire; District 4, Jennifer Bradley, New Jersey;

District 5, Suzanne Seyboldt, Pennsylvania; District 6, Carol Lee Simmons, Maryland; District 7, Della Schweitzer, Florida; District 8, Barbara Saulters, Mississippi;

District 9, Magdalene Fogner, South Carolina; District 10, Peggy Smith, Michigan; District 11, myself, Ohio; Number 12, Nancy Colby from Illinois; District 13, Bonnie Martin from Kentucky;

District 14, Sylvia Machler, Montana; District 15, Robin Ann Hill, Missouri; District 16, Mary Parker, California; District 17, Shirley Wright, Utah; District 18, Janet Pickering, Nevada;

District 19, Janette Carulli, Oregon; District 20, Darlene Spence, Texas; District 21, Deborah Huddleston from Oklahoma. Thank you, ladies, for a wonderful job. (Applause)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Hospital, Hazel Meyers, Chairman.

MS. HAZEL MEYERS: Good morning, ladies. We had a wonderful meeting, and if you ever want to find out how little you know, just go into one of these award meetings and listen to the ladies who are there representing your districts, because they show you how much they really do and how much they know about your program and how little you know. I would like to present to you our Chairman, Angela Lara.

MS. ANGELA LARA: Good morning, National Commander Gertrude, National Adjutant Maria, Past National Commanders, alternates, delegates and guests. My name is Angela Lara, and I am from Hot Springs Unit 11, Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, and I have the honor of being chairman for this committee.

The Hospital Committee met yesterday afternoon. We began a little late due to many late arrivals and there was much confusion, but I believe we all go through it, and we were done by 2:30 and our business was carried out.

I would like to recognize the committee members that participated and did such a wonderful job: District 1, Lillian Halpin; District 2, Frances Ortiz; District 4, Elizabeth Gerrity; District 7, Genevieve Fowler;

District 8, Alma Starling, and I really appreciate her standing in for us as the secretary. That's not an easy job, as everybody knows. District 9, we had Esther Edwards; District 10, Gladys Daniels; District 11, Dorothy Jane Clark;

District 12, Shirley Aragon; District 13, Arveeda Gordon; District 14, Sandy Dobmeier; District 15, Rose Mary Miller; District 16, Beatrice Vieira; District 18, Marilyn Salmela;

District 19, Nancy Chapin; District 20, Mary Burns-Michael; and District 21 was Carolyn Roberts. (Applause)

For the awards now, which people worked very hard, and it's hard to decide who you want to pick as number one because there are many people that do a lot of hard work.

For our first category, I would like to congratulate the DAV Hazard Unit 64 from Kentucky. (Applause)

As she's working her way up, we'll let you know who our next category is. Our second category, congratulations to Clarence Tom Lemley, Unit 24 of North Dakota. (Applause) Our last category, we have Sonoma County Unit 48, Santa Rosa, California. (Applause)

We had quite a bit of discussion about recommendations. One of the things the ladies came up with was that they recommend to people that they clarify professional trade service to be put on hospital when done at hospitals, rather than on community service.

A lot of times people are unaware of which category to put it in on. One of the other recommendations was on Line Number 6, where you have all your financial things, we recommend that it be clarified and totaled.

We found reports that had lines that didn't add up to what the total was, so that was very confusing and please remember that you must itemize areas over $1000. If you do not itemize, we have no idea, and it states on the form to please itemize it.

We also had a lot of extra writing on the forms that came from either the unit or the state where they had been judged, points written down and stuff, and we would ask please don't do that. I would also ask that when you are on a committee, please show up in a timely manner.

It is very, very disruptive when people come in up to thirty minutes late and you've already began your committee. Thank you very much. (Applause)

I missed an award, the fourth one. The highest unit is William Alden Senior/Junior Unit 2 from Grand Rapids, Michigan. (Applause) That was for the 201 and over.

MS. MEYERS: Before we leave the stage, I would just like to say one thing. When you go about your hospital work, the non-VA hospital work, remember our National Commander Gertrude about love is not love until it's given away, but I would like for you to remember one thing, that no matter what, these people, men and women, veterans or non, want absolutely nothing from you that costs you money.

They purely want the smile on your face, the visit you've made, and the promise that you'll come again. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Now, may we have Deborah Mazza and Junior Activities?

MS. DEBORAH MAZZA: I would like to ask my chairman, Shelba Hunt, to please come up.

MS. SHELBA HUNT: This was a surprise. National Commander, National Adjutant Maria, national officers, Past National Commanders, delegates, guests of the 83rd National Auxiliary Convention, the National Junior Activities Convention Committee met in the Las Vegas Ballroom Number 7 at 1:00 P.M. on August 14, 2005.

Our advisor was Deborah Mazza. Our secretary was Kim Stake and I was appointed committee chairman. The following units were judged to the be the best in their category for the National Junior Activity Awards: Group 1, 1 to 25 members, went to Sergeant Warren T. Conley Unit 26, New Jersey;

Group 2, 26 to 50 members, Alexander County Unit 84, North Carolina; Group 3, 51 to 100 members, Westcott Shooten Unit 56, Massachusetts; Group 4, 101 and over, Clarence Tom Lemley Unit 24, North Dakota. (Applause)

The Juniors Activities Books goes to Goshen Memorial Indiana Unit 15. (Applause) This is the best part. National Miss Teenage, fifteen to seventeen, Rebecca Clark, Unit 10, Georgia;

National Junior Miss, eleven to fourteen, Chrisalyn Bishop, Unit 4, Washington; and the National Mini Miss, Megan Martsin, Unit 24, North Dakota. (Applause)

The committee submitted the following recommendations. This committee recommends that each applicant gets a certificate of recognition for participating in these age groups for the junior members because they've all done hard work, and they would all like to do it, but we can only have one in each category.

These were the ladies that helped out with the judging: District 1, Maxine Tapley, Massachusetts; Kazue Luciani, New York; Dorothea Campanelli, New Jersey; Carolyn Sue Knight, West Virginia; Leona Dillard, Florida; Mildred D. Heath, Alabama; Ethel Bussey, Georgia; Vada Kraai, Michigan; Judith Uetterling, Ohio; Ann Marie Sobocinski, Wisconsin; Jennifer Forcier, Minnesota; Adrianne Dillard, Kansas; Doris Bogan, California; Emma Perez, Colorado; Eileen Langille, Nevada; Myra Hause, Oregon; Nayarit Erazo, Texas; Kim Stake from Arkansas; and Wanda Furbish from New Hampshire. Give these ladies a big hand. (Applause)

MS. MAZZA: I would just like to say one thing and that's to Gertrude. I would like to thank you very much for allowing me to serve as your Junior Activities Chairman this year. (Applause)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Legislative, Kathryn Wiley, would you please come forward? Maria is going to speak first.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: The only reason I am, the gifts to the junior members, this year there will no longer be a Mini Miss, Miss Teenage, because we are now non-gender, so the awards will be the outstanding junior member in that age category. I just wanted to explain to you.

2ND JR. VICE COMMANDER KATHRYN WILEY: This last year, I was the Legislative Chair. It was a great pleasure to serve as that chair for this organization. At this time, I want to introduce our convention chair.

It was a lot of fun shocking her when she came in and sat down and signed in and thought all she had to was serve on a committee. Marna, would you please come forward? She did a wonderful job.

MS. MARNA BARNSHAW: Good morning, National Commander Tidwell, National Adjutant Tedrow, National Past Commanders, delegates and guests. The National Legislative Convention Committee met in the Las Vegas Ballroom 7 at 3:00 P.M. on August 14th, 2005. Our advisor was Kathryn Wiley, and we had a volunteer for our secretary and that was Shannon Bayones.

I would like to announce the following winners in the categories: Group 1, 10 to 50 members, Alvin L. Wilson South Carolina Unit 1; Group 2, 51 to 100 members, G.C. Gravine, Unit 64 Wisconsin;

Group 3, 101 to 200 members, Pendleton-King Georgia Unit 10; Group 4, 201 members and over, Greater Daytona Florida Unit 84. (Applause)

I would like to recognize the people that served on the committee: District 1, Barbara DeLuca, Massachusetts; District 2, Diane Wisnesky, New York; District 3, Shirley Forgio, Rhode Island; District 4, Eloise Eith, New Jersey;

District 6, Mildred Velazquez, Puerto Rico; District 7, Marna Barnshaw, Florida; District 8, Charlene Williams, Mississippi; District 9, Clyrissa Brown, South Carolina;

District 10, Pat Warren, Michigan; District 11, Denise Proffitt, Ohio; District 12, Amelia Tapp, Illinois; District 13, Mildred Brown, Kentucky; District 14, Gladys Kjellerson, North Dakota;

District 15, Veronica Bergquist, Kansas; District 16, Susan Gill, California; District 17, Edith Armstrong, Colorado; District 18, Ellie Shuman, Arizona; District 19, Gloria Kay Morgan, Washington; District 20, Linda Paquette, Texas; and District 21, Shannon Bayones, Oklahoma. (Applause)

The committee does make the following recommendations. When judging, do not write on the forms. You need to remember that the forms are for veterans bills and issues only.

Another recommendation is removal of the "or" and state that it should provide "subject and bill number if applicable." I would like to thank all of the members that came out and helped. Thank you very much, ladies. (Applause)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Mae Holmes, Judy Steinhouse, National Senior Vice Commander.

SR. VICE COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Good morning, ladies. It was my honor and privilege to serve this part year as the Mae Holmes Chairman, and I would call on our committee chairman, Lee Dean, from Iowa and also Sarah Kashner, who served as our secretary, and Sarah is from Delaware.

We had a wonderful committee. These ladies worked really, really hard, and I thank them all for doing this.

MS. LEE DEAN: Good morning, ladies. I would like to thank National Commander Gertrude, National Adjutant Maria and all the ladies that were on our committee.

I'm going to have Sarah read off the names for our ladies, and please stand up because you guys did an awesome job.

MS. SARAH KASHNER: District 1, Charlee Voss, Massachusetts; District 2, Anita Ingram, New York; District 3, Linda Folcarelli, Rhode Island; District 4 was me and I'm from Delaware; District 5, Catherine Watkins, Pennsylvania;

District 6, Alice Palaszewski from Virginia; District 7, Cathleen McCoy, Florida; District 8, Carolyn Johnson, Tennessee; District 9, Daphne Whitley Smith, North Carolina;

District 10, Hilda Cool, Michigan; District 11, Deborah Hall, Ohio; District 12, Carla Lee Reynolds, Illinois; District 13, Doris Stanfill, Indiana;

District 14, Sandra Halversen Butler, Minnesota; District 15, Lee Dean, Iowa; District 16, Florence Swisher, California; District 17, Glenna Smith, Colorado;

District 18, Sandra Szymanski, Arizona; District 19, Rayetta Taylor, Washington; District 20, Mary Choate-Patterson, Texas; and District 21, Katherine Freeman from Oklahoma. (Applause)

MS. DEAN: Also, I would like to thank the ladies who sat in and watched how we judged that have never been there before. We had one lady that had been there several times and she took these other ladies under her wing and showed them the reports and what it was all entailing.

I want to thank you ladies for coming in and observing and for all your extra help, because you sat in and were able to be part of it instead of just sitting there and not knowing what's happening. Thank you for coming in and thank you, ladies, for all your hard work. You really did an awesome job.

Group 1, for 10 to 50 members, John Blake Unit 15, Brattleboro, Vermont; Group 2, Michael J. Thomas, Unit 5, Sanford, North Carolina; Group 3, Frank E. Walker Junior and Junior Unit 61, Mount Airy, North Carolina; Group 4, 201 members or over, Roll of Honor Unit 120, Kenmore, New York. (Applause)

MS. KASHMER: We had quite a few recommendations, and I would like to read them to you. If you're required to attach a specific report that is named to the Mae Holmes Report, make sure it is the correct report that is attached and use correct forms because we had people who actually retyped the forms.

One report we read, it said if you volunteer, they said he volunteered zero hours, but that he traveled and had mileage and we didn't understand that. Do not put in the blank of unit membership quota the number needed for quota.

In this place should be the total number to meet quota. When the Mae Holmes Report asks you to attach paper, do not write on the back.

Make sure that you itemize the amounts over $1,000. If you're handwriting a report, make sure that it is legible and if typing, make sure your answers are on the line.

Adjutants need to have all the reports attached and make sure before you send in Mae Holmes Reports that they are photocopied correctly. We actually had to disqualify a report because there was no signature.

State adjutants need to send in only the winning Mae Holmes Reports for each category for each state. We had multiple reports. The judging committees from each state needs to ensure requirements such as itemized on the back of the original reports are included.

Reports should be able to be accessed on the DAVA link as a PDF file. That was a suggestion and reports should be submitted without being retyped. We had people who retyped reports and then forgot to sign it.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Thank you, ladies. History, State Department History Books, Margaret Simpson.

MS. MARGARET SIMPSON: Commander Gertrude, national officers, National Adjutant Maria, Assistant National Adjutant Judy, Past National Commanders, NECs, delegates, members and guests, this year found two new things happening with the History Book Committee, one of great news and one, I'm sorry to say, of not so great news.

One, of the not so great news, is that we only had four books submitted. This is, from what I'm told, the first time we've ever had so little books submitted, and I'm very distressed by this.

I love the history book. It's a great opportunity for you ladies to show everybody what you do in your states. We really don't have any other opportunity, except for the elected national officers, to see what you do in your state.

We, as members in our units, don't get the opportunity to see everybody, except for the event that we are at now.

I would love to pump some enthusiasm into each and every one of you about these books. They're exciting, they're great, they're so much fun. They're not just a memory for your commander, although she gets the honor to take it home and look at it all the time, you also get the honor to have fun and get to see everything that the unit members are doing.

Now, with the men involved, we get to embarrass them by having the camera in their faces too, which could be fun.

The good news, and this, I thought, was very exciting for me. I had the honor to -- if he's in the room, could David Stocker stand up? There he is. (Applause) David was on my committee this year. We had a male member on our committee this year judging with the rest of us and I thought that was great.

Also, ladies, the books are in Room Palace Number 2 and, of course, they need to be picked up, obviously. Before they get picked up, you're all invited to look at them, as long as they're there and the room is open, to give you an idea of what a history is put together. They're all excellent. They're all put together properly and they're all excellent.

Take a look at them. It's a wonderful thing to do. It's a great adventure, and without further ado, I would like to introduce my chairman. Lynn Helms, if you could come up, please.

She did a wonderful job and I would like to thank her all over the place for her help. She was wonderful.

MS. LYNN HELMS: National Commander, National Adjutant, national officers, Past National Commanders, delegates and guests of the 83rd National Auxiliary Convention, the National State Department History Book Convention Committee met in the Bronze Room Number 1 at 3:00 P.M. on August the 14th, 2005. Our advisor was Margaret Simpson, and our secretary was elected, Carol Gray.

The following state department was selected to receive the National State Department History Book Award: The State Department of Michigan. (Applause) The State History Book Chairman was Marie Hekkema. (Applause)

The committee submitted the following recommendations: clarification in the general instructions as to whether or not pictures can be on both sides of the page; history book chairmen need to follow the instructions closely as to what is required in each section; adjust the point system to allow additional points for the overall neatness of the book.

I would like for the following people to stand that were on this committee: District 1, Nancy Colon; District 2, Monique Wisnesky; District 4, Annye Brown; District 6, Frances Borum;

District 7, Josephine Haynes; District 8, Geneva Jackson; District 9, Lynn Helms; District 10, Carole Gray; District 11, Marge Davies; District 12, Patricia Dempsey; District 13, Delores Huff; District 14, Anna Bradsteen;

District 15, Jane Daniels; District 16, David Stockner; District 17, Carolyn Shaver; District 18, Iris Brzezinski; District 19, Peggy Phillips; District 20, Belinda Hackney; District 21, Barbara Sharon Eddy. (Applause)

I would like to thank those for serving on the committee. I would like to also thank the Commander for appointing me as the chairman of the committee.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: VAVS, the representative should be Terry Herrle, but her mother was gravely ill, so the deputy, Joyce Humes, will do the VAVS, please.

MS. JOYCE HUMES: I'm Joyce Humes. I'm sorry that I'm here under these circumstances, but I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience, and I would like to introduce my chairman, Florine Hicks. (Applause)

MS. FLORINE HICKS: Commander Gertrude, Adjutant Daughter-in-Law, Past Commanders, new commanders, delegates and guests, this was quite a surprise for me, because I walked in the room, and they said, "Is your name, Florine?" I said, "Yes", and they told me I was chairman. What do I do?

I want you all to know this is a wonderful opportunity to find out what's going on in our nation. There are a lot of reports that have had to be set aside because of things that were not added, such as a signature.

Our committee really worked beautifully together. I really was very proud of the girls. It was done very simply, very thoroughly, and each and every one, I'm sure, was happy with the results.

You know when you get a group of ladies together, there has to be harmony, and that's one thing I'll say, we really had harmony.

From our 10 to 50 was Yam Hill County, Oregon, Number 5; 51 to 100, Al Bartraw Junior, Virginia, Number 50; 101 to 200, John T. Hensley, Florida, Number 96; 201 and beyond, Roll of Honor, New York, Number 120.

I also have a problem with pronunciation of different areas where I haven't visited, so please bear with me as far as pronouncing some of these names: District 1, Annetta Daltry, Massachusetts; Irene Berger, New York; Dorothy Kashner, Delaware; Ellen Griggs, West Virginia; Mary Ann Branesky, Florida; Nancy Arnold, Tennessee; Nancy Spangler, South Carolina; Pamela Poest, Michigan; Ellen Keller, Ohio; Edith Kreger, Wisconsin; Donna Quesinberry, Kentucky;

District 14, Arlys Collins, Minnesota; Jaxene Jarvis, Iowa; District 16, Florine Hicks, California; District 17, Heidi Hopper, Utah; District 18, Catherine Morris, Nevada, and Catherine also was our secretary;

District 19, Casiana Ashton, Oregon; District 20, Cynthia Jauregar, Texas; Courtney White, Oklahoma; Donna Folcarelli, Rhode Island. I want to thank all of those that were on my committee. Believe me, they worked hard and diligently, but they did a fine job. (Applause)

MS. HUMES: Considering that Florine was very surprised when she walked in and we said she's chairman, she did a great job. (Applause)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: I know you're wondering what we were doing running back and forth here talking to people. I was trying to find out, since I don't know, who got the Junior History Book Award, and it was the Department of Indiana. (Applause) Now, we will ask Linda Trulio, Past National Commander, for the Education Loan Report, please.

MS. LINDA A. TRULIO: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. (Applause) Commander Gertrude, national officers, national chairmen, Past National Commanders, delegates, alternates, friends and guests of the Auxiliary, it was my esteemed honor and privilege to serve as the Chairman of the Education Loan Fund Committee.

This year, we awarded seventeen renewed applications and twenty-two new applications. Considering the amount of students, who aim for higher education or perhaps anticipate a vocational career and need some extra funds, these applications only reflect a small percentage of our membership.

I would expect that each and every adjutant on the state and local level have in their files a copy of this application to hand out, when requested, to perspective students.

We cannot make available loans if a large percentage of our membership does not even know what this loan is about. I encourage all of you to get the word out. If you are listening to this report here today and would like a copy of the application, please write or phone the National Office and ask for one.

You do not have to be an officer or adjutant of your state or unit to receive the information.

The committee will be meeting some time at this convention to review several recommendations and proposals and changes to the applications. Since our eligibility changed as of 02/14, we took a closer look at the application. All applicants must be a full paid life member of our auxiliary.

This year, we permitted our male applicants the opportunity to apply with a down payment of life, since the membership opened just prior to the deadline for filing. This means, guys, that you must be paid by the end of this membership year. Any and all changes will be reflected on the new application.

I would like to thank my committee, which was comprised of: Past National Commander Jan Bennett; our Commander, Gertrude Tidwell; and Senior Vice Commander Judy Steinhouse. I would like to thank Judy Hezlep at National Headquarters for their dedication and promotion of this program. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: At this time, if you have donations to be presented for the Education Loan or the Service Support Program, et cetera, please feel free to come forward.

Somewhere in my pocket I have some money, and I'm going to make the first one. This is on behalf of my lady NSO and all the money he made me at the state convention. Here's $80 for the Service Support Fund. (Applause)

DELEGATE: My donation is from Kentucky.

DELEGATE: I have a donation for the Service Support Fund and the Loan Education from the Department of Michigan.

MS. LINDA GERKE: Linda Gerke, Commander of Unit Number 2 in Missouri, and I have a check for $150. (Applause)

DELEGATE: On behalf of the Department of New York, we have a check for $469 for the National Education Loan, and we have a check for $569 for National Service Fund.

DELEGATE: I have a check here from the Department of Montana for $101 for the Service Fund.

DELEGATE: I have a check from the State of New Jersey to the Education Fund for $100 and also from the National Service Fund, a check for $100.

MS. CHATTIE KISER: Chattie Kiser from the State of Pennsylvania, and I have a check for the National Service Fund for $250, the Freedom Foundation for $95 and the National Education Fund for $75. (Applause)

MS. ANNA BRADSTEEN: Anne Bradsteen from Grand Forks, North Dakota, and I have two checks, one for the National Loan Fund and the other for the Service Project. (Applause)

MS. MYRA HAUSE: I'm Myra Hause from the great state of Oregon, and we have $50 for the National Financial Assistance Loan, $150 for the National Hospitalized Veterans Writing Program and $200 for the National Education Assistance Fund. Thank you. (Applause)

MS. DEAN: Lee Dean from Iowa, Senior Vice Commander. We have $100 for the Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project, $50 for the Freedom Foundation, $50 for the Education Loan and $100 for the Service Project. (Applause)

MS. JACQUELINE HANSEN: I'm Jackie Hansen from the great state of Ohio, and we have a donation for the Support Fund and the Educational Loan Fund. (Applause)

MS. SANDRA D. FINCEL: Sandy Fincel, Commander of the State of Massachusetts, and we have a check for the National Service Fund. (Applause)

MS. SHARON DUNDAS: Sharon Dundas from Idaho and we have two checks, one for the Education Program and one for the Service Support Program. (Applause)

MS. ETHYL BUSSEY: I'm Ethyl Bussey from the southern state of Georgia. We have a check for the National Service Fund, a check for the Hospitalized Veterans Writing Fund, a check for the Freedom Foundation Fund and a check for the National Education Loan Fund. (Applause)

MS. ANN YOUNG: I'm Ann Young from the State of New Hampshire, and we've got a check for the Service Fund and the Educational Fund. (Applause)

DELEGATE: On behalf of the Department of Vermont, we present you checks for the National Education Loan Fund, the Service Support Fund and the Freedom's Foundation.

MS. ETTER BOWERS: Etter Bowers, the State of Virginia, and we have a check for the National Service Fund for $100, a $100 check for the Educational Fund and a $100 check for the Freedom Foundation. (Applause)

DELEGATE: I have a $25 check for the Disabled Veterans Winter Olympics from Unit 32 Washington.

MS. JUNA RIDENHOUR: Juna Ridenhour from the Department of Missouri. I have a check for the Educational Loan Fund and a check for the Service Support Fund. (Applause)

MS. SUSAN HENRY: Susan Henry, Tennessee 116, and I have a personal check for the Educational Loan Fund. (Applause)

MS. GENEVA JACKSON: Geneva Jackson from the State of Alabama, and we have a check for the National Education Fund. (Applause)

MS. TRULIO: Thank you all for your generosity to our program. (Applause)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: At this time, we will have announcements by Adjutant Maria Tedrow.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: I'm going to give a few announcements. Please listen carefully and then after that, the National Commander is going to do something, and then we are going to be finished until Wednesday. (Applause) There's no session tomorrow because we've gone so fast today. (Applause)

I have three names here that would like Forget-Me-Not tickets if anybody has decided that they're not going. If you've decided you're not going, please contact me, because I have three people here --Mattie Brooks, Robin Hill and Becky Warchola -- that would like to have Forget-Me-Not tickets.

We didn't have any changes in the bylaws, but that doesn't mean that you don't order new bylaws, because there's always changes in the bylaws because you elect new officers, new NECs, and not only that, but your next book will be non-gender. Don't rely on this one.

This one is going to get you through and there are no changes to this; however, order new bylaws and you will be informed through the happenings of headquarters when they are ready. Don't order them before that.

It's going to be quite a printing this time, because it's going to go clear through the book, but you will be informed when they are available. I do want to say one thing about the manual.

The manual is no longer for sale. It is being revised. I almost had it finished, and then the new membership system came in and then some other changes came in, so I think we're close to completion. That, too, will be in the happenings.

For all of you that may know, you can go to our link on the dav.org and hit DAV Auxiliary, and it will have the Happenings at Headquarters and also a question and answer column, your NECs, your state commanders and your state adjutants and your national officers. Little by little, we are going to add more to that.

Past National Commanders' Dinner will be in the Las Vegas Ballroom 2 South Tower at 6:30. There will be an Educational Loan meeting immediately following this meeting.

The Nor'easter Luncheon is immediately following the close of this morning's meeting in Las Vegas 5 and 6, South Tower. If you bought a ticket to the Nor'easter, it's in Las Vegas 5 and 6 immediately following this meeting. I think at this time I've been asked to call up Alexandria Ferris.

MS. PATRICIA HENDERSHOT: Ladies and gentlemen, I have just met this little lady. She is from Texas, and she is a new junior, and she belongs in Unit 128 and she would like to do some poetry for us. She's a very talented little lady, and she's a wonderful junior coming up.

MS. ALEXANDRIA FERRIS: Our motto for this year's national convention, 2005, is "Love Isn't Love Until You Give it Away." I would like to add one more sentence to our motto: Love wasn't put in your heart to stay, because love isn't love until you give it away.

I would like to give to all of you with love one of my favorite poems. The name of my poem is "The House I Live In" by Louis Allen and Earl Robinson: What is America to me? A name, a map, the flag I see, A certain word, "Democracy."

What is America to me? The house I live in, A plot of earth, a street, The grocer and the butcher and the people that I meet, The children in the playground, the faces that I see; All races, all religions, that's America to me.

The howdy and the handshake, the air of feeling free, the right to speak my mind out, that's America to me.

The house I live in, my neighbors white and black, the people who just came here or from generations back, the town hall and the soapbox, the torch of liberty, a home for all God's children, that's America to me.

The words of old Abe Lincoln, of Jefferson and Paine, of Washington and Jackson, and the tact that still remains; the little bridge at Concord where freedom's fight began are at Gettysburg and Midway and the story of the time; the house I live in, the goodness everywhere, a land of wealth and beauty with enough for all to share; a house that we call freedom, the home of liberty, and a promise for tomorrow, that's America to me.

What's America? What's America? What's America? America is me. Thank you. (Applause)

MS. BARNSHAW: Thank you, ladies. This is our future. (Applause)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Thank you, Alexandria. This is from the Department of Florida, and it says "Service Support" on it. Before we recess and do all the fun things of winning a door prize, I would like to take a minute to say that this is a sad time for the families of our immediate Past National Commander Jan Bennett and for the family of Lunita Shumaker that passed away this year.

We have thank you notes from those families. I was asked if I would read the one from the Bennett Family. It says: Greetings, Commander, Officers, members and guests, the family of Immediate Past National Commander Jan Bennett would like to thank you for the memories and the opportunities the Disabled American Veterans gave Janet.

She considered the DAV and the DAVA as part of her family. Jan and Jim have always been interested in veterans' causes. In the mid-1980s, they started to attend the national conventions. When Jan started up the national chair, she was working full time in 1996.

She retired from her full-time job and continued her effort with the Auxiliary. With your support, Jan reached her goal of being Auxiliary National Commander. Jan was not going to let her illness get in the way of her completing her job with the DAVA.

During the last couple of years, she had help and support from Maria Tedrow, Helen Parcelle, Evelynne Dunn and Gertrude Tidwell and many, many more of you that I can't name. Thank you for being there for her.

Jan's family would like to thank you for all the kindness, consideration, friendship and love and it is signed by her husband Jim, her son Miller, her daughter Sandy, daughter Patty and her husband Todd, and Mary and her husband, Jeff.

That is a sad note for us to end on this morning, but we started out with a fun one, and we did all the business that we need to do for today and tomorrow too, so you're going to have all the rest of the evening to contribute to Nevada's children. At this time, we will recess until we reconvene at 9:00 A.M. on Wednesday morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting was recessed at 11:30 o'clock a.m., August 15, 2005.)

- - -

- - -

The Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary reconvened in the Grand Ballroom Platinum of the Bally's Las Vegas Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, Wednesday morning, August 17, 2005 and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by National Adjutant Maria M. Tedrow.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Please take your seats. Assistant Sergeant at Arms, would you be good enough to say that we are now convening the convention, please? At this time, we are ready to start, Commander.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Good morning, everyone. Before I open this session, I have a little thank you I need to say. Yesterday, at the Forget-Me-Not Luncheon, inadvertently a commander's gift was given away as a door prize and the lady that received it saw that it had Commander Gertrude on it, and she returned it. I would like to say thank you to her. (Applause) It was from the Department of Wyoming. Thank you, Wyoming. (Applause) National Chaplain Melva Matlack, would you bring prayer, please?

MS. MATLACK: Heavenly Father, we welcome you again to this final business session that we have here. We ask that You bring peace and calm to us. We're here to serve You as well as the Disabled Americans Veterans that we support as an auxiliary.

We ask that you give us the intelligence, the interest, and the assurance that what we do here is for the best of this organization.

We thank You for the presence that we've felt during the entire convention, and we thank you for giving Gertrude this message to show the love and the care that we have for each other. That's a great example of this organization. No one is alone in it.

We are one body, but we all come together with our individual talents, our thoughts, our skills and our intents, so again, we welcome You here and ask that You stay among us as we do the things that need to be done today. Amen.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Kay Egan, National Americanism Chairman, would you present the pledge, please?

3RD JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER EGAN: Would you all stand at attention, place your right hand over your heart and say with me --

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance is recited.)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: The National Adjutant will now call the roll of the newly elected National Executive Committee members and alternates. As your name is called, please come forward for the purpose of installation.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: The National Commander said that only the newly elected National Executive Committee women and alternates will be installed. From District 1, Ellen Drogo from Massachusetts and her alternate is Susan Stalsky;

District 3, Wanda Furbish and her alternate is Sylvia Heath; District 5, Marian Sawdey and Cathy Watkins; District 7, Bernadette Sorrentino and Marna Barnshaw is the alternate;

District 9, Barbara Williams is the NEC and Harriet Hudson is her alternate; District 11, Ellen Keller is NEC and Marge Davies is her alternate; District 13, Geneva Walker and her alternate is Arveeda Gordon;

District 15, Rose Schilpp and her alternate is Lee Dean; District 17, Susan Miller and her alternate is Olive Tomlin; District 19, Jeanette Carulli and her alternate is Ruth Hammer; District 21, Linda Stake is NEC and her alternate is Debra Huddleston.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: You are requested to remain silent during the ceremony of installation. As newly elected National Executive Committee members and alternates, are you willing to assume the oath of your office? Place your right hand over your heart, pronounce your name, and repeat after me the oath of your office.

(Whereupon, the oath of office was administered to the newly elected National Executive Committee members.)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Delegates, members, and guests, I now present to you the National Executive Committee members and alternates of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

I trust you will aid them in the performance of their duties, and with your help, their term of office will be highly successful. Would the newly installed Executive Committee members and alternates please take one minute to face the audience and then return to your seats. (Applause)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: The National Commander has given me permission at this time to tell you how much money was collected for the various programs that we have if you would like to write them down.

With the check that was given to me this morning, Education Loan is $2,439; Service Support, $4,400; Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project, $350; Freedom Foundation, $400.

I would like to say, at this time, for those who do not know, that the Service Support Program will now be open to any Auxiliary member who may be in financial need, and the amount has been raised to $1,000. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Would the Credentials Chairman please come forward to give the final credentials report?

MS. BRZEZINSKI: National Commander Gertrude, National Adjutant Maria, line officers, Past National Commanders, delegates, alternates, guests, the credentials report is as follows: total units registered, 263; total departments registered, 43; total of 306; delegates registered, 569; alternates registered, 41; guests, 113; total registered, 723. Total units votes are 1,645; total department votes, 3; National Officers, 7; Past National Commanders, 12. The grand total of votes is 1,707.

Madam Commander, I move that we adopt the credential report.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Do I hear a second to the motion that we adopt the credentials report?

MS. STAKE: Linda Stake, Unit 57 Arkansas, I second the motion.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: The motion has been made and seconded that we accept the final credentials report. Is there any discussion? All those in favor; all those opposed. The motion carried. Would the Chairman of the Nominating Committee please come forward to give the committee report?

MS. MIRIAM DALEY: Good morning, Commander Gertrude, National Adjutant Maria, Past National Commanders, national officers, delegates and guests.

The Nominating Committee met in the Pacific Ballroom Number 2 on Sunday, August 14th at 1:30. Our advisor was Paula Raymond, Past National Commander. Our chairman was Miriam Daley, District 1. Our secretary was Elizabeth Murbach, District 18.

The roster of districts was read and all were present. The candidates' applications were read and the questions were considered. All the applicants were interviewed. The committee adjourned at 8:00 P.M. to continue deliberations the following day.

The Nominating Committee met on Monday, August 15 at 11:00 A.M. A roster of districts was read and all were present. The chairperson opened the meeting and deliberations with all candidates were made. All positions were voted on by written ballot and votes were read by the chairman and counted by the secretary. A slate of officers was determined.

Two of the nominated committee members from District 4 and District 10 were found to be serving as alternate delegates and as such, couldn't stay. The National Adjutant ruled that they could not serve on the committee, and they were excused from the committee.

A revote had to be made for all officers, and it stayed like that because we had an odd number of members.

A recommendation was made that the districts, when electing a person to the Nominating Committee, need to be registered as a delegate and not an alternate. The slate of officers was again voted on, and a determination was made for the 2005/2006 slate of officers. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 P.M.

The recommendations that we made were that no gifts are to be brought to the interview by the candidates, change the fact sheet to read indicate which national office you want and not don't want, and it should be added to each fact sheet that each candidate be responsible to let the district representative know where they are during the Nominating Committee deliberations.

The following people served on the Nominating Committee. Ladies, please stand as your name is called and hold all your mighty applause until the end. District 2, Debbie Barbuto; District 3, Sylvia Heath; District 5, Marian Sawdey; District 6, Rachel Witt; District 7, Beverly Gregory; District 8, Patricia Hicks; District 9, Jane Troutman; District 11, Joyce Hutchinson; District 12, Linda Whitaker; District 13, Edith Jackson; District 14, Margaret Hass; District 15, Dorothy VanHoy; District 16, Vicki O'Neal; District 17, Helene Pockrus; District 18, Elizabeth Murbach; District 19, Ruth Hammer; District 20, Louise Rapisand; and District 21, Sue Hollingsworth. Thank you, ladies. (Applause) It was an excellent committee and everyone worked so well together and really, they put their heart and souls into it.

The following is the slate of officers presented by the Nominating Committee: Commander, Judy Steinhouse; Senior Vice Commander, Donna Tanner; 1st Junior Vice Commander, Kathryn Wiley; 2nd Junior Vice Commander, Kay Egan; 3rd Junior Vice Commander, Donna Stinnett; 4th Junior Vice Commander, Sandy Dobmeier; Chaplain, Lucita Christian; Judge Advocate, Carol Gray. Commander Gertrude, we would like to thank you very much for appointing Paula Raymond as advisor. With her knowledge and expertise, she was a great help to the committee and really led us in the right direction.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: At this time, I would like to dismiss the officers to return to their districts for caucus. I would also like to dismiss all convention committees.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: It is important that you remember this. If you want to vote as a duly elected delegate, you have your blue tags on. When two or more candidates are nominated for any one office, roll calls shall continue until completed unless a candidate or candidates withdraws.

The person receiving the majority of the roll call votes shall be elected. Another thing, if there is opposition in an office, you do not applaud the winner. Now that we have that straight, blue tags and roll call complete unless one withdraws and you do not applaud the winner. Thank you.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Pages, you may go to your districts.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: We're waiting for tellers, and if there's no objection, the tellers will be the staff that has worked so diligently out there changing all the registration this morning? Do I hear any objections? Thank you. While we're waiting for the third teller to come in, let's do one thing we haven't done for a long time. Are you ready? Here we go.

(Whereupon, "Jingle Bells" is sung.)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: I'm going to read the slate one more time, and I'm going to inform you that to accept the whole slate as one is out of order. Judy Steinhouse has been nominated for National Commander. Donna Tanner has been nominated for National Senior Vice Commander.

Kathryn Wiley has been nominated for the office of 1st Junior Vice Commander. Kay Egan has been nominated for the office of National 2nd Junior Vice Commander. Donna Stinnett has been nominated for the office of National 3rd Junior Vice Commander. Sandy Dobmeier has been nominated for the office of National 4th Junior Vice Commander.

Lucita Christian has been nominated by the committee for the office of National Chaplain. Carol Gray has been nominated for the office of National Judge Advocate. At this time, I would like the district caucus.

(Whereupon, a caucus was conducted.)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: You have heard the report of the Committee on Nominations. Judy Steinhouse 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.

MS. MARY L. WEBER: Mary Lou Weber of Unit 24, North Dakota. May I approach the podium, please?

COMMANDER TIDWELL: Yes.

MS. WEBER: Commander Gertrude, Adjutant Maria, national officers, Past National Commanders, delegates and guests, it is my honor and privilege to stand before you to second the nomination of Judy Steinhouse for National Commander of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

Judy, Judy, Judy. Judy is single and lives in Fargo, North Dakota. She has worked for the Internal Revenue Service for the last thirty-six years and still manages to show up for work occasionally. Judy's eligibility for this great organization is through her father, Delmar Steinhouse.

He was a veteran of the European theater, U.S. Army. She started her career in the Auxiliary in 1967 in Jamestown, North Dakota, Unit 31, where her parents were both life members. In 1978, she transferred her membership to Dickenson, North Dakota, Unit 8, when her job with Internal Revenue moved her to the western part of the state. She became a life member in 1985, after serving as North Dakota State Auxiliary Commander for year 1984-1985. In 1994, her job transferred her to Fargo, where she now lives.

She is currently a life member of Clarence Tom Lemley Unit 24 at Valley City, where she is the unit commander. She has served the state department as adjutant for the last eleven years and is currently the assistant adjutant on the state standing rules committee.

Judy started in the national chairs as 4th Junior Vice and she guided the boat through the community harbor service program in that first year. A U.S. flag presentation was the main focus of her favorite program, Americanism. The Miss DAV U.S.A. Pageant for legislation was a big hit, especially with the participants when she was 2nd Junior Vice.

Presenting the membership program dressed in her father's old Army uniform was a special treat for Judy. She has a special picture of that presentation thanks to Jim Hall. Last year, for the Mae Holmes report, she presented teddy bears to all her program chairmen and concluded the program by presenting bears to the rest of the members on the dais.

Judy has come to this point in her life through her strong faith in God and just being herself, Judy. Therefore, it is my honor and privilege to endorse Judy M. Steinhouse for National Commander of the Disabled American Veterans. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: All those in favor of Judy Steinhouse for the office of National Commander, signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Judy Steinhouse has been elected National Commander of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary. (Applause)

You've heard the report and Donna Tanner 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 Senior Vice Commander. All those in favor of Donna Tanner, signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Donna Tanner has been elected as the National Senior Vice Commander. (Applause)

Kathryn Wiley has been nominated by the committee for the office of National 1st Junior Vice Commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare

the nominations closed for the office of National 1st Junior Vice Commander. All those in favor of Kathryn Wiley; those opposed. The ayes have it and Kathryn Wiley has been elected National 1st Junior Vice Commander. (Applause)

Kay Egan has been nominated by the committee for the office of National 2nd Junior Vice Commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of National 2nd Junior Vice Commander. All those in favor of Kay Egan for the office of National 2nd Junior Vice Commander, signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Kay Egan has been elected National 2nd Junior Vice Commander. (Applause)

Donna Stinnett has been nominated by the committee for the office of National 3rd Junior Vice Commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of National 3rd Junior Vice Commander. All those in favor of Donna Stinnett, please signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Donna Stinnett has been elected National 3rd Junior Vice Commander. (Applause)

Sandy Dobmeier has been nominated by the committee for the office of National 4th Junior Vice Commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of National 4th Junior Vice Commander. All those in favor of Sandy Dobmeier for the office of National 4th Junior Vice Commander, signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Sandy Dobmeier has been elected National 4th Junior Vice Commander. (Applause)

Lucita Christian 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 those in favor of Lucita Christian for the office of National Chaplain, signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Lucita Christian has been elected to the office of National Chaplain. (Applause)

Carol Gray 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 Carol Gray for the office of National Judge Advocate, signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Carol Gray has been elected to the office of National Judge Advocate. (Applause)

The election has been completed and now I ask for the National Sergeant at Arms to come to the podium for the purpose of introducing the National Executive Committee members and those members who served as pages.

At this time, while we're waiting for the pages to assemble, I would like to acknowledge the National Color Bearers, Courtney White and Debra Huddleston. (Applause)

MS. VICKY GRIER: Good morning, ladies. We're going to introduce the NECs and some of the pages. If by chance I mess your name up, you can just talk to God about it, okay? District 1, Frances Costa and Alternate, Ellen M. Drogo; District 2, Deborah L. Barbuto; District 3, Donna M. Folcarelli; District 4, Dorothy L. Kashner; District 5, Catherine F. Watkins; District 6, Juanita B. Giles; District 7, Winona O. Eastin; District 8, Loriece Cole; District 9, Margaret M. Snelling; District 10, Lorene Penermon; District 11, Carolyn S. Reed; District 12, Betty Buck; District 13, Jan Walters; District 14, LeeAnn B. Karg; District 15, Elaine E. Ragan and the alternate, Rose Marie Schilpp; District 16, Florence V. Swisher; District 17, Ramona Ganong; District 18, Ruthann Tucker; District 19, Barbara S. Reding; District 20, Ruth A. Gates; District 21, Margaret Sue Hollingsworth.

MS. RUTH R. KOON: Personal Pages, M. Sue Hollingsworth and Anna Hollingsworth for Gertrude Tidwell. Judy Steinhouse's personal page is Mary Lou Weber. Donna Tanner is Susan. Kathryn Wiley is Ruth Hammer. Kay Egan's page is Wynona. Donna Stinnett had Sheila; Annette Morgan, and Melva Matlack is Dorothea Campenelli. Junior pages is Jillian Stinnett, Amanda Thomas, and Anna Hollingsworth. (Applause)

Ladies, we would really like to thank you for all your help this week. You've been marvelous, you've been kind, and very helpful. There's another junior page, Chrisalyn Bishop. (Applause) Thank you, ladies. It's been wonderful.

MS. FRAN COSTA: Madam Commander, I request permission to make a presentation.

COMMANDER TIDWELL: You have permission.

MS. COSTA: All the pages have gotten together and we would like to thank Ruth and Vicki for the fun time we've had working with them. I know there is several times they would have liked to wring our necks, but it has been a pleasure and we have a little presentation. Vicky and Ruth, could you come to the podium? On behalf of all the pages, we would like to present you with this little gift of appreciation for all you've done. (Applause)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: I'm just going to acknowledge. I want to acknowledge, of course, our convention committee from Nevada that did a great job. (Applause) I especially want to acknowledge Iris Brzezinski, who was our personal page during this convention, carrying things back to the office for us. Thank you, Iris. I appreciate it. (Applause)

Of course, you make up the convention, but the staff tries to get it in operation as smoothly as possible and sometimes that's not easy to do.

I would like to acknowledge and I don't think they're in the room -- I think they left because we're getting ready to pack up things, but Pat Kemper, Brenda Webster, Melody Whitaker, and of course, Judy, for all the effort that they have put forth because believe me, we enjoy the annual convention the same as you do, but it's a lot of work getting ready for it and seeing that it runs smoothly and packing up to leave.

I want all of you to know that we couldn't do it without a good staff and we have one of the best at National Headquarters. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER TIDWELL: I would also like to second what she says because the staff at National Headquarters go out of their way to make the commander look good. (Applause) It always takes somebody behind the scenes. We do not ever do anything alone.

Is there any further business to come before this convention?

Ladies, I asked if there was any further business and hearing none, I declare the 83rd National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary hereby adjourned. We will immediately go into the National Executive Committee meeting. We are now closed.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 o'clock a.m., August 17, 2005.)

- - -