

PROCEEDINGS

of the

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
2007 NATIONAL CONVENTION**



August 11-14, 2007

New Orleans, Louisiana

PROCEEDINGS – 2007 NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

**NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS OF THE
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**

COMMUNICATION

from

**THE NATIONAL ADJUTANT, THE
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**

transmitting

**2007 NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS OF THE DIS-
ABLED AMERICAN VETERANS, PURSUANT TO 36 U.S.C. 50308
AND 44 U.S.C. 1332**



**November 21, 2007—Referred to the Committee on Veterans'
Affairs and ordered to be printed**

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

LETTER OF SUBMITTAL

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

November 21, 2007

Hon. Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Dear Ms. Speaker:

As business manager of Disabled American Veterans, and as secretary of its National Convention, I hereby certify as to the authenticity of the reports and proceedings of our National Convention, held in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, and submit them to you through the office of this organization located in Washington, D.C., to be printed as a House document as originally authorized by 44 USC 1332 and in fulfillment of 36 USC 50308.

The enclosed National Convention proceedings include an independent audit report of all receipts and expenditures as of December 31, 2006, as described in 36 USC 10101.

Sincerely,



ARTHUR H. WILSON
National Adjutant
Chief Executive Officer

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NATIONAL OFFICERS 2007-2008
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

National Commander
Robert T. Reynolds, 6034 Cliff Drive, Alexandria, VA 22315

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

First Junior Vice Commander
Roberto Barrera, 800 West 6th Street, Del Rio, TX 78840

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

Third Junior Vice Commander
Donald L. Samuels, 544 Douglas Bend Road, Gallatin, TN 37066

Fourth Junior Vice Commander
Larry A. Polzin, 13336 Alder Grove Street, Sylmar, CA 91342

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

National Chaplain
Rev. Dr. Charles W. Edwards, Jr., 8003 Manassas Drive, Austin, TX 78745

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

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

First district: Joseph A. Costa, 20 Adamsdale Rd., North Attleboro, MA 02760

Second district: Anthony L. Mirando, 2494 Bayview Avenue, Wantagh, NY 11793

Third district: Wayne Desjardins, 13 Birchwood Ave., Bangor, ME 04401

Fourth district: Paul V. Lardizzone, 321 MacArthur Drive, Dover, DE 19901

Fifth district: Darlene A. Bielecki, 3709 W. 38th St., Erie, PA 16506

Sixth district: German Bravo-Perez, 622 Centauro Street, Altamira, San Juan, PR 00920

Seventh district: Roger Sullivan, 918 Chula Court, Lady Lake, FL 32159

Eighth district: G. Eddie Figueron, 2116 Memorial Drive, Alexandria, LA 71301

Ninth district: Marian J. Truscello, 139 Bentwood Rd., Leesville, SC 29070

Tenth district: J. Dave Boozer, 144 Bristol Street, Arian, MI 49221

Eleventh district: Frank D. Williams, 2450 McConkey Rd., South Vienna, OH 45369-9502

Twelfth district: Henry E. Williams, 3528 Fourth Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481

Thirteenth district: William Bottom, 1209 Garden St., Elkhart, IN 46514

Fourteenth district: Keith E. Beach, P.O. Box 441, Ekalaka, MT 59324

Fifteenth district: Raphael N. Wahwassuck, Sr., 21110 Ladle Lane, Waynesville, MO 65583

Sixteenth district: James C. Bogan, 1660 Wanda Avenue, Seaside, CA 93955

Seventeenth district: Frank Maughan, 731 W. 3750 North, Ogden, UT 84414

Eighteenth district: Harold Minami, 344 Hoomalu Street, Pearl City, HI 96782

Nineteenth district: Richard Lucht, 691 NW 13th St., McMinnville, OR 97128

Twentieth district: Gerald J. Cowan, 2416 Richview Court, Garland, TX 75044

Twenty-first district: David W. Spurgin, 700 Prairie Creek Rd., Mena, AR 71953



Robert T. Reynolds
National Commander
2007-2008
Disabled American Veterans



Bradley S. Barton
National Commander
2006-2007
Disabled American Veterans

**NATIONAL OFFICERS 2006-2007
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**

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

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

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

Second Junior Vice Commander
Roberto Barrera, 800 West 6th Street, Del Rio, TX 78840

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

Fourth Junior Vice Commander
Jerome G. Krejci, 5 Wylie Court, N.W., East Grand Forks, MN 56721

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

National Chaplain
Rev. Edward Bastille, 580 Cherry Valley Road, Gilford, NH 03249

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

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

First district: James H. Tanner, 48 Holly Avenue, Lynn, MA 01904

Second district: Anthony L. Mirando, 2494 Bayview Avenue, Wantagh, NY 11793

Third district: Anthony T. Karam, 237 S. Lincoln Street, Manchester, NH 03103

Fourth district: Paul V. Lardizzone, 321 MacArthur Drive, Dover, DE 19901

Fifth district: John E. Ogozaly, 34 Cemetery Street, Simpson, PA 18407

Sixth district: German Bravo-Perez, 622 Centauro Street, Altamira, San Juan, PR 00920

Seventh district: Edward S. Barnshaw, 808 53rd Avenue East, #174-J, Bradenton, FL 34203

Eighth district: G. Eddie Figueron, 2116 Memorial Drive, Alexandria, LA 71301

Ninth district: William L. Coward, 112 Churchill Circle, Leesburg, GA 31763

Tenth district: J. Dave Boozer, 144 Bristol Street, Arian, MI 49221

Eleventh district: Harlan F. Plummer, 1211 McCoy Road, Peebles, OH 45660

Twelfth district: Henry E. Williams, 3528 Fourth Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481

Thirteenth district: James S. Huff, 3658 Highway 54 East, Fordsville, KY 42343

Fourteenth district: Keith E. Beach, P.O. Box 441, Ekalaka, MT 59324

Fifteenth district: Franklin C. Bergquist, 4255 S. Laura Circle, Wichita, KS 67216

Sixteenth district: James C. Bogan, 1660 Wanda Avenue, Seaside, CA 93955

Seventeenth district: Floyd Watson, Jr., 219 Ames Avenue, Cheyenne, WY 82007

Eighteenth district: Harold Minami, 344 Hoomalu Street, Pearl City, HI 96782

Nineteenth district: Albert H. Buster, 2990 Pickering Place, N.E., Bremerton, WA 98310

Twentieth district: Gerald J. Cowan, 2416 Richview Court, Garland, TX 75044

Twenty-first district: Irvin D. Eddy, Route 1, Box 38, Custer, OK 73639

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDERS

1921-22:	Robert S. Marx, Cincinnati, Ohio (deceased 1960)
1922-23:	C. Hamilton Cook, Buffalo, New York (deceased 1935)
1923-24:	James A. McFarland, Dalton, Georgia (deceased 1942)
1924-25:	Frank J. Irwin, New York, New York (deceased 1942)
1925-26:	John W. Mahan, Bozeman, Montana (deceased 1947)
1926-27:	John V. Clinnin, Chicago, Illinois (deceased 1955)
1927-28:	William E. Tate, Atlanta, Georgia (deceased 1949)
1928-29:	Millard W. Rice, Minneapolis, Minnesota (deceased 1980)
1929-30:	William J. Murphy, Santa Ana, California (deceased 1931)
1930-31:	H. H. Weimer, Chicago, Illinois (deceased 1955)
1931-32:	E. Claude Babcock, Washington, D.C. (deceased 1958)
1932-33:	William Conley, Los Angeles, California (deceased 1941)
1933-34:	Joe W. McQueen, Kansas City, Missouri (deceased 1969)
1934-35:	Volney P. Mooney, Jr., Los Angeles, California (deceased 1945)
1935-36:	Marvin A. Harlan, El Paso, Texas (deceased 1970)
1936-37:	M. Froome Barbour, Cincinnati, Ohio (deceased 1985)
1937-38:	Maple T. Harl, Denver, Colorado (deceased 1957)
1938-39:	Owen Galvin, Minneapolis, Minnesota (deceased 1956)
1939-40:	Lewis J. Murphy, South Bend, Indiana (deceased 1966)
1940-41:	Vincent E. Schoeck, Detroit, Michigan (deceased 1966)
August 16, 1941-August 15, 1943:	Lawrence R. Melton, Dallas, Texas (deceased 1978)
August 15, 1943-September 20, 1943:	William J. Dodd, Jersey City, New Jersey (deceased 1957)
1943-44:	James L. Monnahan, Minneapolis, Minnesota (deceased 1980)
1944-45:	Milton D. Cohn, Buffalo, New York (deceased 1968)
1945-46:	Dow V. Walker, Newport, Oregon (deceased 1957)
1946-47:	Lloyd F. Oleson, Ventura, California (deceased 1982)
1947-48:	John L. Golob, Hibbing, Minnesota (deceased 1976)
1948-49:	Jonathon M. Wainwright, San Antonio, Texas (deceased 1953)
1949-50:	David M. Brown, Akron, Ohio (deceased 1982)
1950-51:	Boniface R. Maile, Grosse Pointe, Michigan (deceased 2002)
1951-52:	Ewing W. Mays, Little Rock, Arkansas (deceased 1994)
1952-53:	Floyd L. Ming, Bakersfield, California (deceased 1975)
1953-54:	Howard W. Watts, Indianapolis, Indiana (deceased 1977)
1954-55:	Alfred L. English, Shelbyville, Tennessee (deceased 1987)
1955-56:	Melvin J. Maas, Chevy Chase, Maryland (deceased 1964)
1956-57:	Joseph F. Burke, Bayonne, New Jersey (deceased 1970)
1957-58:	Paul E. Frederick, Jr., Cincinnati, Ohio
1958-59:	David B. Williams, Boston, Massachusetts (deceased 1994)
1959-60:	Bill H. Fribley, Crestline, Kansas (deceased 1994)
1960-61:	William O. Cooper, Dallas, Texas (deceased 1990)
1961-62:	Francis R. Buono, Whitestone, New York (deceased 1977)
1962-63:	Peter L. Dye, Denver, Colorado
1963-64:	Douglas H. McGarrity, Allen Park, Michigan (deceased 1986)
1964-65:	William G. Dwyer, San Diego, California (deceased 1982)
1965-66:	Claude L. Callegary, Baltimore, Maryland
1966-67:	John W. Unger, Sr., Danville, Illinois (deceased 1970)
1967-68:	Francis J. Beaton, Fargo, North Dakota (deceased 1969)
1968-69:	Wayne L. Sheirbon, Seattle, Washington (deceased 1999)
1969-70:	Raymond P. Neal, Daly City, California
1970-71:	Cecil W. Stevenson, Jonesboro, Arkansas
1971-72:	Edward T. Conroy, Bowie, Maryland (deceased 1982)
1972-73:	Jack O. Hicks, Larue, Ohio
1973-74:	John T. Soave, Detroit, Michigan (deceased 1984)

1974-75:	Walter T. Greaney, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts (deceased 1994)
1975-76:	Lyle C. Pearson, North Mankato, Minnesota
1976-77:	Frank J. Randazzo, East Meadow, New York
1977-78:	Oliver E. Meadows, Godley, Texas (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
2005-06:	Paul W. Jackson, Colorado Springs, Colorado
2006-07:	Bradley S. Barton, Tualatin, Oregon

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 86th NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE DISABLED
AMERICAN VETERANS HELD AT NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
August 11, 2007
Joint Opening Session

The Joint Opening Session of the Disabled American Veterans and the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana, on Saturday morning, August 11, 2007, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by National Commander Bradley S. Barton

COMMANDER BRADLEY S. BARTON: Ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

COMMANDER BARTON: We hope you enjoyed our military medley. (Applause) I now call to order the 86th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans. Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant, will you 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 86th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans to be convened in New Orleans, Louisiana, at 9:05 a.m., Saturday, August 11th, 2007. Consideration and disposition of business brought before this Convention shall be conducted in accordance with the National Constitution and Bylaws now in force.

COMMANDER BARTON: I want to remind everybody, please turn off your cell phones. Present the Colors.

(Whereupon, the Colors were presented by the Department of Arizona Color Guard.)

COMMANDER BARTON: Ladies and gentlemen, our National Anthem.

(Whereupon, the National Anthem was sung.)

COMMANDER BARTON: Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

COMMANDER BARTON: Two. Now, for the invocation I would like to call on National Chaplain, the Reverend Doctor Edward Bastille.

CHAPLAIN REVEREND DOCTOR EDWARD BASTILLE, JUNIOR: I have a story. (Laughter) And I'd like to dedicate this story to Bobby Barrera. A sailor was visiting with a pirate. They were swapping stories. The sailor noted the pirate's peg leg, eye patch and hook.

"So tell me" asked the sailor, "how did you come to lose that leg?" "Ah," said the pirate, "'twas a black squall swept me overboard. Whilst in the water, a shark snapped my leg off and I've had this peg leg ever since." "Wow," said the sailor. "And how did you get the hook?"

"We were fighting in close quarters," said the pirate. "Some scurvy dog with a cutlass hacked my hand off and I've had this hook ever since." "Amazing," said the sailor. "And what about the eye patch?" "Ah," said the pirate, "'twas a seagull pooped in my eye." (Laughter)

"A seagull?" asked the sailor, a big incredulous. "Well, I should explain" said the pirate. "'twas my first day with the new hook." (Laughter) Let us pray. Lord, God, comforter and author of all that has meaning in our lives, be with us this morning as we gather as the Disabled American Veterans.

Calm our spirits and open our minds as we come together to work for those we serve and represent. Help us as leaders to be confident of our future and dedicated to our mission. Give us, Oh, God, insight and guide our choices that we may help care for and support our disabled veterans.

Oh, God, be especially with those of our brothers and sisters who have fought in Afghanistan and Iraq. Guide them, protect them, and help them feel our support. Lord, God, during our week together in our deliberations if we should feel the excitement of a particular issue, help us make sure we have no hooks in our hands. Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

COMMANDER BARTON: Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in thanking the members of the Department of Arizona Color Guard for posting the Colors. (Applause) Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

COMMANDER BARTON: And welcome to the fabulous Crescent City. As they say here in New Orleans, "Laissez les bon temps rouler! Let the good times roll." (Applause)

Joining us this morning to reveal more about this intriguing city on the bayou and its particular ways is Past Department Commander of Louisiana, Lloyd Helms. (Applause) Lloyd is standing in for the Convention Chairman, Mike Cox who, unfortunately, could not join us today due to illness.

In 1958 Lloyd joined the Air Force Aviation Cadet Program where he learned the radar navigation skills that would serve him so well aboard a B-52 bomber in more than 156 combat missions over Laos, Cambodia, North and South Vietnam. In 1978 Lloyd retired from active service as a major.

Since his retirement, Lloyd has worked exclusively to better the lives of disabled veterans. He has served as the Department of Louisiana commander as well as two terms as commander of one of the state's largest chapters, Chapter 30 in Shreveport.

Lloyd and his wife, Paula, have three children, one grandchild, and live in Bossier City, Louisiana. Fellow members and guests, please join me in welcoming Past Department Commander Lloyd Helms. (Applause)

PAST LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT COMMANDER LLOYD HELMS: Thank you, Commander, for that warm introduction. National Commander Barton, National Adjutant Wilson, National Line Officers, Auxiliary National Commander Tanner, and Auxiliary National Adjutant Tedrow, distinguished guests and fellow DAV members, it is an honor to welcome you to the 86th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans.

Louisiana is as much a concoction as gumbo, the spicy dish that has made it famous. The state has been strengthened by rare combinations of many nations and cultures. And Louisiana has kept the best of them. So when it comes to fun, food, things to do and places to go, you have your pick of many fascinating activities, especially here in New Orleans, one of North America's most distinctive and culturally diverse cities.

When you call it the "Big Easy," the "Crescent City" or simply "N'Awlins," when the sun goes down New Orleans will enchant you with a unique array of sights, sounds, and tastes. This is more than a city, it is a legend.

I've been asked many times, "What is Cajun and what is Creole?" Creole, a term often heard in reference to Louisiana, originally meant "born in the colonies." It can also refer to a combination of French, Spanish, African or Caribbean cultures. Today, it most means good food. (Laughter)

Just remember the food here is judged by how many napkins you have to use in order to clean up. (Laughter) The Cajuns are known for their French dialect, their music, spicy food and their ability to live life to its fullest. Today, they continue to preserve their hard-fought heritage.

No city in the world takes fun more seriously than New Orleans. Here the real magic is in the music, the food, and the people, the French Quarter, jazz bands, beignets and chicory coffee, the "Cities of the Dead," the Mighty Mississippi, and, of course, the three Cs—Creole, Cajun and crawdads. (Laughter) New Orleans has it all.

Just a couple of trolley stops down the line you will find Jackson Square and bonny Bourbon Street with its distinctive sounds and attractions. Near the hotel you can visit the Audubon Zoo, the Aquarium of the Americas, Harrah's Casino, catch a dinner cruise on a paddle wheeler, or just simply stroll up on the Riverwalk.

By the way, we are not all drunken, Cajun whack-Os but that is our tourism campaign. As you enjoy the Big Easy, please keep in mind the reason we are here, to do our best to help the DAV remain the finest veterans' service organization in the world.

We are here to take care of business. And there is a lot of work to be done but there is also a lot of fun to be had. Enjoy Louisiana's unique culture. Consume lots of food, but watch your waistline. And work hard to make this a great Convention. But just remember, it is illegal to tie an alligator to a fire hydrant. (Laughter)

On behalf of the Department of Louisiana, Department Commander Billy Worley, it is an honor to be the host state of the 86th DAV/DAVA National Convention. In the words of the National Convention Committee, "Let the good times roll." Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Lloyd. Colonel Terry Ebbert, U. S. Marine Corps, retired—hoorah—serves as Director of Homeland Security for N'Awlins. And he is assigned the operational and planning responsibility for the police and fire departments, the Office of Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Medical Services.

Colonel Ebbert is a distinguished, twice wounded combat veteran who was awarded the Navy Cross during the Vietnam War. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Colonel Terry Ebbert. (Applause)

COLONEL TERRY J. EBBERT: Americans, patriots, and heroes, it's an honor and I'm humbled to have the opportunity to welcome you to the great city of New Orleans. I am, though, a little bit worried that I have to stand up next to anybody with a gavel that big. (Laughter)

And I've only been asked for six "get out of jail" cards coming in. (Laughter) And I haven't figured out from the energy here this morning whether this is a late Friday night coming in or an early Saturday warm-up. (Laughter) But it is an honor on behalf of Mayor Nagin to welcome all of you to the great city of New Orleans.

New Orleans is an historic, important city. We're struggling now—and also, spend a lot of money because that's a good tax base for us. But we are coming back from the largest natural disaster our country has endured in its history.

This is a city that lost 80 percent of its housing. It lost its criminal justice system, its school system, its water, sewer, electrical, pumping, well, all those things that you and I as Americans in a democratic country look at as the foundation of being able to function and provide for our citizens.

We're almost two days or two weeks away from the second anniversary of Katrina and we've come a long way. There is a lot of people out across the United States that wonders why we want to continue to live surrounded by levees below the sea level. But, I can tell you that this nation is in a world wide war on terrorism. This war will be won or lost on the economy of this country.

The economy of this country runs on energy. And today you sit in the energy heartland of America. This river, the offshore ports, the 135 petrochemical companies, the 7,000 ships into this port, the 250,000 barges, 40 percent of the crude oil that comes up this river and through the pipelines.

We handle about 40 percent of the refining for the country, between here and Baton Rouge. Nobody wants those refineries built in their backyard so everybody in America has got a stake in ensuring that this city and this area of Southeast Louisiana recovers.

And to recover, we've got to get our people home because you don't have a business, you can't run an industry if you don't have the infrastructure and you don't have the people to run it. So those are the issues that we are dealing with as a city, as a region, as a state, and as a federal government.

This is the only city in America that's looking at moving 100 percent of the population out in the face of a Category 3 or greater storm, not an easy challenge. I think you can move a couple Marine divisions easier than—at least marines when you tell them to "Stand at attention" get in line.

You can do that. But when you're trying to deal with the 1.2 million civilians here, somehow it doesn't work quite as easily. But, it is a challenge. And we face a lot of challenges. But we've come a long way. This is an important point in I think our nation's history.

We do play an important role in this country. And we've come a very, very long ways. But I want to finish by talking about what an honor I've had the privilege of my whole life of serving or walking alongside of great Americans. I did it for 29 years in the Marine Corps and I've got to do it over the past 3.5 years here in the city.

In the darkest hours in the aftermath of this storm, Katrina, I looked around my room and I saw a police chief veteran; I saw a fire chief veteran, both veterans in their own right but service to our country had laid the foundation for their leadership.

I looked over my shoulder and there was the commanding general of the 82nd Airborne, the commanding general of the National Guard, Admiral Allen from the Coast Guard, a Marine general officer with the 4th Division.

So you look around at the response for this catastrophe and it rested in the hands of people that understand what it was to serve in the military and build a foundation of leadership, of knowledge, of personnel skills, that allowed us to come back through those very dark days.

So I think that as you go forward in your lives you continue to set the pace for the future. I do think—and this is average personal opinion—that one of our problems in this nation is that we don't have public service and everybody becomes dependent upon the government and nobody wants to become independent.

And that's something I think you and I have long since passed as we've moved through life. We understand what public service is. We understand what a privilege it is to live in the United States of America.

So, again, on behalf of this great city, I do want to welcome you. I do want you to have a great time. And I do want you to come back. And those of you who haven't had the opportunity to walk a couple blocks and move over here to this great D-Day Museum—and I know the

director is going to talk to you. I'll take the privilege since I'm here earlier than he—that you've got to visit the World War II Museum.

It's one of the icons of this city and soon to be of this country. So God bless all of you for your service, your sacrifices to this great nation and God bless America. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you Colonel Ebbert. We have today a wonderful opportunity to visit a place that is close to all of our hearts, the American Veterans' Disabled for LIFE Memorial. Right now, the Disabled Veterans LIFE Memorial Foundation is working hard to gather the funds needed for construction.

I am pleased to tell you they are on schedule to make the memorial a reality by the year 2010. This memorial will stand in the shadows of our nation's Capitol and serve as a permanent reminder of the service and sacrifice of disabled veterans. (Applause) So please, if you will, join me for a virtual walk through what will become the American Veterans Disabled for LIFE Memorial.

(Whereupon, a video of the Americans Disabled Veterans for LIFE Memorial was viewed.)

COMMANDER BARTON: When I first met Lois Pope a few years ago, I realized immediately that she is a woman with strong beliefs, but she is also a woman of grace and compassion. Lois has brought about a new level of recognition for the achievements and contributions of America's disabled veterans through the Disabled Veterans LIFE Memorial Foundation.

The Memorial Foundation was established in 1998 through the combined efforts of Mrs. Pope, chairwoman, Mr. Art Wilson, president, and the late Jesse Brown, former Secretary for Veterans Affairs. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome a great friend of the DAV, Lois Pope. (Applause)

MR. ROB LEWIS: And now, let's meet your DAV National Officers: our Past National Commander from sunny Colorado Springs, Colorado, a rousing welcome for Paul "Action" Jackson; (Applause) from Gilford, New Hampshire, your National Chaplain, a heavenly welcome for the Reverend Edward Bastille; (Applause) the pride of Grand Forks, North Dakota, our National Judge Advocate, Mike Dobmeier; (Applause) your Fourth Junior Vice Commander, from Grand Forks, Minnesota, the Land of a Thousand Lakes, Jerry Krejci; (Applause) your National Third Junior Vice Commander, a Tarheel extraordinaire, from Raleigh, North Carolina, Wally Tyson; (Applause) your National Second Junior Vice Commander, from Del Rio, Texas, let's hear it for our favorite Lone Star, Bobby Barrera; (Applause) your National First Junior Vice Commander from Illinois, the Land of Lincoln, a rousing welcome for Raymond Dempsey; (Applause); and last but certainly not least, your National Senior Vice Commander, from Arlington, Virginia, Old Dominion himself, please give it up for Robert Reynolds. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER ROBERT T. REYNOLDS: 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 is mine.

And I am very proud to introduce a man who has lived up to and often exceeded the expectations of leadership and commitment we've come to expect from our national commanders. In a time of war on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan Brad has inspired our organization to reach new heights in building better lives for disabled veterans.

His passion for serving his fellow man, his charisma and fortitude will long be remembered in the annals of DAV history. Ladies and gentlemen, it is my sincere pleasure to introduce to you Bradley S. Barton, National Commander of the Disabled American Veterans. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you and good morning, everyone.

(Response of "Good morning.")

COMMANDER BARTON: Good morning. Welcome to the 86th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans. And welcome back to New Orleans. I know you're anxious to get started with the business of building better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families.

But before we begin I want to express my gratitude for providing me the opportunity to experience one of the most important and rewarding years of my life. I've had an extremely exuberant year as your national commander. It's been filled with joy, tears, friendships, success, and towering moments.

I've seen first-hand the care and compassion of our members and the great successes of our organization's programs. Beyond question, my most vivid memory of this past year is the

dedication of the Center for the Intrepid and the two new Fisher Houses at the Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas.

I was pleased to be part of an official delegation and to meet with injured soldiers and their families. The DAV played a big role in the efforts to build this world class medical and rehabilitation center. The Charitable Service Trust provided a \$750,000 grant last year to put the funding over its goal.

I witnessed firsthand what the Fisher Houses provided when National Adjutant Art Wilson and I went to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. We toured the hospital, talking with recently wounded soldiers and their families. It is an impressive program that assists those wounded and injured recover and return to fulfilling lives.

Another highlight of my year as your commander is when I addressed the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees at our Mid-Winter Conference. I was touched by your wholehearted backing as we emphatically told lawmakers that a new law that allows attorneys to charge a fee for assisting veterans with their claims is totally unacceptable. (Applause)

We've already paid the price for our benefits with our service to our country and the sacrifice of our injuries. The attorneys can represent us pro bono, as they have in the past. I will always remember and deeply appreciate the tremendous support I received from all of you that were there.

Together we stepped up efforts to reform funding for veterans' health care, increase staff to resolve VA's claims backlog, and provide full and fair concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and disability compensation. (Applause) That day on the Hill it was such a thrill and an adrenaline rush to hear the cheering support of hundreds of DAV and Auxiliary members as I laid out our legislative goals to Congress.

The standing ovations from our members and our Congressional representatives renewed my strength and determination to serve my fellow disabled veterans. I just hope it was as inspiring for all of those who attended as much as it was for me. (Applause) Thank you.

I want to share with you how inspiring it is to work with our outstanding, professional, national service, legislative, voluntary service staffs. They are the men and women who provide us with both important program support and timely information on issues in Congress.

They give us the tools we need to ensure that veterans will always remain a national priority. It is crucial that all our members become better informed and active at the local, grassroots level. Clearly, the way to do that is working with the Commander's Action Network, DAV CAN. It is the first big step to protect and improve our benefits and health care.

We are fortunate to have topnotch leadership at every level to meet the challenge we face. National Adjutant Art Wilson is a trusted, supportive advisor. He carries with him a storehouse of knowledge gained from his career of service to veterans.

Without question, Art is a leader of the finest veterans' service organization in the world. (Applause) His confidence, support, and strength have been invaluable to me through this year.

We are fortunate, also, to have two outstanding national executive directors, Rick Patterson in Cold Spring, and Dave Gorman in Washington. (Applause) Their guidance and foresight have enabled me to serve the needs of the DAV more successfully, more knowledgeably, and to the best of my ability. They and their highly professional staffs make sure the mission of the DAV is carried out to its fullest.

I am also very proud to have worked with an outstanding group of line officers this year. Rob, Ray, Bobby, Wally, Jerome and Ed, Mike, great job. You have been a wonderful support to me. (Applause) Your skill in executing your duties has been exceptional.

And I want to thank the National Executive Committee members for their insight and leadership. They have done an outstanding job and deserve thanks from all of us. (Applause) To you, our corps of National Service Officers, who devote your lives to service and care of veterans, I salute you. (Applause)

And I commend the Transition Service Officers who are working with our newest generation of veterans to help smooth the way for the care and support they need. I extend my thanks, also, to our Chapter and Department Service Officers, volunteers, Transportation Network drivers, hospital service coordinators. (Applause) And I thank each member of the DAV for what you do every day to help our fellow veterans.

Without the support of our front-line members, those of you who pound the pavement to find the neediest veterans, those of you who clothe the homeless veterans out on the street and in the hospitals, those of you who listen to veterans who have no one else to listen to them, I could not have succeeded without your fortitude and your compassion. (Applause)

While we've achieved a major victory in the area of funding for veterans' programs this year, we all must work hard to ensure that our government continues to provide veterans the benefits and services they have earned. As I take stock of what we've accomplished, our amazing record, not only for this year but throughout our history, is legendary.

But we cannot stand on our record. Each of us from your national commander to you, the individual member, has a responsibility to do our best in the highest traditions of honor and service.

It has been an honor for me to serve as your national commander and it has been a wonderful year in my life, one that I would never have believed possible after I was wounded in Vietnam.

Anything that I've accomplished as your national commander is a result of your support and the support of our professional staff. Thank you for your trust, your encouragement, and your service to our mission.

I remain confident that our citizens will strongly support legislative initiatives to improve the well-being of disabled veterans, those from today's wars and yesterday's. The people of America are with us. But they need to know what is happening. It is up to us to tell America what is needed and why. And the DAV gets the word out better than ever before.

This year we've stepped up our ongoing public outreach efforts. For example, we communicated how soldiers were warehoused and forgotten at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. We revealed how those suffering from traumatic brain injuries, PTSD and other psychological wounds of war were being given short shift by the military.

We reached out to the American people to tell them that soldiers wounded while serving our nation were being given less than they earned for their sacrifices. This generation of disabled veterans needs our service and advocacy in action.

I am very pleased to tell you the DAV is there, in the front of the line, telling their story. And sitting in front of a Congressional Committee hearing when soldiers were finally able to speak, the only organization they credited for helping them was the DAV. (Applause)

All of our successes mean one thing, we have much more work to do. If we slack off now the creeping bureaucracy will again erode our gains. We must be ever vigilant against policies that will mean the loss of our rights and earned benefits. If we're not alert, Congress and the Administration can slip back through the looking glass to make bad plans look good.

The threat of privatization is always with us. Private industry views the VA health care and benefits delivery system as rich and ripe for exploitation. We have helped create a veterans' system that works, one that functions. We have the solid support of the American people and we have the attention of Congress, which appears to be sensitive to our concerns.

For the first time in the long history of the independent budget Congress has given veterans' programs more funding than we requested. But, again, we must remain vigilant. We must not let our guard down. We can take pleasure in these advances but we cannot become complacent.

There is a new budget on the horizon; a new year begins, and our work starts anew. We must do everything in our power to ensure that our gains are never erased and that our sacrifices of the brave young men and women are not forgotten.

We must never forget what our sacrifices have given the American people. We must never forget what the sacrifices of the newest troops in Iraq and Afghanistan have given the America people. We must fight for these youngsters as well as for ourselves with these newest veterans by our side.

We have kept America's love of liberty alive at great personal cost to ourselves. We gave freely and without question. Our success in preserving and improving our earned benefits depends on the ability and willingness of all of us to join forces to make our voices heard.

We have a shared responsibility to make sure all disabled veterans receive the health care, disability compensation, and other benefits they are entitled to. Only by working together can we put an end to the long delays in delivering benefits and improve access to health care that cause undue hardships for disabled veterans and their families.

It has been and will continue to be a hard battle. But over the past year I have become even more convinced that it is a battle for right and justice that we can win. This past year is a great example of how the DAV truly is a force to be reckoned with.

It has been the experience of a lifetime serving as your national commander and as a humble member of a larger family. Thank you for this fantastic year. It has been an honor and a privilege and I am humbled and I look forward to continuing to serve you in the years ahead as a member of the greatest veterans' organization in the world. (Standing Ovation)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER REYNOLDS: Commander Barton, your leadership and devotion to the DAV will long be remembered. And we all thank you.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Rob.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER REYNOLDS: At this time the chair will entertain a motion to accept the national commander's report.

MR. STAN BARTON: Commander, Stan Barton, Chapter 1, the great state of Oregon, it is an honor and a privilege to make a motion to accept your report.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER REYNOLDS: Can I have a second, please?

MR. OTOH BARTON: Otho Barton, Chapter 1, Portland, Oregon, I second the motion.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER REYNOLDS: All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

COMMANDER BARTON: At this time I would like to introduce the governing body of our organization, the National Executive Committee. Gentlemen, please stand and be recognized. (Applause) Thank you. You may be seated.

"It is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press. It is the soldier, not the poet who has given us freedom of speech. It is the soldier, not the campus organizer who has given us the freedom to demonstrate. It is the soldier who salutes the flag, who serves beneath the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag who allows the protester to burn the flag." Father Dennis Edward O'Brien of the United States Marine Corps.

And I wish to add, it is the soldier who takes care of his or her own when things get too heavy. I hope this next video will serve to remind us all that the price of freedom demands courage and sacrifice. Please join me in watching the following video titled, "He ain't heavy."

(Whereupon, the video "He ain't Heavy" was viewed.)

COMMANDER BARTON: 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 health care services, benefits programs, and national cemeteries for American's veterans and their dependents.

Secretary Nicholson served as U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican for three years prior to becoming the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. 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, the Combat Infantry Badge, the Meritorious Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, 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 as 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 election of 2000.

So, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honor and a privilege to introduce Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable R. James Nicholson. (Standing Ovation) Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

HONORABLE R. JAMES NICHOLSON: Well, thank you, Commander Barton, for that warm and generous introduction. It's just great to be here with you all today during the renaissance of the Big Easy. I was with you the last time, Commander, I think, on the ski slopes at Snowmass in Aspen and it wasn't quite this warm, as I recall. (Laughter) But it doesn't seem that long ago.

Congratulations on your 86th Convention. I was told on good source here that Dave Gorman gave the invocation at that Convention. (Laughter) I knew he was old, but I didn't know he was that old. It's great to be in his company as well as it is your National Adjutant Art Wilson, Auxiliary Commander Donna Tanner, and with Rick Patterson who we don't see a lot of in Washington but I know does great work for you and your organization.

And I want to thank you also for giving me this opportunity to come here today as the Secretary of VA and as a veteran and as a citizen to thank all of you connected to, part of members of the DAV for all the contributions that you've made for the safety and the security and the freedom of our country.

And I want to thank you in more, as they say around Washington, they have this term they use, "granular" which means "more detail." I never used that term before I came into Washington but in a more granular way I want to thank you for your sponsorship of the Winter Sports Clinic.

I have participated in that three times. Suzanne, my wife and I have made some very good friends that we've continued to see there. I participated in the sled hockey games and the rock climb and the mono-skiing.

And it's been good for me to experience that and to see the long-term benefits that are being given, not just to the veterans there that you invite there and sponsor but to those that observe that from afar who say, you know, if he can do that, I can do that in my condition. And it's having a great effect on veterans and the restoration of the emphasis in their life to the ability that is still left and not the disability.

I'm grateful for your help in our homeless veterans' endeavors. Your homeless veterans' initiative is an effective and a compassionate call to changing the lives of thousands of homeless veterans which we, unfortunately, still have; although, we're working on that diligently.

I thank you for your Transition Service Program, opening new doors to success every day, and for your Mobile Service Program and the Van Program. And I know you have a representative of Ford Motor here with us today. And my gratitude along with yours I know goes to them for their part in that. So that's the granular part.

And the strategic part, the transcendent part of how I see you, of the DAV, is about something more fundamental, though, and that's the flesh and the blood sacrifice that you have made in manifesting your patriotism for our country, and not just you that have worn the uniform but those that have been a part of our support structure, the families that endure in this sacrifice almost equally as much.

So I cannot thank you enough for all that you've done and for now over 2.5 years it's been my privilege to lead this department which, as we all know, was charged by President Lincoln in 1865 "to care for him who has borne the battle, and his widow, and his orphan."

You know, I was giving this, a speech one day. And afterwards a guy asked me, he said, "Don't you ever get tired of quoting Lincoln?" And I said, "No, I never get tired of that." Those seventeen words I think capture 142 years of tradition of honoring the service and the sacrifice of those that procured our freedom and those that today still are preserving it.

And as I now am preparing to leave this post I want to take, again, this opportunity to commend the DAV. You are particularly good—and I mean this most sincerely, and the people who represent you in Washington with whom I deal so regularly, probably most of all Dave Gorman, I think are wonderfully effective, informed, competent, and professional in the way that they go about their business of representing you and all veterans in our country. So you can be grateful, as I know you are, for the leadership that you have put together in your organization.

Now, if you would indulge me I want, because I am here and I'm your secretary, to give you a brief report of the VA and to do that I like to use a metaphor of my youth. I grew up in Northwest Iowa, rural Iowa I want to say, and some people say that's being redundant (Laughter) to say "rural Iowa" but in this case it is.

I was in a little town of 99 people. It was about a half a square mile, surrounded on all four sides by corn fields. And we lived in that town. My father went broke farming and so we moved in there when I was in the sixth grade. And but it's name is Struble, Iowa. Nobody knew that because the only two signs there said "Resume speed" as cars sped through there crossing the Great Northern Railroad track. (Laughter)

In fact, I remember distinctly the first time I ever got out of there. My dad took me when I was in the eighth grade in our family car, which was a Model A, down to Sioux City, Iowa, to see a rodeo. And I was struck by the Brahma bulls, the bucking bulls. And since I've been back in Washington I think of those bulls a lot. (Laughter) And I will say I think of what they do regularly, too, quite often.

But I mention Struble because we worked for the farmers around there and there were seven kids in my family and we all had to help out. And so I used to milk cows. And I would sit on that three-legged milking stool. It was three basic foundations and if you used it right and got your head into the, you know, kind of the flank of that cow she couldn't get rid of you.

And I see the VA as having those three major legs. And it's been mentioned here today. And the commander mentioned it in his report to you but that's the metaphor I use to describe. We have a health leg, a benefits leg and a memorial leg.

The health leg is the one that gets the most attention, the most silhouette. It employs by far the most people. We have about 245,000 people overall and there are about 200,000 of them in health. And those of you that use our health services I know are very familiar.

You're familiar with the scale. We now see over a million patients a week in the veterans health organization so it is unarguably the biggest health care provider in the United States and arguably it is the best and that's not just the boast. (Applause) Thank you.

Somebody has just written a book which says that. It's called "Best Health care Anywhere." His name is Longman. I've never met him but I have read his book, believe me. But he supports it with a great deal of data comparing us to the other systems.

We have doubled the number of patients that we are treating at the VHA in the last ten years. Under President Bush the budget of the VA overall is up 77 percent. The budget for health care is up 83 percent since he has become president. (Applause)

And we, while I think doing a superior job, we have challenges. We're at war. And we're in a war with an enemy that's using unique means of combat against our warriors. And so while happily the ratio of those coming back of fatalities to injured is very low, in most all previous wars that we've been in for one killed there have been three injured.

In this war for one fatality there are sixteen injured. And it's because of the heroics of those providing battlefield medicine and evacuation and the competence of those people that these young folks are not coming to us, thank God, in body bags but they're coming to us on gurneys.

And some of them are very seriously injured, presenting us with real challenges. And I will say that I think we were responding in an exemplary way. And time precludes going into a lot of the detail about that but we have organized 21 polytrauma centers—poly meaning multi injuries—so we can treat them all in one location.

We don't have to do it serially and move them from one place to another for a different kind of care. We've greatly expanded our facilities overall. We now have over 880 clinics at the VA in addition to the 153 major medical centers. We have 209 vet centers and we're adding 23 new ones.

And in response to those coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan we have now—and this is really significant, I think—we have completed the training of every clinician at the VA to be able to competently screen every soldier, every service member who comes to us for any type of brain injury and any showing of post traumatic stress disorder, PTSD.

So we're not only now trained to do that but we are doing it. So anybody that presents themselves for any reason, a sore arm, anything that comes to, anybody that comes to us is screened to see if they have even a latent presence of a brain injury because of the presence of blasts or if they're suffering any mental disability. And I'm going to say a couple more words about that later.

We've also been able to expand our budget for our mental health care offerings by over \$3 billion. And I want, I'll do it right now. I want to emphasize something about post traumatic stress disorder. In other conflicts it was called "battle fatigue" and "shell shock" and the current terminology for really the same phenomenon is "post traumatic stress disorder."

And my experts tell me that any young person that's been over there that comes back and has these symptoms is having a common reaction to a very uncommon experience in their life. You know, we live in a very civil society and over there when they blow people up that's a pretty uncivil act.

And as a general in Iraq the last time I was over there was telling me, saying for kids to have to police other people up and their body parts is a pretty traumatic experience. I'm going back to Iraq a week from Monday, by the way. So I've been there several times and he's, they're right, I think.

The point I want to make to you all as leaders in the veteran community and people that really care about this is to help us at the VA to make sure these young people know that there is no reason for them not to come in to the VA and if they're experiencing any of this and let us examine them and treat them.

We have a program at our Cincinnati VA Hospital where if they'll come and be resident in that program for three weeks—and we've done this enough now to be confident about these results—we have 71 percent of them leave there after three weeks without any symptomatic showing of post traumatic stress disorder.

So we can make them whole. We can restore normality to their life. And they should not feel any stigma about coming in and seeking our help. As I said, it's a common thing that's happening to them because of the uncommon experience.

And none of us, an employer, people granting security clearances, a spouse, a family member, should all recognize this doesn't mean that dad or mother or sister, or brother, or anybody is losing their mind. It is something that happens when you go through this. And we at the VA can treat it. We can make them well. So help us with that if you would.

The second leg I want to address of this three-legged organization is benefits. You're real familiar with it. We were being deluged with claims and we not only have almost record numbers of claimants but the claimants themselves, who have different issues about things that, you know,

have happened to them that are service-connected that we, of course, must validate are at record amounts, too.

It used to be about two or three of these different maladies. Now they're running closer to eight to ten per individual. In the education area we've provided education this past year to over 500,000 veterans. We've made loans for 142,000 veterans to buy homes. And we insure over 4 million veterans. We're the sixth largest life insurance company in our country.

And we do a good job of administering those programs. But I'm going to be frank to tell you in the area of compensation and pension, particularly in compensation, we have challenges because of those numbers that I've just told you. We, it has come down. It was just a few years ago 220 days. It's now taking 177 days and that's too long, in my opinion. And we need to keep knocking that down.

Now, the reality is—and people like Dave Gorman and the others can tell you that there is some law that operates here, both regulatory or statutory and case law that keeps this pretty long. And we're going to have to address that if we're really going to get serious about really shortening this time because—and it's for the veteran.

Every time we ask a veteran for another piece of confirming information the veteran has another 60 days with which to respond. And that gets tacked on and that gets stretched out. So money, alone, will not cure this, although we have gotten some new money and we've been able to hire and train new claims adjudicators.

And I'm very optimistic that next year that this will come down another 10 days. But I know the frustration out there. I share it. And we're working on this. Let me tell you that we have made our OIF/OEF returnees a priority. Veterans over 70 are a priority in this system.

And let me just add that over 50 percent of the claims that we're dealing with at any one time are from veterans who are already being compensated by the VA who are asking for their compensation to be increased, which is their right, or that they have appealed the decision of the VA.

It's also true that when a decision is made the veteran is compensated from the day he or she filed the claim. So that mitigates that somewhat but it's still too long and we're working diligently to bring that down.

The third leg is the memorial leg, the burials. Our Greatest Generation—I like to say that World War II is the Greatest and today's people are the Latest Greatest Generation, those over there fighting for us today. But the Greatest Generation folks are passing away now at a rate of about 1,900 a day.

So we are in the biggest expansion that we've been in since the Civil War. That is going very well. Our mission is clear. The country wants us as another expression of their gratitude to those of us that served in uniform to have a beautiful, shrine-like, pastoral place to be buried for our final repose and the final respect of our country. And that is what we are providing.

In all of these missions I will also tell you that we are being very, very well resourced by the President and by the Congress. And they, I think we're at a time where we're experiencing a controversial war, yes, but the warriors are not controversial, just the opposite. And that has not always been the case.

Those of us that are Vietnam veterans can remember when we came home. When I came home the Army sent me to graduate school in New York City and I wouldn't dare have worn my uniform. They would have spit on me if I would have. But that's not the case today.

In fact, I was just with a lady this week in Greensborough, North Carolina, who told me a story of witnessing a person get up and insist that a young soldier take her seat in the First Class section of an airplane that they were traveling on together. And that's a wonderful phenomenon for our tremendous, brave warriors today. They deserve no less. (Applause)

That also elevates the expectations of the VA because we're the agents of this grateful nation of people. And it's a wonderful thing, really, but it does, it puts more expectations, more pressure on us. And I think that's just fine. And we're reacting, I think, well.

And let me just tell you about some of the major transformations that we have going on. And I won't go into the details of these but I have instituted a new system of patient advocates so that during this transition and follow-on care of these kids that have been seriously injured we have someone whose mission is to see that they and their family are attended to and they don't get out in some never-never land for any of their needs.

We've been experiencing a drop-off in the nurses. We've started a new nursing academy at the VA. We are going through a major transformation and I think leading the government in this in information technology and data security.

We've just confirmed a new Assistant Secretary, first time ever, for Emergency Preparedness at the VA. We're going to split the function of the Chief Financial Officer. It's, that person has had that responsibility for an \$80 billion enterprise. You know, we'd be in the Fortune 25 if we were a private business.

But that person has also had responsibility for contracting and acquisitions. We're going to split that and have a new assistant secretary do the acquisitions. We acquire about \$14 billion worth of purchases around the country. That's bigger than the budgets of many Cabinet Departments in our country.

We're going to have a new person, professional position that I've gotten approved who is going to look after the construction of facilities. We're in a major expansion. We're going to be building a new hospital down here in New Orleans and I'm going to be announcing that site in the very near future.

And we're going to have a person—and I mean no disrespect at all to doctors but doctors have things that they know real well and construction is not one of them. We're bringing construction people in to build and remodel things that we do.

Diabetes, I am sad to tell you, is at epic proportions in the VA. Over 25 percent of the veterans that come to us now have diabetes. And a lot of it is driven by lifestyle. It's just, we just haven't been eating right and exercising enough.

And we have a major initiative going and so if you've been to one of our clinics lately I hope that that clinician has had a thing drop down on their computer and started asking you about your body mass and your lifestyle because we can retard that dreaded disease.

Another is that of staff infections in our hospitals. Instituted a major effort to eliminate those. Staff infections in America now kill more people in hospitals than do people die on the highways, and that, too, is preventable. And we are at that at the VA.

So we have, we have a great deal going on there. I, after 2.5 years, have had the privilege of leading this wonderful agency. I have, one of my favorite motivating phrases is from one of my heroes in America is President Teddy Roosevelt. And he said one time, "Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."

And that has indeed been my privilege in the last 2.5 years and I think that's felt by all of us at the VA. Next Monday morning President Bush is coming to our hospital in Washington to look first-hand at the work that's worth doing, the work that we're doing at that hospital for veterans.

And so I'm going to end my time with you here today and my remarks not talking about myself but talking about the people at the VA who work for you and with whom I've had the privilege of working. And I'm going to do it using the story of the place that we're at, New Orleans, Katrina.

And you may or may not know that we had two hospitals taken out by Katrina. The one in Gulfport was just obliterated. The hospital here was not blown over but it was flooded out. And it left that building full of patients and caregivers. And it's very near to where we're sitting here this morning.

And for five days there was no electricity. There was no coming or going. People were in there and employees in the upper floors of that big hospital could look out into the parishes that they lived in here and see their homes, some of them, but only the chimneys and the roofs of their homes. They had no idea the disposition of their families, their spouses, their children, even their pets.

But we, through the creativity and the drive and spirit of the VA team were able to get some deuce-and-a-half ton trucks that we commandeered in Georgia and brought them down here in a convoy and then got some C130 airplanes and we managed to finagle getting these trucks down to the hospital. We then had to use some boats and so forth to, you know, convey people to the trucks.

But everyone of those patients was evacuated. Many of them were on respirators. Many weighed over 300 pounds. The elevators didn't work. They had to come down the halls. And we did not lose one patient in Katrina. (Applause) And we did not lose one patient medical record. (Applause)

Now, you contrast that. There were over a million medical records lost in Katrina here in the Gulf Coast Area. When you lost your medical record, you've lost your health history and that's a serious thing. And because all of ours are digitized, that we have electronic medical records, they were all backed up.

And when we moved in the end tens of thousands of veterans upland, as I like to say, and got them resettled, we didn't lose one of them or one medical record. And that is due to the work of the people who had worked and work at the VA.

And then think about the fact that those care givers in that hospital all went with their patients. They got on those trucks not knowing where they were going and then got on airplanes not knowing where they were going. And we triaged the airplanes in the air and we put patients all over Texas and Northern Louisiana and elsewhere.

And they stayed with their patients. They abided their oath. (Applause) And that, to me, that typifies the devotion, the spirit, the compassion of the people who work at the VA. They are a wonderful team of people. And they've been wonderfully led and were being, I think, wonderfully resourced today.

But we have something really special in this country in the form of the Department of Veterans Affairs, not because of me but because of the people that work there. And I will say they are greatly assisted by you, the veterans' service organizations of this country.

It's been a, just an extraordinary opportunity and a privilege for me to serve and to serve with you and with them. God bless all of you. God bless our veterans and God bless America. Thank you. (Standing Ovation) Thank you.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for those gracious remarks. It has been my honor once again to share the platform with our DAV Auxiliary National Commander Donna Tanner. As my Auxiliary counterpart Donna has impressed me time and again with her untiring dedication, her limitless compassion, and her capable leadership in the Auxiliary.

Commander Tanner 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 a truly an exceptional woman, DAV Auxiliary National Commander Donna Tanner. (Applause)

DAV AUXILIARY COMMANDER DONNA TANNER: Thank you. Thank you Commander Brad for your kind introduction and your friendship and support not only to me but to the DAV Auxiliary. Usually when I get up to speak I do welcome everyone in my native language, which is Massachusetts, so, how are ya? (Laughter)

Commander Barton, National Officers, NECs, Past National Commanders, members and guests, welcome to the 86th National Convention in the resilient city of New Orleans. I'm honored to say that we have worked together as a team to help build better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families. And although we are individually brilliant, when we work together we shine.

I would like to take a moment to introduce the team of officers that have worked so hard this year to make our Auxiliary a shining star. Please hold your applause until I have introduced them all. And please rise when I call your name.

From the state of Washington, National Senior Vice Commander, Kathryn Wiley; (Applause) now you're not following my instructions; (Laughter) from North Dakota, Sandra Dobmeier, First Junior Vice Commander; from Florida, Second Junior Vice Commander, Kay Egan; from Tennessee, Third Junior Vice Commander, Susan Henry; from Texas, Fourth Junior Vice Commander Patrice Rapisand; from Ohio, National Chaplain, Judy Uetterling; from Michigan, National Judge Advocate and Past National Commander Carol Gray; from Ohio, National Adjutant and Past National Commander Maria Tedrow; from Ohio, National Assistant Adjutant Judy Hezlep; and from North Dakota, our Immediate Past Commander Judy Steinhause. (Applause) Thank you. They've all worked so hard this year.

Also on the dais are the National Convention Chairman Linda Acosta of Louisiana. (Applause) And joining us today is Past National Commander Evelynne Dunn and Iris Brzezinski of Nevada. (Applause) Seated in the front row are the Auxiliary National Executive Committee. Please stand to be recognized. (Applause) Thank you. And thanks to all of you for your hard work and dedication.

I am deeply moved by all the wonderful opportunities that were afforded me this year as your Auxiliary National Commander. The best part of this position is the people you meet. I was very fortunate to meet President Bush at a White House breakfast on Memorial Day thanks to National Commander Brad and Donna Barton.

I was equally thrilled to meet America's heroes in my travels, heroes such as hospitalized patients from VA medical centers all over Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia on the Caring and Sharing Cruise in Pittsburgh and the volunteers who bring them to this great event, the people of Birmingham, Alabama who really know how to celebrate America's veterans and their contributions to our nation and, most importantly, the dedicated and hardworking members of the DAV and Auxiliary I have met and renewed friendships with across this country.

They are the people who meet and overcome challenges every day, the people who build better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families, and the disabled veterans and their families who live better lives as a result.

Challenges are nothing new to our organization. We have overcome many and we are currently working to seize the tremendous membership opportunities available to us to grow our membership as never before.

With more family members of disabled veterans eligible and more men and women returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan and other military service injured, it is more important than ever to welcome them into our ranks and to be there for them so that they do not have to face the future with uncertainty.

The DAV continues to be the premiere advocacy and service organization in this country and the Auxiliary is by their side making a positive difference. I've had wonderful opportunities to see just what a tremendous impact the DAV and Auxiliary have on those we serve.

I visited hospitalized veterans in VA medical centers nationwide and at Bethesda Navy Medical Center and at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. And I have seen what a difference a DAV Auxiliary volunteer can make in the life of these men and women. A smile or a pleasant greeting is all it takes to brighten their day as well as the day of the volunteer.

When I have visited these wounded warriors and their families they are always pleased to know that there is a compassionate and knowledgeable organization ready and willing to stand with them and to be there to assist them in their time of need.

This year the Auxiliary has been challenged by Ms. Laura Balun, Chief of Voluntary Services as the VA Central Office, to increase our number of volunteers and volunteer hours in this fiscal year. And I assured her that the DAV Auxiliary always meets a challenge.

I have found the Auxiliary very active in the Transportation Network across the country. Many of us are hospital service coordinators and volunteer drivers, ensuring that sick and disabled veterans needing medical care can get to their appointments.

This relieves the loved-ones of a tremendous burden. And for those who have no one to turn to, it is often the difference between quality medical care and no care at all. And for those of us gathered here, no care will never be an option. (Applause)

I also had the great pleasure of attending the Winter Sports Clinic. From the very first day I could see what a difference this event makes in the lives of severely disabled veterans. The participants were of all ages, from World War II veterans to veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

It was such a life-changing and freeing experience for the veterans, their family members, and loved ones and the nearly countless volunteers who make this clinic possible. I was very humbled handing out medals to these participants and very excited knowing that the DAV Auxiliary is a sponsor of this inspiring event.

The DAV Auxiliary has always been ready for legislative action and we still are. We are well-informed and cannot be beat when it comes to writing and contacting our legislators. We keep them informed and let the know that membership in the DAV comes at a price and that affects the whole family.

Our voice rings loud from city hall to the halls of Congress. And the message is clear—enact and protect legislation that builds better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families.

One of the proudest moments I had as your representative this year was sitting with National Commander Barton and the DAV staff at the presentation table before the Joint Veterans Affairs Committee in our nation's capitol. Commander Barton clearly and effectively stated our concerns regarding quality health care and service provided to America's disabled veterans.

He firmly pointed out to legislative leaders the discrepancies and injustices of their actions and the consequences to those who have paid the price of service to our country. I was proud to sit at that table representing all family members of disabled veterans as he delivered this statement.

I can assure you that as long as the battle continues the DAV Auxiliary will be by the DAV's side to complete our mission of building better lives for disabled veterans and their families. (Applause)

We live in a fast-paced, ever-changing society. We're members of an organization that has made great inroads for disabled veterans and their families but there remains more to be accomplished. Our actions at this Convention will establish our future as an organization.

As I prepare to pass the torch to our next group of leaders I want you to know that this was one of the most rewarding and humbling experiences in my life. I thank you for your confidence and I thank you for all the courtesies extended to me.

I've had a great time and I wish the same for everyone attending this Convention. I want to say God bless you, God bless America and, as the Commander said, "Laissez les bon temps rouler. Let the good times roll." (Standing Ovation) Thank you.

I have a gift for the commander. On behalf of the DAV Auxiliary I want to thank you or we want to thank you, excuse me, for all you do for the Auxiliary and all you do for America's heroes. Thank you very much. (Applause)

(Whereupon, DAV Auxiliary Commander Tanner presented DAV Commander Barton with a gift.)

COMMANDER BARTON: I was going to hand it to you.

COMMANDER TANNER: That would be a big mistake. (Laughter)

COMMANDER BARTON: Donna, it has been a pleasure and an honor for me to share the stage with you. You've been a wonderful commander and I appreciate your efforts on behalf of disabled American veterans in this country. And I've got a little token of our appreciation for what you've accomplished this year. And it's a plaque. It says: "Presented to Donna M. Tanner in deepest appreciation of your dedicated leadership while serving as the DAV Auxiliary National Commander, August 2006 to August 2007. Bradley S. Barton, DAV National Commander, August 2007."

COMMANDER TANNER: Thank you. Thank you so much. (Applause) It looks like a book so I'm going to consider this my book of love. How's that? (Laughter) Thank you.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you. DAV's role as a advocate for disabled veterans and their families is clearly visible in its nationwide Transportation Network. As most of you know, DAV has 185 hospital service coordinators around the country who arrange transportation for disabled veterans to and from the VA medical facilities for treatment.

Since 1987 the DAV National Organization, Chapters, Departments, and the DAV National Service Foundation and Colorado Trust have purchased 1,959 vans at a cost of nearly \$39.7 million. (Applause)

Throughout our 86-year history the DAV has received unprecedented support from many resources. But there is only one friend who has been there with us since the beginning and steadfastly continues to support our mission to build better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families, and that is the Ford Motor Company. (Applause)

And joining us today is a special guest with some more great news about the longstanding Ford/DAV partnership. Jim Vella is the president of Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services.

In this role he leads all philanthropic and community service-related activities, including the coordination of volunteer efforts by Ford employees and all activities of the Ford Motor Company Fund, a separate philanthropic organization funded largely by the Ford Motor Company profits.

The Ford Motor Company Fund's primary focus is education, but it also supports organizations and innovative programs that promote automotive safety, education, and assist communities with a variety of needs. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm DAV welcome to Mr. Jim Vella. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, the new Ford vans were unveiled to the audience.)

MR. JIM VELLA: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MR. VELLA: I thought since you played one of my favorite songs, the "Ford Truck Song" I'd show you one of my favorite hats.

(Whereupon, Mr. Vella put on a baseball cap with a Ford emblem on the front which is surrounded by lights.)

MR. VELLA: Yes, I like this hat, especially at night. It's easy to find me in a crowd. (Laughter) It's really good to be here today. And when I look at those vehicles it's great to know that those are built right here in America and they're going to continue to be built right here in America. (Applause)

So, you know this is a triple header for me because here I am with a great crowd of people who have served our country; we have our products here, and I'm in the great city of New Orleans, so what could make a better weekend?

Now, I'm really, really honored and humbled to some degree to be here with all of you. And I'm really here on behalf of the 300,000 hard-working Ford Motor Company employees,

not just here in the United States but all around the world. It's great to be here with so many Americans who have so bravely served this country.

And I'm also pleased to be here today to reaffirm our commitment to what really has been a terrific partnership—and that's how we look on our relationship with the folks that are here today and the folks like Commander Barton. It's really a partnership. And it's been important to us for many years.

And this is my first year at a Convention but certainly it hasn't been the first year for Ford Motor Company. The history between our two organization is really amazing and I just want to take a second to share some of that with you because I wasn't aware of it all and it really talks to the kind of company that Ford Motor Company is.

We started this partnership actually with our founder, Henry Ford, who seemed to have his fingers in a lot of pots as he went through his life. But in 1922 he organized a cross-country caravan of 50 Model T Fords to take disabled veterans to their Convention in San Francisco and he continued that practice for many years.

He also donated 39 acres of land in Dearborn for the building of the first veterans' hospital to serve both Detroit and Northern Ohio. And today I am here, following in his footsteps, if you will, and proud to continue his legacy as we sponsor many worthwhile and life-changing programs supported by the Disabled American Veterans.

Our support continues under the leadership of our Executive Chairman Bill Ford, great-grandson of Henry Ford, and our President and CEO Alan Mulally. You know, I can't really think of a company that is more American and that embodies the American dream more than Ford.

And that's why we believe it is very important to continue to support organizations like this one and people like you. Your work and innovative initiatives help to build better communities for all of us. And we hope that our continued relationship with the DAV will help both of us to build a better world.

We know that what you all do is extremely valuable. And that's why we continue to support your efforts with things like vehicle donations, scholarship programs, and special purchase programs. And we're truly honored to help provide mobility in motoring and to serve veterans' transportation needs in every state in this great country. (Applause)

You know, at the same time I talked about partnership many of you in return have shown your appreciation to us by purchasing literally thousands of Ford vehicles through the Ford Partner Recognition Program. And I want to thank each and every one of you for giving us the privilege to have you as one of our customers.

I invite you to consider this program and visit the Ford Partner Recognition and Mobility Motoring Booths which we'll have set up and talk about our program representatives about how we can meet your needs.

Beginning tomorrow morning and continuing through the duration of the Convention we'll be located in the Chemin Royal Hallway right outside the Grand Ballroom. Please, if nothing else, stop by and say hello. We'll be happy to talk to you and answer any questions you have.

To date I'm happy to say that members and their families have purchased almost 9,000 Ford cars and trucks and more than 1,000 of those vehicles have been purchased just this year. That's phenomenal. Let me take a moment to thank each of you who drive our products.

We truly appreciate your support. And, also, it's that kind of support that allows us to continue to give back to the communities and to partner with organizations like yours. Now, I would like to invite Commander Barton and National Adjutant Wilson to join me at the podium. And I am glad to announce our further support for your organization with a check here for \$200,000 and the donation of eight new Taurus X seven passenger vans. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, Mr. Vella presented a ceremonial check to Commander Barton and Adjutant Wilson.)

MR. VELLA: I really have a great job. (Laughter) Before you go back to your seats, though, I'm not quite done. I'd also like to announce today that we are providing \$25,000 to the Jesse Brown Youth Memorial Scholarship Fund. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, Mr. Vella presented a ceremonial check to Commander Barton and Adjutant Wilson.)

MR. VELLA: Let's see if we can fit those in your back pocket. (Laughter) We feel that this gift honors the spirit of Jesse Brown, a man known for his selflessness, his leadership, and his compassion. And education has always been a priority for us. I think it's very important that we leave a legacy for the next generation.

We have a long history of supporting educational programs with all of our partners and it's driven by our company's core principles, our core values, and the impact that we as a corporation want to make in the world in which we live and work and do business.

Education really inspires, empowers and opens the door to a world of opportunities and economic mobility. Since the year 2000 Ford's contributions to this program have resulted in the award of 87 scholarships and we plan to continue to build on those successes.

Now, I would like to ask Auxiliary National Commander Donna Tanner to join us on stage. As you already know, the DAV has a wonderful history and a bright future for a lot of reasons, many of them who are here today. But I want to just recognize two of those reasons today and it's the strength of the leadership of this organization.

And I want to recognize National Commander Brad Barton and Auxiliary Commander, Auxiliary National Commander Donna Tanner. We have a token of our appreciation for your dedication to this great organization and the help that you have provided Ford Motor Company through your efforts.

(Whereupon, Mr. Vella presented gifts to Commander Barton and Commander Tanner.)

MR. VELLA: 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. And just on a personal note, it has really been an honor just to talk to some of you in the hallways and just to be around you.

And it's probably easier for me to say this than for you because some of you are so humble, but, you know, in today's world we have a lot of troubling times in our country today and we talk about the current war that's going on and should we be there or not and you open the paper and you hear of all the, you know, the kind of the bad news which I think is something the media focuses on.

But, each and every one of you who served our country and made really an ultimate sacrifice are heroes. And the one thing I would encourage you to do as you move forward is make sure your stories get told because (Applause) because our country needs you, especially our young people.

There aren't a lot of good role models. There are plenty of bad ones and you read about them every day in the paper. So, whatever you do as you move forward and as you go through your sessions and talk about your future, the one thing I would encourage you as an individual and as a father of two teenagers and one young man who is 23—and who, also, I have a Godson who is in the military right now serving in Afghanistan—is make sure your individual stories get told and that the American public knows why we need to continue to support these efforts that you have.

Enjoy the rest of the Convention. Thank you for your bravery, your loyalty, your sacrifices. Thank you for our freedom. And, once again, you can't say it enough, God bless America. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER BARTON: Jim, I want to say that we are deeply grateful and overjoyed by Ford's compassion and kindness, today and always. By the way, Jim, the generous \$200,000 donation has allowed the DAV to purchase eight additional vans and to continue more than 85 years of cooperation between two great American institutions. (Applause)

It also pleases me greatly to say that since 1996 Ford has donated a total of 125 vehicles worth approximately \$3 million. (Applause) As a worldwide leader in automotive technology and engineering and innovation Ford embodies the vision, benevolence, and the wisdom that proves that the bottom line isn't always about dollars and cents.

Ford's commitment to our nation's sick and disabled veterans beautifully illustrates the modern-day blueprint for corporate citizenship in America. On behalf of the more than 1.4 million members of the Disabled Veterans and our Auxiliary, please accept our heartfelt thanks for your benevolent leadership and for making the needs of disabled veterans a priority. (Applause)

I would be remiss if I failed to also acknowledge Ford's ongoing 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, Jim, Lynn Quigley, and all the dedicated folks at Ford who help support the DAV's service and programs. We are very grateful. (Applause) The DAV and Golden Corral teamed up again this past November for the best ever Military Appreciation Monday. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a video regarding Golden Corral's Military Appreciation Monday was viewed.)

COMMANDER BARTON: Joining us today is Dolly Mercer, Golden Corral Consumer Promotions and National Events Managers. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm DAV welcome to Dolly Mercer. (Applause) Hello, Dolly.

MRS. DOLLY MERCER: Thank you and good morning and I just got chill bumps. I hadn't seen that video so my voice is breaking already but it is a pleasure to be here. We've had a great partnership. We're going to try to make this—the screen. Okay, we're going to go now. We've got a PowerPoint to go with me to illustrate some of the things we've been doing.

But as the video said, this was started by the Virginia Beach franchisee of Golden Corral. (Applause) Yea. And he did this in 1999 and 2000 and he opened his doors to all of his restaurants in the Virginia Beach Area to feed anybody that was with the military, currently serving or had previously served, just come in and enjoy a great meal, no questions asked, no identification, anything needed.

And in 2001—let's see if this works—we rolled it out to the entire system. And, again, this year we'll have all 485 Golden Corral restaurants providing a free meal on November 12th from 5:00 to 9:00. And I just want to kind of recap some of my pictures. They'll go a little slower and maybe you can capture, see who is in this. Maybe it's some of you all sitting here. And do tell me after the program if one of these was you and where you were.

I know that Paul Jackson was in here in one of these, standing in front of the DAV van. So that one was in Colorado Springs. There are some in Weslaco, Texas. There are some from the North Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina. So there are quite a few pictures. We have lots of them. They're just heartwarming when you see all the veterans there, young, old.

I try to go to a different Golden Corral every year in a different state. I never know where I'm going to go but I'm always touched by your stories, so glad that we can honor you there. And we're going to continue to do that. And as—here are some more pictures. We're going to roll through these quickly.

I just want to give a kind of a recap. It was in the video that they showed and we didn't start counting the meals in 1999. I wish we had but we didn't do it but we are, through the last six years we've done 1.5 million meals to anybody who has ever served in the military. And we've been so proud to do that.

And hopefully—we've donated almost \$1.9 to the state and local Chapters. I, you know, I know some of the things that have been done with it with helping with ramps and your buildings and wheelchairs and things like that. And the money that we'll continue to do over the years to come I hope will buy so many more things that will help each of you.

And I just kind of want to recap where we were. This past year and last year Gary Sinise, who I know you are all looking forward to seeing tomorrow night with his band, is going to be our spokesperson again. And we will have a public service announcement that will be offered to every radio and TV station nationwide so I'm sure you'll be seeing that.

And we have posted on our Website this year—this is the first time we've done that—anything that we think would be significant to the public and to you all about our relationship, our partnership, of what we're doing. Please visit our Website at www.goldencorral.com and look for where it says Military Appreciation. There is photos. There is just lots of new information on there.

And one of the things we've done the last two years is information about the National Memorial Day Concert that the DAV and Golden Corral jointly sponsored. And that was co-hosted by Gary Sinise. And he did an announcement, a public service announcement, at the beginning and the end of the program that thanked the public and all the military for the sacrifices you've given.

And it was a very moving service. I hope a lot of you saw it. It just brings tears to your eyes when you're there. I attended last year and it just, the heartwarming stories just go on and on. I mean it just really is a very moving experience.

And this was just the DAV Magazine article. I'm sure you all saw it. And then we did a table tent in our restaurants to help let the public know what you all and Golden Corral were doing to support this concert and maybe get a few more people to watch it and hear these stories and just might be moved by it as much as Golden Corral has been.

And I wanted to announce one of the new things that we're doing this year. It kicked off last week. Golden Corral is going to be offering scholarships. We're calling it an essay contest for I don't know what kind of reasons, maybe tax reasons or whatever but it's going to be called an essay contest.

And we're offering it to children of the military or someone who is serving now or who has just recently served. This will be five \$5,000 scholarships and then it breaks it down to lesser

amounts. There will be age categories from like 13 to 17. You just write a thousand word essay of, if this is a child, how proud you are of your parent, that what they've done, the values they've taught you, whatever sentiment that you want to express.

There isn't any specific guidelines to this essay contest other than what is heartfelt to you and what is a story you want to tell about these people. And then we have an age category from 18 up that will be judged differently from what a 13-year old would write about their service or their parents' service. So, hopefully this is just the first of, the first year of our annual essay contest. And it will be supported on our Website and also in our restaurants with table tents.

And then we've got another initiative that we're rolling out October 1. We're going to offer a thousand postcards in all of our restaurants—and this is what the postcards look like—that anybody can come in and just sign your name or write a message on the back of a postcard.

And we're going to send the overseas to Iraq and Iran and thank all the men and women who are just giving everything they have to help this country and serving and giving of their own. So we hope to have a million postcards that we can send before the holidays.

There will be a collection box like this in every Golden Corral. Golden Corral will be responsible along with Operation Thank You out of Columbia, South Carolina. I don't know if any of you all have heard of it but they help get mail and postcards overseas so we'll be doing this.

So if you're in our restaurants, please fill out one of the postcards and drop it in and, you know, let our men and women know that you're behind them, you know, you do want to send them a message of support.

And then, last, I'd like to invite you all to join us for dinner, again, on Monday, November 12th. It will be our seventh annual thank you meal. It starts from 5:00 to 9:00. We'd like everyone of you to come out. Every Golden Corral will be participating.

And this will be the opportunity from November 1 to November 12th where all of your Chapters can be in our restaurants, collect contributions from the public that will be kept locally and hopefully will let some of the Chapters buy some of the things that they haven't been able to before.

So please join us on November 12th and make this a great Seventh Annual Military Appreciation for Golden Corral. Thank you for inviting me here again. We just love partnering with you all. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Dolly, for the great support you provide our veterans across this country. We are very grateful to all Golden Corral employees nationwide who honor our nation's military heroes.

The Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year is our most prestigious award. With it we honor one person each year whose character and integrity and service to disabled veterans provide an inspiring example for others to follow. It is very common for our organization to hear elected officials talk about their patriotism and support of veterans.

Occasionally, this talk can be, well, empty. But this year's Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year puts his skills and talents to use serving his fellow veterans and the residents of Florida's Space Coast. Norman Wolfinger has overcome significant disabilities from combat in Vietnam to become one of the most respected State Attorneys in the State of Florida and the nation.

In addition to serving his community, he's gone above and beyond the call of duty to provide some of our most needy veterans with free legal assistance to help get them off the streets.

His visionary service for victims of crimes and selfless advocacy of his fellow disabled veterans are the signature values shared by past and future recipients of DAV's top annual honor—the Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year award. Let's take a few minutes to look at the life of this outstanding disabled veteran that we are honoring today.

(Whereupon, a video honoring Norman Wolfinger was viewed, followed by a standing ovation.)

COMMANDER BARTON: Norman Wolfinger is truly a distinguished public servant and the ideal example of what a disabled veteran can accomplish and overcome with the right encouragement and support.

And anyone who knows Norm, and knows what this honor means to him, will tell you that his leadership and service for America's disabled veterans and their families will continue to grow, and the investment he has made in his fellow veterans will reap rewards for many years to come. Ladies and gentlemen, the DAV 2007 Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year, Norman Wolfinger. (Standing Ovation) I'm going to read you the inscription on the award.

“The Disabled American Veterans is honored to recognize your extraordinary commitment to veterans, your community and the nation. Through confident determination in overcoming severe disabilities you’ve promoted positive recognition of all disabled veterans.

“Your exemplary service on behalf of veterans and your fellow citizens brings hope and inspiration to all who work to build better lives for America’s disabled veterans and their families.

“Through the public service and volunteerism you have been an overwhelming asset to your community and a steadfast advocate for the best interests of the public.

“You have been a model of integrity and selflessness, a mentor to your fellow veterans, community leaders and future generations. Your patriotism and sense of duty honors all who have served and sacrificed in uniform.

“On behalf of all those who bear the scars of war, thank you for your benevolent leadership and for your setting new standards of citizenship and public service.” (Applause)

MR. NORMAN WOLFINGER: Thank you. Wow. Commander Barton, honored guests, fellow disabled American veterans, families, friends, thank you all so much for this rather incredible and humbling honor. And believe me the, you know, having not been in the service for so many years I’m getting spoiled. (Laughter)

I mean, when I have people picking me up at the airport, they take me to my room—they didn’t tuck me in, though. (Laughter) But, you know, it brings back the memories of what service is about and how we do watch over each other and help each other. So, there is so much that I could say.

I really do have a lot of people to thank and recognize. I just want to pass through a little bit—the State of Florida DAV, Department of Florida, they’ve been fantastic through all these years; my local DAV Chapter, 109 in Titusville, Florida, has been fantastic; some important people in my life with me today, you can’t—my office has like 330 or 340 people and 120 attorneys and that’s pretty bad, isn’t it? (Laughter)

And I am an attorney, but a state attorney, a prosecutor. But from my office I have Beth Rossman and Debbie Lader and they’re responsible for a lot of the things, of helping me get a lot of the programs up and running.

I do have a special friend here from the 6th to the 27th, Joe Dean. Joe, can you stand? (Applause) Now, Joe, don’t take everything you heard here today to heart. I don’t want you telling all the stories. Okay? Let’s keep some to ourselves. But, Joe, and all the friends from the 6th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery in Quan Loi, a great bunch of guys.

With me today, also, are—I’m so proud—my son Rob and his wife Jennifer, if they could stand, and my grandson, Owen; he can’t stand; (Applause) they work out at NASA so they are following the tradition, or work with NASA; my daughter Amy who has gone off to college this year for her freshman year and if she can stand if she’s out there somewhere. (Applause)

Now I feel so proud of my family, my children. They’re just great. But I have to tell you, for 37 years I’ve been married to this woman. (Applause) Now, you have to understand, she met me when I got back from Vietnam and you’re not exactly all there. I couldn’t take a step.

I probably drank a little bit too much because there was nothing else I could do. But she took me in, basically; and we were together just about every day after the first few months I was home. And we’ve been together for, from 1969 on, however many years that is. It’s been a great life and I love her dearly, my wife Jane. (Applause)

Words cannot express how much this day means to me. When I look out across this room and I, and watching all the people here, it’s like you’re standing in a hall of giants. It really is. You have brothers and sisters here from World War II, from Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Mogadishu, you name it, Iraq. You know, just incredible.

And I truly believe that there is a lot that are here with us in spirit, not in body any more. And we love them for their service and honor them as well. I hold the deepest respect for each and every one of you and your leadership and what they do for the disabled American veterans.

Yes, we all come here with our unique and individual experiences, all different, all different. But we do have a common bond. I know with certainty that each of you have that same love of country. I know that each of you have that deep, abiding conviction that our way of life must be preserved. And I know that we each understand that freedom is not free.

President Ronald Regan said it best when he said, “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same.”

For over 230 years Americans, American soldiers have fought and died to gain and preserve that freedom and that liberty that we so dearly cherish today. And I firmly believe it's our duty to pass that torch forward to our children.

How do you take, though, from the sacrifices of the American soldier, the America's finest, to inspire that patriotism, that love and passion for freedom? Several months ago at the Space Center—and that's where I live and this week, in fact, Endeavor took off and we were there.

But, several months ago the Space Center in a way to try to inspire the nation, in addition to seeing the shuttle go off they have a Visitor's Center and they decided, let's do a ride. Let's give people the thrill of experiencing what it's like to go up in a launch.

How is it when you go off, the astronauts? Let's give them a taste of it. And they call it the Space Shuttle Experience. They don't like to call it a "ride." And my daughter got her first job there. Can you believe that? So she's helping on this ride.

But I got to thinking, wouldn't it be neat, is there some kind of a ride that we can have? If we have to pass off this torch is there something that we can come up with to do that? And it didn't take me long before you realize you don't have to invent anything because it's already there, right here.

(Whereupon, Mr. Wolfinger tapped his heart.)

MR. WOLFINGER: It's in our hearts. You already have that feeling of patriotism, passion, as evidenced by your membership in DAV and by your presence here today, by the things that you're going to accomplish. And I know you already have it because I saw you all when, you know, we had the posting of the Colors and we had the songs from each of the military services, when we had the film of our brothers.

You have that passion. What a great honor it would be to pass that torch and show the next generation the way by modeling that passion, as you do, each and every day. That's our debt. That's our responsibility that we have to carry on.

When you talk about role models for patriotism, if you've met the soldiers that are over in Iraq today, Afghanistan, the finest. We're in good hands. Our hearts and prayers and thankful appreciation are with them as they fight at this very moment overseas.

And just as they have not let our country down, I know that we as members of the DAV, there is no way you're going to let them down. We're still on guard and we're still ensuring, through the DAV in particular, that they're going to receive the best medical, psychological help and treatment that's available today.

And it's because of the hard, hard work of your Commander, and all these people here in this room that you're going to accomplish those goals. My DAV family, thank you for giving me all your support for these last 39 years. You know, I wonder where they went. A little fatter.

But keep up your fantastic work of building better lives for disabled American vets and their families. I assure you, it's greatly appreciated by all. May God bless you. May God bless our soldiers overseas and bring them home safely, and may God bless America. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER BARTON: I'm sure that you will join me in extending our thanks and appreciation to Mr. Wolfinger for his noteworthy example and service to disabled veterans and their families. (Applause)

The Bugle Award was created in 2005 to recognize the outstanding contributions of the media in support of disabled veterans and the programs of the DAV. By extending this appreciation we are recognizing those who have demonstrated the adage of "Love the Warrior."

For CBS News Chief Washington Correspondent Bob Schieffer, his service in the Air Force and his reporting of the war in Vietnam had a profound effect on how he views those who serve our nation. Bob Schieffer has covered Washington for CBS News for more than 30 years. He became chief Washington correspondent in 1982.

Before joining CBS News, he was a reporter at the Fort Worth Star-Telegram and in 1965 became the first reporter from a Texas newspaper to report from Vietnam. In his book, This Just in, What I Couldn't Tell You On TV, Schieffer wrote about the men he covered in Vietnam during a visit to the 93rd Evacuation Hospital at Bien Hoa.

He wrote, "These were people, young people. It occurred to me that long after this war was over these people would still have no arms or legs. They would be going home not as God made them, but as war left them." Because Mr. Schieffer could not be here with us today due to his reporting commitments, I had the pleasure of presenting his award personally at his Washington, D.C., office.

(Whereupon, a video of Commander Barton presenting the award to Mr. Schieffer was viewed.)

COMMANDER BARTON: As a personal note to that presentation, Bob took us out to lunch and he is quite a gentleman, a really nice individual. In addition to Mr. Schieffer, we presented a Bugle Award to Tim Starks who was instrumental in raising awareness of important public policy and legislative issues and their affects upon disabled veterans.

Tim writes for "CQ Today." His thoughtful reporting not only explains the issues, but he was among the first to incorporate in his coverage information on recommendations of veterans service organizations in The Independent Budget, as well as the issue of mandatory funding for veterans' health care.

Reporting commitments also prevented Mr. Starks from joining us today. Let's give these deserving recipients another round of applause. (Applause) At this time I would like to ask Auxiliary Past National Commander Evelynne Dunn to come forward for a special presentation. Margaret.

DAV AUXILIARY PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER EVELYNNE DUNN: Good morning, everyone.

(Response of "Good morning.")

AUXILIARY PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, Commander Brown—Barton, excuse me. (Laughter)

COMMANDER BARTON: That's close enough.

AUXILIARY PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER DUNN: National Commanders, National Officers, Past National Commanders, members and guests of the Disabled American Veterans and its Auxiliary, how exciting it is to be back in the Big Easy for another fantastic National Convention.

And what an honor it is for me to present the DAV Auxiliary Past National Commander's Outstanding Auxiliary Member of the Year Award to Iris Brzezinski of Auxiliary Unit 13 of Las Vegas, Nevada.

The Past National Commander's Outstanding Auxiliary Member of the Year Award recognizes the dedication and contributions made by an outstanding Auxiliary member to enhance the goals of our organization and promote community service.

Iris has excelled in both areas during more than 22 years of helping to build better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families. Iris' membership eligibility is through her husband, Bill, a medically-retired Vietnam-era disabled veteran who served in the United States Coast Guard. He is also a Past Department Commander and Department Adjutant.

An avid bowler and golfer, Iris met Bill in a Bowling Center in Las Vegas in 1981 and they were married in 1985. Their family includes sons Matthew and Kristopher, their daughters-in-law, and their grandchildren, three of whom are Junior Auxiliary members.

Iris is active in many family activities and has been a Cub Scout leader and director of the Area Central Little League Board of Directors. Iris became involved in the Auxiliary in 1985 when she and her husband, Bill, visited Unit 13 to see Matthew accept an essay award. A short time later she was an active member.

In 1989 Iris became a Transportation Network volunteer driver. And she often drove the 520-mile round-trip from Las Vegas to the VA Medical Center in Loma Linda, California, to make sure veterans got the medical care that they needed.

For more than two decades Iris has served in nearly every leadership capacity in the organization, including Unit and Department Commander and now, currently, Department Adjutant.

Her National activities include six National Conventions as Banner Bearer, service on the Nominations Committees, Mae Holmes, and History Book Committees. She has served as a member of the National Executive Committee and the Finance Committee, which she chaired in 2003 and 2004. She was the 2005-2006 Nevada Auxiliary Member of the Year.

Iris is a revenue officer in the Nevada Department of Taxation where she has been employed for more than eleven years. Of special note is Iris' work on behalf of Women Helping Women in Southern Nevada, a program she helped to initiate.

This program was needed and welcomed in her community and supports the wives of disabled veterans by helping women cope with the complexities of living with physically handicapped relatives. To this program and everything that she does, Iris brings compassion, empathy, teamwork, dedication, and a willingness to give her all and then give some more.

And for this and for so much more, it is my pleasure on behalf of the Past National Commanders of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary to present to Iris Brzezinski from the great state of, from the Great Silver State of Nevada—and she is a woman of sterling character—

the Outstanding Auxiliary Member of the Year Award for 2007. Congratulations, Iris. (Standing Ovation)

The Award reads "DAV Auxiliary Past National Commanders Award to Iris Brzezinski, the Outstanding Member of the Year. Presented on August the 11th, 2007." (Applause)

MRS. IRIS BRZEZINSKI: Thank you, Evelynne. National Commanders, National Adjutants, National Officers, Past National Commanders, members and guests of this Disabled American Veterans and Auxiliary, when I was notified that I was a recipient of this award, I was truly astounded and I thought to myself, surely there were hundreds of other women more deserving of this award.

I am humbled and honored and would like to thank the Past National Commanders for selecting me as the Auxiliary Outstanding Member of the Year. Thank you. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER BARTON: Congratulations, Iris. Each year the DAV presents the prestigious George H. Seal Awards to honor the remarkable volunteers who care for disabled veterans and their families through the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Program.

The awards are confirmed in memory of George H. Seal, a DAV Director of Membership and Voluntary Service and leading organizer and administrator of DAV VAVS programs. Ladies and gentlemen, this year's recipients of the George H. Seal Award for extraordinary volunteerism are Joseph Smith of Reno, Nevada, and Joan Cook of Seminole, Florida. (Applause)

Joseph Smith's outstanding record is clear evidence of the kindness and compassion he displays each day in serving disabled veterans at the Reno, Nevada, VA Medical Center. A member of DAV Chapter 1 in Reno, Joe always has a pleasant, upbeat attitude, which has a positive effect on everyone around him.

Joe is known by all to be helpful, competent, and compassionate. Joe has accumulated 10,348 hours in his eleven years as a DAV volunteer. He currently transports patients within the VA medical center to their medical appointments. Joe has a direct effect on the spirits of patients with ambulatory problems. When he escorts a patient, Joe is a friendly presence that helps relieve the patient's anxiety.

It has given the patients great comfort to know that there is someone looking after them. Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2007 DAV member recipient of the George H. Seal Memorial Trophy, Mr. Joseph Smith. (Standing Ovation)

MR. JOSEPH SMITH: Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you. (Applause) Congratulations, Joe. The 2007 George H. Seal Award for Outstanding DAV Auxiliary Member goes to Joan Cook of Seminole, Florida. (Applause) Joan Cook has volunteered for more than 2,750 hours over 13 years.

A member of Auxiliary Unit 13 in Saint Petersburg Beach, Florida, she has devoted her life to volunteering after the death of her veteran husband. Proud of the excellent care he received at the VA medical center, she was determined to volunteer as long as life allowed her to give the same excellent care to others.

Working in many different areas of the Bay Pines, Florida, VA Medical Center, Joan serves as the DAV Auxiliary representative on VAVS Committees and is involved with many of the hospital's programs. She is an inspiration to her peers and her positive attitude influences others to do their very best.

Volunteers like Joan Cook come along rarely. She volunteers several days each week, averaging 20 to 30 hours. She is also around during the weekends to help on special projects and national programs. May I present the 2007 DAV George H. Seal Trophy recipient from the DAV Auxiliary, Joan Cook. (Standing Ovation)

MRS. JOAN COOK: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MRS. COOK: It's an honor to accept this award. I never realized it was presented to the volunteer who has the most fun. (Laughter) This is a canned speech because they know I get carried away. May I say the DAV members in Florida are the best as they support the VAVS Program 100 percent, making me look good and I get all the smiles and the thank-yous. And may I add veterans do cry in appreciation.

My family followed me here because they were afraid I'd get lost so I would like to have them recognized. Please stand. They're everywhere. (Applause) You see I'm patterned from my home to the VA medical center and back again, that's it. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Congratulations, Joan. Again this year we continue a tradition that honors one of the foremost advocates in the history of the veterans' movement. The Jesse

Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program continues a legacy of service established by the late Secretary for Veterans Affairs, Jesse Brown.

His spirit and dedication lives on and his name continues to encourage and inspire future leaders to serve America's disabled veterans and their families. We are proud to recognize twelve of the 2007's top young citizens and volunteers who have volunteered a minimum of 100 hours at a VA medical center during the calendar year. Our scholarship winners have certainly accomplished much in their roles as volunteers and have built lifelong bonds for the veterans they've served.

The first place scholarship of \$15,000 was awarded to Jamiya Harris of Saint Petersburg, Florida, (Applause) for her dedicated service at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Bay Pines, Florida.

At the age of 11 Jamiya visited her grandmother and guardian, Agnes Washington, at her job as a dispatcher at the Bay Pines. From that point forward she was hooked. Last year alone Jamiya logged 496 volunteer hours and has more than 1,500 total hours of service for Florida's veterans. (Applause)

Based on her experiences at the VA medical center she plans to study medicine in college. As Jamiya prepares for college, she and her grandmother will have \$15,000 less to worry about paying toward her education. Ladies and gentlemen, the 2007 Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Award recipient, Jamiya Harris. (Standing Ovation)

MS. JAMIYA HARRIS: Good afternoon.

(Response of "Good afternoon.")

MS. HARRIS: To be nervous is something. I was back there sitting in my seat about to shake out of my seat. (Laughter) So I'm going to go out and give you my thank-yous. It is truly an honor to be receiving the Jesse Brown Youth Memorial Scholarship. I would like to say thank you to each and every one that had a hand in selecting me to be the top, Number 1.

I would like to say thank you to Derenda Sembolin who is our Chief of Voluntary Services at our home, the VA Bay Pines Health care Systems. And I'd like to thank my grandmother for instilling all of my valuable morals and—whew. (Applause)

This scholarship has opened many doors for me. The \$15,000 is a great start for my education. I will just only be a junior in high school so I have two years to decide where I want to go and to where I want to use this money for. And before I leave I would like to tell you about my experience from when I heard about my winnings.

We were on our way home from volunteering and my grandmother leaving from work and she was like, "There was a message on the machine and you got \$15,000." I'm kind of like, "Okay, what?" (Laughter) You know, I'm thinking, are you sure it's not \$1,500?

She's like, "Well, when you get home, listen to the message." And, sure enough, it's like, "Jamiya, you have won \$15,000." I was like, "Oh, thank you, Jesus, for this money." So, thank you, everyone, for this. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Congratulations, Jamiya. The young men and women who received this year's scholarship exhibit outstanding compassion and a devotion to service to veterans as volunteers at VA medical centers and facilities. Through this scholarship another generation of future leaders has been introduced to our cause and the service and sacrifice of America's veterans.

For the record, I am honored to mention the other scholarship winners. The second place scholarship of \$10,000 went to Andrew D. Wisneski who volunteered at the San Francisco VAMC. (Applause)

Other scholarship recipients and their volunteer locations are: Elizabeth Grondalski, VAMC St. Louis, Missouri; Sarah Kathleen Black of VA Eastern Kansas Health care System; Sandeep Singh of VAMC Battle Creek, Michigan; Alicia E. Garcia, VA New Mexico Health care System; Maya Williams, VA New Jersey Health care System; Stephanie Smith, VAMC Columbia South Carolina; Jenna Anne Greenman, VAMC Battle Creek, Michigan; Jimmy C. Chester, VAMC Decatur, Georgia; Ashleigh L. Summers, VAMC Jackson, Mississippi; and Michael Schultz, VAMC Milwaukee, Wisconsin. (Applause) Congratulations to all.

Now I'm going to call on National Adjutant Art Wilson to make any announcements.

ADJUTANT WILSON: The first business session of the Convention will begin promptly at 1:00 o'clock this afternoon. The important business of approving the Statement of Policy of the Disabled American Veterans is scheduled at that time as well as the adoption of the Rules for the Convention.

During this afternoon's business session I will present my report, membership awards will be presented, and we will hear from the report of the Treasurer of the DAV's Board of Directors.

Beginning this afternoon at 2:45 Convention Committees are scheduled to meet. Those of you that have been elected to Convention Committees are asked to be on time in the room assigned for your meeting. We ask the committees to complete their work just as soon as possible.

The National Commander's reception begins this evening at 7:00 o'clock in the Grand Ballroom. Now, as you know, the 2008 presidential campaign is already well underway. We have invited the top three presidential candidates from both political parties to address our members at this Convention.

At this time, though, none of them have responded to our invitations. Well, here is the bad news, if we hear from them we will certainly make every effort to get them on our schedule to present their views on the important issues affecting disabled veterans and their families. Also, a printing error resulted in the omission of the Planned Giving Seminar from the Convention program.

I encourage all of you to attend this entertaining hour, which will include not only important information on estate planning but also rare film clips from the long-lost Hollywood movies about veterans, priceless clips from the USO shows from more than a half-a-century ago, and, as a special bonus, a limited edition of DAV mug to every attendee. The seminar is tomorrow afternoon at 3:00 p.m. in the Elmwood Room. Take the tower elevator to the third floor.

And, finally, beginning with this afternoon's business session we will be giving away to five delegates to the Convention a DAV jacket. Their names will be called at the end of each business session, but you must be present to win. That's all I have, Commander.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Adjutant Wilson. Ladies and gentlemen, if you will rise and I will ask the Chaplain to lead us in a closing prayer.

CHAPLAIN BASTILLE: I have a story. (Laughter) A VA nurse in a doctor's waiting room heard a scream from within a doctor's examining room and saw an elderly woman come out and quickly depart in a state of agitation.

"What happened?" asked the nurse. "I told her she was pregnant," replied the young intern. "You couldn't be serious," remarked the nurse. "Of course not," he answered, "but it cured her hiccups." (Laughter)

Lord, God, be with us as we adjourn our meeting. We have much to do. Guide us during our Convention to keep our vision of the future clear in our minds. Keep us on course so that we can do the task set before us. Give us, Oh, God, a sense of purpose and the ability to be of single mind and when necessary to disagree with love, tolerance, and mutual respect for each other.

Help us realize that we all get hiccups and need someone to cure us. Guide us and encourage us to our mission of service to our nation and to our brother and sister veterans. In the name of the God who loves us all, Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

COMMANDER BARTON: The Convention now stands in recess until 1:00 o'clock this afternoon.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 12:10 o'clock, p.m. on Saturday, August 11, 2007.)

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION August 11, 2007

The First Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans 86th National Convention convened in the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana, Saturday afternoon, August 11, 2007, and was called to order at 1:10 o'clock, p.m., by National Commander Bradley S. Barton.

COMMANDER BARTON: The Convention will come to order. In opening the first business session of the 86th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans it is fitting and proper that we render the respect due to the flag. Hand salute, two. As a reminder, please turn off your cell phones. We will now be led in prayer by Chaplain Bastille.

CHAPLAIN BASTILLE: Wow. Yes, I do have a story. (Laughter) An honest letter was sent by a DAV adjutant to the Internal Revenue Service. It stated, "Dear Sirs, I cannot sleep. Last year when I filled out my income tax return I deliberately misrepresented my income. Now I cannot sleep. Enclosed is a check for \$500 for taxes. If I cannot sleep, I will send you the rest." (Laughter)

Let us pray. Lord, God, provider of all that we need and promoter of all that has meaning in our lives, be with us as we gather as disabled American veterans. Help us as we discuss ways of making our organization accomplish its mission. There are many who depend upon us and who need our support to have a more fruitful life.

Oh, God, be with us and keep us committed to our mission. You have given us the task to be leaders. Guide us that we may share our vision and friendship and with responsibility with those we have been charged to lead and to serve. Help us in our pride of service to remember those we serve and why we serve. Be with us. Keep us steadfast of purpose, especially as we pay our debts. In the name of the God who loves us all, Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

COMMANDER BARTON: In order for a delegate to be heard at this Convention, you must first be recognized by the Chair. Only those delegates at a microphone will be recognized. The delegate must state his name, Chapter number and the state they represent. I will now call on the Credentials Committee Chairperson, Mary Bencivenga, for her report, first report.

MS. MARY J. BENCIVENGA: Good afternoon, Comrade Commander.

COMMANDER BARTON: Good afternoon.

MS. BENCIVENGA: Comrade Adjutant, National staff, and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Credentials was called to order for its first business session on Saturday 8/11/2007 by the advisors, Michael E. Dobmeier and Anthony Baskerville.

The first order of business was the election of a 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 the secretary. Sloan Hoopes was nominated and elected as secretary.

The Credentials Committee met this morning in the Rosedown at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel. Roll call showed 1,053 delegates and 57 alternates present. This is a partial report for informational purposes only and reflects the registration at the close of the registration at 4:00 p.m., on Friday, August 10th, 2007.

At the present time we have 454 Chapters, 46 Departments, 33 National Officers, 10 Past National Commanders, for a total of 1,053 delegates and 57 alternates for a total vote of 9,495. This completes the partial report for the Credentials Committee, Commander.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Mary. Comrades, the Rules are a continuing part of our Bylaws. They are a part and parcel of Article 3 and remain in effect continually. They are subject to amendment as provided in the Bylaws and do not require adoption. 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:

"Number 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.

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

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

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

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

"Number 6. Enhanced outreach to ensure that all disabled veterans receive all benefits that they have earned and that the American people understand and respect the needs that 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.

“And 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 BARTON: The Chair will entertain a motion for the adoption of the DAV Statement of Policy.

MR. ALBERT H. LINDEN, JUNIOR: Mic 2.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 2.

MR. LINDEN: Al Linden, delegate, Gator 90, makes the motion.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Al. Do I hear a second?

MR. NORMAN J. RESNER: Mic 1.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 1.

MR. RESNER: Norm Resner, Department of Illinois, Chapter 42, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Norm. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. At this point I would like to introduce and recognize my National Chief of Staff Stan Barton—Stan, please stand—Officer of the Day Robert Asiello, and my Sergeant-at-Arms Don Smith. (Applause) Thank you, gentlemen.

Our organization is blessed with expert 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. For nearly 41 years—has it been that long?—Art Wilson has dedicated himself to serving disabled veterans and their families with energy, imagination and integrity.

Initially a National Service Officer—the first Vietnam veteran to enter the DAV’s National Service Officer Program—Art moved up through the ranks of our NSO corps to supervisory positions, then on to the National Appeals Office at the Board of Veterans’ Appeals in Washington.

With extensive experience as top-notch service officer, Art was named the National Service Director in Washington, overseeing all of DAV’s service programs. His 12 years in that position allowed Art to craft our National Service corps into a professional and highly motivated group of men and women with total commitment of service to our disabled veterans and their families.

Since Art’s appointment as National Adjutant in 1994, he inspired leadership and commitment to the organization’s ideas, 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. Thank you, Commander. You never miss an opportunity to say how old I am, do you? (Laughter) Good afternoon, everyone.

(Response of “Good afternoon.”)

ADJUTANT WILSON: Commander Barton, National Officers and staff, special guests and of course you, our most important folks, members of the Disabled American Veterans, it’s an honor to stand before you once again at this, our 86th National Convention, and to offer a sincere thanks particularly to Commander Barton for his extraordinary year of service for our organization.

The road to National office requires passion and dedication and hard work. And the further one goes forward in achieving the pinnacle of leadership, the greater the challenge. Commander, you’ve been a shining example of that commitment and a thoughtful mentor for all of us.

We are very, very grateful that you’ve given so much to our cause and so selflessly of your time. Thank you, sir. (Applause) And like many of the greatest leaders of our time, we have been blessed to have the steadfast support of your wife, Donna.

She has truly served alongside of you. And we know that without her spirit and her strength the entire organization would not have enjoyed the tremendous successes that you have made possible as our team leader.

As many of you know, the commander and myself and others in the DAV were invited to Brussels, Belgium this year as honored guests of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or, NATO. And while we were there it was our honor to visit with some of the historic places where many of our nation’s military men and women gave life and limb to bring liberty to the world.

We were invited to the Ramstein Air Force Base and the U.S. hospital at Landstuhl, Germany, where we met with several recently-injured warriors who were in various stages of recovery, coming there directly from the battle zones of Afghanistan and Iraq.

The immediate medical care provided there is outstanding. It was comforting to see that our troops are in good hands. And we also visited some of the sacred places where the remains of those Americans who gave all still reside. At the American cemetery in Normandy row after row of tombstones remind one of the brave souls whose ultimate sacrifices made the life we live today possible.

And if you visit that hallowed ground and look at the white markers that stand guard over the fallen, it makes you stop to think of what you're doing in advance to advance the values of the men who died to instill and preserve our freedom.

The experience also demands that you put the service of those who sacrificed in proper perspective. We can't draw precise parallels between wars but we know statistically that while only 62 percent of those wounded in combat during World War II survived, more than 88 percent of combat-wounded soldiers so far have survived their injuries in Iraq.

On D-Day a medic would have written off a soldier if an enemy bullet or shrapnel had pierced his brain. In Iraq a corpsman or a medic is often able to get an injured soldier to a hospital within moments after a severe injury occurs. Doctors behind the front lines are able to perform emergency surgery and to reduce brain swelling. So within 24 hours that that soldier had been wounded, he might regain consciousness in a room at Walter Reed, surrounded by his family.

The advances in protective equipment, transportation, and battlefield medicine and communication are nothing short of miracles. And at Walter Reed and at Bethesda Naval Hospital and Brooke Army Medical Center and other military and VA hospitals we see our brave young warriors fighting on through some of the most horrific wounds, amputations, burns and trauma ever known to man.

When you think of the pain and suffering that these brave men and women have endured, it is hard for our fellow citizens to see beyond the injury and to look at the person behind the scars. But we know from our own experiences that, and from each other, that the initial hell of a service-connected injury is only a fraction of suffering that follows.

Many of our most steadfast advocates think about disabled veterans from time to time and there are people in this room today that have fought every moment of every day since leaving Chulai, the Chosin Reservoirs, Guadalcanal, Luxembourg, Beirut and Panama, Honduras—and the list goes on and on.

We know that war is brutal and horrifying and that any time there is a war the consequences for the warriors is a continuing effect for the rest of their lives. And if we take a hard look at statistics for Iraq and Afghanistan, we see that while it was a blessing that so many lived, the extent of their injuries only increase our responsibility to provide them with the best service, the best medical care, and the most timely adjudication of VA claims that the best nation on earth can offer.

And, after all, when a soldier loses his sight or a young marine gives a limb, or when an airman suffers a traumatic brain injury or a sailor becomes paralyzed as the result of an IED, the life they knew is over. And for them and their families a new life of tremendous challenges has only just begun.

We who have sacrificed for our country have been given the responsibility of ensuring that the integrity of our nation remains intact. And we know that the future will hold many challenges for these young men and women. And we are resolved to continue our essential struggle to build better lives for them and their families.

And if we ever have a chance to stand before the graves of the men who died on D-Day and you think of the souls of the men and women who are suffering today, you get the sense that our mission is critical and real for us today as the battle, as any battle has ever been fought in this nation's history.

The nation that forgets its veterans is a nation that will be forgotten. You, every single one of you in this room, represent the brave men and women who secure our legacy. And your service ensures that those who sacrificed to maintain it will always be remembered.

So, in the upcoming video we will show you a few highlights of our accomplishments this year. All of the achievements are possible only thanks to your help and support. So, please settle back for a few moments, enjoy this short film highlighting our "Year in Review."

(Whereupon, the "Year in Review" video was presented.)

ADJUTANT WILSON: Again this year we've captured tremendous, a tremendous amount of momentum, momentum we'll need as we push to serve another generation of wartime

veterans. We continue to advance our cause and have become even stronger, a stronger force for advocating our mission.

And we've again been able to boost our supplemental distributions to our Departments for their service programs thanks to increased support from our very own DAV members. Give yourselves a round of applause. (Applause)

Between your service and the continued support of the American people we continue to provide and expand our service programs for sick and disabled veterans. Of course we are very grateful for the continued support of the American people and thanks to their generosity we're able to continue providing and expanding our world-class service programs for our nation's sick and disabled veterans.

As many of you know, the DAV, this year, announced a unique agreement with a handful of generous legal firms to provide free representation for injured soldiers facing medical and physical evaluation board process at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

At the same time, the DAV continues to strongly oppose the fee-based attorney relationships with veterans. This has caused some controversy so it's important that we set the record straight on this issue. For decades the DAV and other veterans' service organizations have provided free claims and benefit services for our nation's disabled veterans.

We strongly feel that veterans should not have to pay for these services. The DAV National Service Officers and Department and Chapter Service Officers remain the premier professionals when it comes to the unique mission of helping disabled veterans.

And when it make sense to involve a commercial partner who is generously donating their services at no cost to the veteran and we determine that that support they offer, that the support they offer will be a great service to veterans, we're happy to provide them with the opportunities to help.

However, we will continue to oppose any policy that would undermine the level of services the veterans deserve and reject any initiatives that would take money out of our veterans' pockets by allowing them a fee-based attorneys services in the VA's administrative claims process. (Applause)

Let me put a few facts with that position. The record proves that by far DAV provides the best and most successful claims representation available from any source in this country. And we are darn proud of our National Service Officers, Department Service Officers, Chapter Service Officers, and our Transition Service Officers. And I know you are proud of them as well.

And while I'm on that subject of outstanding service programs and speaking of commitment, let me ask all of our Chapter, Department, and Transition Service Officers to please rise so we can give them thanks for everything that they do for our nation's sick and disabled veterans. (Applause)

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, thank you. And allow me the privilege of introducing our National Service Officers, both retired and active. Ladies and gentlemen, please stand for a well-deserved round of applause, all of our National Service Officers. (Applause) Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for everything that you do every single day.

As an organization, we continue to evolve. At a strategic plan meeting recently we worked on some important initiatives that will streamline our course of action, improve our communications, and ultimately empower the organization at every level to better serve disabled veterans and our communities.

And among these changes is our continuing effort to improve the presence on the Internet and give every Chapter its own Website. And as we continue to move ahead in this direction we are finding more ways where information technology can wisely improve our ability to serve veterans.

I encourage all of you to embrace this technology. Our Chapter Webmasters of today will secure a special place in the legacy of DAV. They are bringing our organization into this new age and keeping the organization as vital and as relevant today as it was right after World War I.

And I remind all of you that while some of our methods are changing, and our strategies for achieving our goals evolve, our values remain the same. We are a band of brothers, as we've always been. You, the men and women who fill our ranks, remain our life blood. You are the reason for our achievements and the key to our future successes. And I thank you from the bottom of my heart for what you do. (Applause)

Innovation, tempered with sound judgment, leadership, integrity, quality and service is the driving force propelling us into a complex and exciting technological future. We are embracing that future with new ideas and programs that take advantage of this unparalleled advancement in communications and information technology.

But we're only at the threshold. And as we step into the future the possibilities are as limitless as our imaginations. So, today, for the first time in our history this event is being broadcast live on the Internet throughout the nation.

And with this technology, we are joined here in spirit today by hundreds if not thousands of our members who could not make our Convention in person. Some of these people are too ill to attend, others possibly members who haven't been involved in their Chapters or concerned citizens.

And, as I said, our values remain the same. This Webcast is just one of the innovations that will bring more energy into our organization and allow us to do more to serve deserving membership. We are exploring a variety of opportunities to employ new technology to better serve disabled veterans and their families.

But one possibility we're looking at is the creation of cyber Chapters to involve greater numbers of members in our activity. Imagine a member who has been housebound for years suddenly afforded the opportunity to participate in a Chapter again or possibly for the first time, a member enabled, sharing comradeship and serving in a constructive way that heretofore could only be dreamed of.

Today dreams can be realities and the DAV is exploring new possibilities to enhance all we do to build better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families.

Now, over the next few days we have a great deal of important work to do and we'll give you some valuable information so that we believe it will have a lasting effect on the service, volunteer and grassroots advocacy programs that you make possible.

I urge each of you to look closely at your Convention program and plan to attend as many of the seminars as you can. We want you to have a good time while you're here in this fantastic city but we know that none of us can forget the importance of the work that we'll accomplish throughout these events.

And I know that you're anxious to get down to business so let me close by thanking you for your attendance, your service, and the spirit you bring to this Convention. You are the life blood of our organization and the reason that we've enjoyed so many successes this year.

Together we're building a dynamic legacy for the future. And your individual commitment to tomorrow's veterans is certainly inspiring. Give yourselves a hand, please. (Applause)

But before I close I want to recognize our National staff for all their hard work and dedication to our mission: Rick Patterson, our Chief Financial Officer who manages our National Headquarters in Cold Spring; Susan Loth, from the Fundraising Department and her staff; Tony Baskerville and everyone in the Membership Department; Gary Weaver and his crew in the Communications Department; and Mark Burgess and the Human Resources staff; Greg Nichols and the Information Technology team; and Nancy O'Brien who administers our charitable programs; Inspector General Bob Gushee and his staff; General Counsel Chris Clay; and Comptroller Anita Blum and her team who handle all of our financial matters. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen; (Applause) and of course our Washington staff in Washington headed by Executive Director Dave Gorman and his team; Randy Reese and the National Service Department staff; Joe Violante and his team at the National Legislative Department; and Ed Hartman and the National Voluntary Services staff.

I also want to offer my sincere thanks to our support staffs at our Headquarters offices and all of our offices around the country; and of course my personal thanks and gratitude to two people who manage to keep things running smoothly: Executive Assistant Carol Ayers and Executive Secretary Sally Miller, for without them it would never happen. Trust me. (Applause)

I also want to thank the DAV Auxiliary for all the support that they give to us. From our volunteer programs to our legislative/grassroots efforts, and to their communities and all across the country, the Auxiliary is always there for disabled veterans and their families. Auxiliary National Commander Donna Tanner and Adjutant Maria Tedrow, thank you so much for your leadership and your dedication. (Applause)

And, finally, I offer a salute to the brave men and women in our armed forces whose service and sacrifice have kept our nation free and secure. And whether at war in Iraq or Afghanistan or keeping watch in other far off lands, or right here at home, they are truly the best of the best.

May God watch over them and keep them safe from harm. Thank you all very much for everything that you do. (Applause) Thank you, Commander Barton. And that concludes my report. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Art. The chair will entertain a motion to accept the National Adjutant's report.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER JAMES E. SURSELY: Mic 2.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 2.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SURSELY: Jim Sursely, delegate, Central Florida Chapter 16, proudly makes a motion to accept that fantastic report by our National Adjutant, Art Wilson.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Jim. A second?

MR. ERIC L. SELLERS: Mic 2.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 2.

MR. SELLERS: Eric Sellers, Chapter 4, Norfolk, Virginia, Department of Virginia, I move that we accept that, also. I second that motion.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Gary. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

MR. LEWIS: Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to introduce the National Executive Committee. Please stand when your name is called and remain standing. I would ask our audience members to please hold your applause until I have introduced all of the members.

James H. Tanner, First District, of Massachusetts; Anthony L. Mirando, Second District, of New York; Anthony T. Karam, Third District, of New Hampshire; Ronald W. Brodeur, Third District Alternate, of Maine; Paul V. Lardizzone, Fourth District, of Delaware; John E. Ogozaly, Fifth District, of Pennsylvania; German Bravo-Perez, Sixth District, of Puerto Rico; Edward S. Barnshaw, Seventh District, of Florida, and Treasurer of the Board of Directors; G. Eddie Figueron, Eighth District, of Louisiana; William L. Coward, Ninth District, of Georgia; J. David Boozer, Tenth District, of Michigan, and member of the Board of Directors; Harlan F. Plummer, Eleventh District, of Ohio; Henry E. Williams, Twelfth District, of Wisconsin; Jim Huff, Thirteenth District, of Kentucky; Keith E. Beach, Fourteenth District, of Montana; Franklin C. Bergquist, Fifteenth District, of Kansas; James C. Bogan, Sixteenth District, of California, and member of the Board of Directors; Floyd Watson, Junior, Seventeenth District, of Wyoming, and member of the Board of Directors; Harold Minami, Eighteenth District, of Hawaii; Albert H. Buster, Nineteenth District, of Washington; Gerald J. Cowan, Twentieth District, of Texas; Irvin D. Eddy, Twenty-First District, of Oklahoma. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: It is now time to hear from National Membership Director, Tony Baskerville, with his report on the status of DAV membership. Tony.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR ANTONY BASKERVILLE: Commander Barton, National Officers, delegates and guests to the 86th DAV National Convention, greetings. Every DAV member shares the responsibility for identifying and inviting prospective members to join the Disabled American Veterans.

Indeed, the DAV's future depends on the fulfillment of that responsibility. Every DAV Chapter needs a consistent supply of new members if it is to maintain its current membership level, much less grow.

In addition to providing willing hands for service and other Chapter activities, new members bring new ideas, new outlooks, and new enthusiasm to your Chapter. Unfortunately, due to our nation at war and the many young men and women serving in harm's way throughout the world we have a substantial pool of prospective members.

It is our inherent duty as members of the DAV to ensure that this organization is fully prepared to serve the next generation. We need to have pride in ourselves as disabled American veterans as well as pride in our organization, with its many Chapters and Departments.

For 87 years the DAV members have held stewardship for building better lives for disabled veterans and their families. And whether we wish to believe it or not, each of us make up the foundation for DAV's future. By recruiting and mentoring new members in your Chapters and Departments you are building the framework for a future generation of disabled veterans that they can build further upon.

I ask you, is it time for change? We're in the 21st Century. Times are changing. Our very population is rapidly becoming more diverse. And if we don't adapt we will perish. Just because something worked in the "good old days" doesn't mean they will work as well today.

Change your meeting structure. Make your meetings more interesting. Get excitement, energy into your meetings. More prospects will want to join thriving chapters. Become recommitted to recruitment. It is amazing what happens when you really commit.

I am pleased to report to you that 1,684 Chapters reached or exceeded last year's goal as well as 50 Departments. We surpassed our goals by 7,884 new members, bringing DAV's total membership to 1,398,923. (Applause) We now have 1,019,624 fully-paid life members.

The DAV National Service Officers contributed to our recruitment efforts by signing 2,317 part-life members and 3,181 fully-paid members, totaling 5,498 new members. Transitional

Service Officers are responsible for signing up 7,871 returnees from Iraq and Afghanistan to one-year trial memberships as well as offering DAV's professional representation before VA and military boards.

My thanks to the National Service Director, Randy Reese, and his staff and to our National Service Officers and Transitional Service Officers for their invaluable service and assistance they provide. This past year many of our National Service Officers recruited 100 or more new members and each of them deserve our recognition: from the Bluegrass state of Kentucky, Greg Belak with 159 members; from the Longhorn state of Texas, Patrick J. Noonan, 129 members; from the Roughrider state of North Dakota, Greg Seurer had 113 members; and from the Sunshine state of Florida Andrew "Tom" Smith came to us with 106 members. (Applause)

Commander Barton, it is my pleasure to present to you and the delegates assembled the recipients and awards for recruitment excellence for the year 2006-2007. The 2006-2007 Recruiter of the Year hails from California, Past Department Commander Frederick Powers.

(Whereupon, the Recruiter of the Year award was presented to Frederick Powers, Junior.)

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR BASKERVILLE: Fred recruited 373 part- and full-time paid life members to his credit this year. In the Division Commander competition the awards for Division I, Department of California, Fred Powers. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division I award was presented to Frederick Powers.)

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR BASKERVILLE: Thank you, Fred. Division II, Past Department Commander of Minnesota, Daniel Hill. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division II award was presented Daniel Hill.)

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR BASKERVILLE: Division III, Department of Louisiana, Joseph Menard. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division III award was presented to Joseph Menard.)

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR BASKERVILLE: Division IV, Department of South Dakota, Past Department Commander, Loren Murren. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division IV award was presented to Loren Murren.)

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR BASKERVILLE: And Division V, which will be moving to Division IV next year which is going to make it a little harder on you there, we have Timothy Cruff, Past Department Commander of North Dakota. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division V award was presented to Timothy Cruff.)

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR BASKERVILLE: Division Recruiters of the Year were Frederick Powers of California, Division I, Greg Belak from Kentucky, Division II, Daryl Testone of Arkansas, Division III; Joseph Wafford, Maine, Division IV; and Greg Seurer of North Dakota for Division V.

The Jonathon M. Wainwright Award is presented to the Department that finishes the year with the largest increase in new members. This year it goes to the Department of Texas and Past Department Commander Rex Lloyd who took top honors with 2,817 new members. (Applause) I don't see Rex here with us. We will ensure that the award gets back to Texas.

The Robert S. Marx Award is given to the Department that completes the year with the highest percentage increase of fully-paid life members over goal. It is presented to Ann Cameron-Adams, Past Department Commander, Duane Adams of Department of Oregon. (Applause) And I see that Ann could not make it as well.

Each year those who recruit 100 or more new members were given the opportunity to select to win a laptop computer. As we all know, recruiting levels for the 2006-2007 membership year were disappointingly lower than anticipated. Despite that, there are six recruiters who have signed more than 100 new members this past membership year.

In recognition of their efforts on behalf of DAV, each of them will receive the opportunity to select either a laptop, a digital camcorder, grandfather clock, his or her watches, HD TV, digital camera with printer, or golf clubs.

Each of the following information, individuals will receive prize instructions listing how they may redeem their prize: from California, Fred Powers; from New York, our friend, Prosper Sodano; Andrew T. Smith; R. Gregory Belak; Greg Seurer; and Patrick Noonan. Congratulations to each of you for jobs well done. (Applause)

Commander, a complete report has been prepared and can be picked up in the Public Relations Office. This concludes the report of the National Membership Department. (Applause)

(The following written annual report was submitted by Anthony Baskerville, National Membership Director:)

ANNUAL REPORT
OF
ANTHONY L. BASKERVILLE
NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR
To the
Disabled American Veterans
86th NATIONAL CONVENTION
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
AUGUST 11-14, 2007

COMMANDER BARTON, NATIONAL OFFICERS, DELEGATES AND GUESTS TO THE
86th DAV NATIONAL CONVENTION—GREETINGS:

Every DAV member shares the responsibility of identifying and inviting prospective members to join the Disabled American Veterans. Indeed, the DAV's future depends on the fulfillment of that responsibility.

Every DAV Chapter needs a consistent supply of new members if it is to maintain its current membership level, much less grow.

In addition to providing willing hands for service and other Chapter activities, new members bring new ideas, new outlooks and new enthusiasm to your Chapter. Unfortunately, with our nation at war and many young men and woman serving in harms' way throughout the world, we have a substantial pool of prospective members.

It is our inherent duty as members of the DAV to ensure that this organization is fully prepared to serve the next generation.

We need to have pride in ourselves as disabled American veterans, as well as pride in our organization with its many Chapters and Departments.

For 87 years DAV members have held stewardship for “Building Better Lives for Disabled Veterans and their Families,” and whether we wish to believe it or not, each of us make up the foundation for DAV’s future.

By recruiting and mentoring new members in your Chapters and Departments you’re building the framework that future generations of disabled veterans can build upon.

I ask you --Is it time for change? We are in the 21st Century. Times are changing. Our veteran population is rapidly becoming more diverse, and if you don’t adapt, you perish. Just because something worked in the “good old days,” it doesn’t mean it will work as well today.

Change your meeting structure. Make your meetings more interesting. Get excitement and energy into your meetings. More prospects will want to join a thriving Chapter.

Become recommitted to recruitment. It is amazing what happens when you really commit. I’m pleased to report to you that 1,684 Chapters reached or exceeded last year’s goals as well as 50 Departments.

We surpassed our goal by 7,884 new members, bringing DAV’s total membership to 1,398,923 with 1,019,624 fully paid members.

DAV National Service Officers contributed to our recruitment efforts by signing 2,317 part life members and 3,181 fully paid members -- totaling 5,498 new members. Transition Service Officers are responsible for signing up 7,871 returnees from Iraq and Afghanistan to one year trial membership as well as offering DAV’s professional representation before VA and Military Boards.

My thanks to National Service Director Randy Reese and his staff. And to our NSOs and TSOs for the invaluable service and assistance they provide.

This past year, many of our National Service Officers recruited 100 or more new members and each of them deserves our recognition.

From the Blue Grass state of Kentucky, Gregory Belak, 159; from the Long Horn state of Texas, Patrick J. Noonan, 129; from the Roughrider state of North Dakota, Gregory A. Seurer 113; and, from the Sunshine state of Florida, Andrew “Tom” Smith with 106.

Our Membership Department produced a special mailing in September to more than 127,000 members identified as inactive/unable to distribute. Response to that mailing generated 2,094 full and 1,786 part paid members. We’ve also created incentives to partially paid members to encourage them to fully commit by becoming a fully paid life member. A complimentary copy of the book, “The Price of Their Blood: Profiles in Spirit,” authored by DAV National Service Officer and Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the late Jesse Brown, or a wallet-sized Life Member Metal Card and DAV 5 star lapel pin, or a set of DAV Tumblers, have contributed to more than 11,000 fully paid life members and provided for another successful membership year.

Commander Barton, it is my pleasure to present to you and the delegates assembled the recipients of awards for recruitment excellence.

The 2006/2007 Recruiter of the Year from California is Past Department Commander Frederick Powers with 373, part and fully paid members to his credit.

In the Division Commander competition: The Award for Division I Departments -- with over 35,000 members -- goes to California and Past Department Commander Frederick Powers. For Division II Departments -- with 18,000 to 34,000 members -- the award is presented to Daniel Hill, Past Department Commander of Minnesota. In Division III, -- Departments with 10,000 to 17,999 members -- we recognize Past Department Commander Joseph Menard of Louisiana. For Division IV -- Departments with 5,000 to 9,999 members -- our recipient is a previous winner from South Dakota and Past Department Commander Loren Murren. And from Division V -- Departments with less than 5, 000 members -- our winner is moving to Division IV for the 2007/2008 membership year and tougher competition. Please recognize Timothy Cruff, Past Department Commander of North Dakota.

Division Recruiters of the year are:

Division I	Fredrick Powers, California
Division II	Gregory Belak, Kentucky
Division III	Daryl L. Testone, Arkansas
Division IV	Joseph Wafford, Maine
Division V --	Gregory Seurer, North Dakota.

The Jonathan M. Wainwright Award is presented to the Department that finishes the year with the largest increase in new members. This year it goes to the Department of Texas and Past Department Commander Rex Lloyd, who takes top honors with 2,817 new members.

The Robert S. Marx Award, given to the Department that completes the year with the highest percentage increase of fully paid life members over goal is presented to Commander Dwayne Adams of the Department of Oregon, which finished the year at 100.96%.

Each year those who recruited 100 or more new members were given the opportunity to be selected to win a laptop computer. As we all know, recruiting levels for the 2006/2007 membership year were disappointingly lower than anticipated. Despite that, there are seven recruiters who've signed more than 100 new members this past membership year. In recognition of their efforts on behalf of DAV each of them will receive the opportunity to select either a: Laptop, Digital Camera, Grandfather clock, His & Her watches, HD TV, Digital Camera & Printer or Golf Clubs.

Each of the following individuals will receive a prize list and instructions on how they may redeem their prize: Frederick Powers, Prospero Sodano, Andrew T. Smith, R. Gregory Belak, Donald F. Horton, Gregory A. Seurer and Patrick J. Noonan. Congratulations, to each of you for a job well done.

Two years ago DAV examined the prospects of enabling each Chapter and Department to have -- at no cost to them -- internet capabilities and their own websites. It gives me great pleasure to report that the project has been completed well ahead of schedule and well under budget. Please join me in thanking IT Director Greg Nichols and members from his staff -- Bob Dewenter, Lyn Collins, and Heather Workman.

Last month, Lyn provided training for members attending the Commanders and Adjutants Association meeting held at National Headquarters. During tomorrow's Membership Seminar, Lyn will provide vital information on functions of your website Portal. Please come out and take advantage of this great technology.

Before I close, allow me to congratulate each of our award winners and provide this bit of advice to all new Chapter and Department leaders. There's a prevailing myth that the membership team handles membership.

The truth is that the leadership must prioritize retention and set the tone for staff and volunteers. Membership is everybody's business. Everyone in DAV needs to be focused on membership and Chapter and Department leaders need to be at the forefront of this initiative. To be an effective Chapter or Department leader, you must have a successful membership retention program.

Department/Chapter leaders must be visibly and proactively involved. Department/Chapter leaders must assume the challenging tasks of preparing a new generation of disabled veterans for the crucial responsibility of crafting strategies for membership success.

Remember: Become recommitted through recruitment. The future is in our hands.

Thank you National Adjutant Wilson, for your support and guidance throughout the year -- Executive Directors Patterson and Gorman, thanks for your guidance and direction and you, my fellow members, I am honored to serve as your Membership Director and look forward to working with you in the future.

Commander, this concludes the report of the National Membership Department.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Tony, for that excellent report. I'll entertain a motion to accept Mr. Baskerville's report.

MR. RESNER: Mic 1.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 1.

MR. RESNER: Norm Resner, Department of Illinois, Chapter 42, so moves.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Norm. May I have a second?

MR. LINDEN: Mic 2.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 2.

MR. LINDEN: Al Linden, delegate, Gator 90, Florida, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Al. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. Dr. Gordon "Nick" Mueller is the President and CEO of the National World War II Museum since its opening on June 6, 2000, by the late historian Stephen Ambrose. Prior to that Dr. Mueller was the Chairman of the Board of the Museum and a 34-year Professor of History and Administrator at the University of New Orleans.

Originally designated the National D-Day Museum, with focus on the June 6th, 1944, invasion of Normandy, the museum has been designated by Congress as the country's official "National World War II Museum" and is expanding its scope to include the entire World War II experience.

Severely damaged by Hurricane Katrina, the museum has recovered significantly. Dr. Mueller has extensive experience in directing, leading and managing all aspects of the museum's operations. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm DAV welcome to Dr. Nick Mueller. (Applause)

GORDON "NICK" MUELLER, PhD.: Well, thank you very much. It's truly an honor to stand before this group. And thank you so much for inviting me. And thank you for choosing New Orleans for this important and prestigious conference. And most of all, thank you for your service and your sacrifice to this great nation.

On behalf of the National World War II Museum and its trustees and staff and volunteers, before I begin I'd like to pause just to ask all the veterans of World War II that are here today to stand or waive so I can salute you. Where are you out there? Just stand up wherever you are. Let's give them all a great round of applause. (Applause) Waive if you can't stand. Hoorah.

I hope all of you will have the opportunity to visit us at the National World War II Museum while you're in New Orleans. It is a remarkable and profound experience celebrating the American spirit and the epic struggle of the war that changed the world and, indeed, helped to change America.

Through the prism of World War II we also honor the extraordinary men and women, like all of you, who have served all our country in all wars, men and women, in Korea, Vietnam, Bosnia, Honduras, Iraq, all of you. Your courage, your teamwork, your optimism, your ingenuity, your passion and patriotism, we honor you all. Now, how many of you have any idea of why the National World War II Museum is in New Orleans? Anybody know?

(Response of "Higgins.")

DR. MUELLER: Higgins. I heard it right out there. You're exactly right—one man, Andrew Jackson Higgins. Andy Higgins designed and built the now famous boats which General Dwight David Eisenhower said won the war for the allies. Higgins built 20,000 of the landing craft and PT boats right here in New Orleans.

And he did it with an integrated workforce, men and women, black and white, handicapped, working side-by-side, 24/7 to get the job done. And they were all paid the same wages for the same job, a remarkable achievement in the deep south in the 1940s. So that's why it's here.

And before Hurricane Katrina the museum had begun a visionary expansion to quadruple the size and scope of the museum, creating an incomparable six acre campus of exhibition pavilions and multi-media experiences surrounding a marvelous grassy green parade ground.

As many of you may know, and just have heard, we opened in June of 2000 as the National D-Day Museum, fulfilling the dream and determination of Stephen E. Ambrose, arguably our country's greatest historian and storyteller of World War II and my best friend and a colleague at the University of New Orleans for 30-plus years.

The original museum did focus on the D-Day landings, first in Europe and then a few months later, 18 months later we dedicated the museum's Pacific Wing, illuminating the D-Day invasions of the Pacific Islands and the strategic island hopping of our U.S. forces in Asia.

To recognize the extraordinary accomplishment of citizens and our state of Louisiana and those in Congress who helped us, Congress decided that this was going to be America's official National World War II Museum. But with that honor came a mandate. Of course it was an unfunded mandate.

It was a mandate to tell the entire story of World War II, every service branch, every campaign, and every hero. Then came Hurricane Katrina. Thankfully, the museum itself did not suffer any major physical damage from the storm. We had no flooding in this area. It's just a few blocks here from the hotel. And no real significant wind damage.

And our priceless collections and artifacts and oral histories were, thankfully, untouched. Nevertheless, after Katrina many people assumed that the museum master plan and expansion was like World War II itself, history.

Questions arose around the country, "How can you pursue such a major expansion when there is much uncertainty and a depressed economy and hardly any tourists in the city or even in sight?" day-to-day challenges that were awesome for a city that had been submerged for over a month. And, frankly, there was much despair.

But the National Board of Trustees of this museum posed the question differently. It said, do you fold your tent because the task is now more difficult, even though your mission means more to the city now than anyone could have imagined before Hurricane Katrina and that disaster, at a time when the urgency of telling the World War II story was even more critical before all of that Greatest Generation is gone from us?

Our board said no, we fight back. We are not in the trenches. Nobody is shooting at us. Let's get this thing done anyway. We will prevail. And they unanimously voted to move forward with a \$300 million expansion, affirming their faith in New Orleans, in this situation, in our important mission.

And they recognized immediately that this story had to be told, had to be conveyed to future generations, to the youth of our country. And they redoubled their commitments to the expansion.

Now the land has been cleared today. If you've been over there you've seen across the street. Test vials have been driven and construction will begin this fall on the next phase of our master plan, the National World War II Theater.

This state-of-the-art, advanced format theater that's going to be coming out of the ground soon is going to be an extraordinary cinematic experience, a dramatic and immersive presentation called, "Beyond All Boundaries," an experience that will engage the senses as well as the hearts and minds of our visitors.

Tom Hanks is Executive Producer of the project and Phil Henevett, former Chief of Universal Studios, is the Director and heads the development team. And in just a few moments I'm going to share with you a sneak preview of this powerful multi-media experience which will open in early 2009 along with a USO venue and a restaurant.

Immediately following that will come the Campaign Pavilions and the United States Freedom Pavilion and these two pavilions will bring visitors through the immersive environments of Guadalcanal, the Battle of the Bulge, Mediterranean, Italy, Northern Europe and much more.

And every galley, every experience, and every building, I can promise you, will be fully ADA-compliant. It would be unthinkable to create this expanded museum campus with anything less than the ultimate adaptive designs to accommodate every visitor.

This is the story of how we got this thing going back in 1998 when I became chairman of the museum and CEO, before we had a staff, some couple of years and had not been close to the design work.

And I looked in the museum under construction to the Forbes Theater, which some of you may have been in if you've already been to the museum, and I discovered to my complete dismay and shock that the Malcolm Forbes Theater had a raked floor, slanted with no handicap access except about six feet in front of the screen.

And I said this was simply unacceptable. And the first act I just about had as chairman was to spend \$30,000 to bring in the jackhammers and level the floor of that theater. It's now flat and wheelchair friendly as some of you I think know if you've been there.

Now the upcoming phases of the expansion of the master plan, as I indicated, will include the United States Freedom Pavilion which is currently entered as a Bill in the House of

Representatives to be voted on through Armed Forces Committee and Appropriations in both the House and the Senate in the next Congress, not this Congress.

We have many sponsors. The drive is being led by the World War II veterans in Congress as well, of course, as our own members of Congress from Louisiana but many throughout the country. And if you have friends in Congress, send them a letter or give them a call and tell them to support this \$50 million entry pavilion for the museum.

There will also be a Victory and Liberation Pavilion at the end with the Campaign Galleries and the Campaign Pavilions in between. We will showcase the war on the land, war on the sea, and in the air. And in the future we will add across the street a new hotel and conference center.

So you can see that we are building on this six acre campus a museum to portray this war. The museum we believe has to be as epic as the war that it honors. D-Day for us was only the beginning. And knowing that I would be speaking with you today my thoughts turned to the parallels among us, the DAV, the National World War II Museum, and the City of New Orleans.

Your organization and the individuals who make up Disabled American Veterans truly embody the American spirit. During your years of service, at the time of your injuries, and still today as you work for the great good of your brothers and sisters in arms, you face your personal challenges with tremendous courage and grace and determination to go on, the will to fight back, to not just survive but to thrive and to accomplish goals and meaningful goals along the way.

The challenge to New Orleans and our museum blew in on hurricane winds and on the waves of aging and inadequate engineering and levy construction. But we can and should take inspiration from the example of the DAV and from the history and lessons of World War II.

You didn't give up. We're not giving up. We're fighting back and we will heal ourselves in New Orleans. And we have the courage and determination to move forward and the resourcefulness and the ingenuity. And you are an inspiration to all of us.

We will continue to rely on the teamwork of local and regional and national entities to get the job done. We believe that the National World War II Museum is in the vanguard of that recovery and that we will, together, here in New Orleans, build an even greater national treasure and a destination/cultural attraction for people throughout our country and, indeed, throughout the world.

As they said in the World War II era, "We're all in this together." And now it's my pleasure to show you a brief preview of that great film which is in production right now, "Beyond All Boundaries," the original multi-media presentation that is being created especially for this National World War II Theater. So if we can roll that film, please.

(Whereupon, the film "Beyond All Boundaries" was presented.)

DR. MUELLER: Well, I think you can see how powerful this 4-D presentation will be and how it will advance our mission to convey the history and the values of what America achieved in World War II to new audiences today and as far into the future as we can see.

This was an epic encounter in the middle of the 20th Century between the forces of democracy and the forces of dictatorship. It's a great American story. It's a big story, a good story, and one that requires a great treatment. As you all know, and some of you were there, we were attacked.

We didn't start that war. We sent the best of our youth halfway around the world in both directions not to build empire, not to subjugate people of other countries in the world but to destroy fascism and dictatorship and to bring democracy and salvation to a people living under oppression.

And then we turned around and gave those countries we had just defeated strong economies and democracies. That's a big story. That's one we're proud to tell and we're going to tell it right and we're going to tell it here in New Orleans for all future generations.

That is the American spirit that we celebrate through the voices and the memories and the artifacts of the men and women who won that war. I'd like to conclude with just two quotes from a remarkable woman, whom you all know, Helen Keller, about overcoming challenges.

She said, "Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired and success achieved." She also knew the importance of optimism, one of the key ingredients of the American spirit. For those who are not in the group of optimists she said, "No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars or sailed to an uncharted island or opened a new doorway for the human spirit."

The National World War II Museum is filled with optimists and we have optimist friends around the country, including all of you. And we join you, the DAV, in opening that new doorway for the human spirit. If you haven't come already, I hope you come and visit us before you leave. God bless you and God bless America. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Dr. Mueller for joining us today and for your superb leadership at the National World War II Museum. Now I realize there is some anxious Committee members and chairmen to get to their Committee meetings but we cannot start them while the Convention is in session. We're running a little long so please be patient.

During my term as National Commander I must admit I have introduced my fair share of unusual people, most of whom are politicians and some with unusual names. But I have yet to introduce a "Goat Woman." (Laughter) That is about to change.

Kaziah Hancock lives in Utah on her Sweetwater Goat Ranch where she raises—no surprise—goats, thus earning the unusual but endearing title "Goat Woman." But Kaziah is much more, much more than that.

She is an amazing American artist who is passionate about her work and uses it to reflect her pride in and appreciation of our nation's military men and women and their families. Please join me now in watching a short video film about this wonderful woman.

(Whereupon, an NBC film was viewed about Kaziah Hancock.)

COMMANDER BARTON: Members and guests, it is my pleasure to present a truly remarkable and compassionate woman, Kaziah Hancock. (Standing Ovation) The inscription reads:

"Your love and pride for military service members and their families is forever reflected in the original oil on canvas portraits of deceased veterans you paint and donate to their immediate families. Each portrait is a lasting memorial to those who have given the last full measure of devotion to protect our nation and the freedom we cherish."

"Your paintings bring solace to the sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, husbands and wives of deceased veterans. Your artistry helps to appease profound heartbreak and grant peace in the midst of great sorrow."

"On behalf of all those who bear the scars of war, thank you for your compassion, desire, and talent to make the lives of others less burdened."

Kaziah, on the behalf of DAV members everywhere, it is my pleasure to present you with this special award in appreciation of all you do for veterans and their families. (Standing Ovation)

MRS. KAZIAH HANCOCK: By God, I'll tell you one thing, I hope America never forgets. I hope they never forget all those that have died so that we might have the blessings that we enjoy here in America today and all that you have suffered and all that the rest, the Americans that represent our military, have suffered, their sacrifices, the death, the injuries. (Applause)

I started out doing this just as an act of kindness from one American to another. But as the requests came in and I continue to paint the deceased, fallen, I—reading the letters from the families, you know, and some of those would include what the soldier had wrote home to his mother or father and his commitment and his determination to do his very best to keep America safe—you know, I mean that beautiful farm that you see, my little 15 acres where I have my sweet kids, you know. (Laughter) You know.

You know, when I get down on my knees and I thank God for all of my blessings I have to get up off my knees and I have to thank somebody else, too. And you know what, that would be you and all of the others like you and all those that have made my life possible to be beautiful.

And it's my hope that as I put a face to the lost to preserve the memories of these beautiful men and women and to show my empathy to the parents and give them something that they can know that somebody gives a damn that they've lost somebody precious, I hope the rest of America when they see that, when they see that video, when they punch into the Hero Paintings. com Website and they see these beautiful faces, just like when they see a man, a woman, that's handicapped walking the streets or in a wheelchair or with a crutch that is a result from what they have contributed to our nation, you know, what?

I would hope, I would just hope that there would be gratitude in their hearts and a desire that they might be just a little more kind to one another, that they may be a little less wasteful, that they may come up with a greater determination to see what the hell they can do—because everybody has something to contribute—to see what they can do to give back for all that's been given for us because freedom is not free. Well, you know, you've shown your thanks to me by asking me here and I truly appreciate that. But let me tell you, I am not the hero.

(Whereupon, someone from the audience called out "thank you" followed by a standing ovation.)

COMMANDER BARTON: 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 the Convention Committees be admitted into the record of the proceedings of this Convention.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: So moved.

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

MR. SALVATORE STANZIONE, JUNIOR: I second the motion, Salvatore Stanzione, delegate from Chapter 149, Greater South Ocala.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Sal. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

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COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

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02 (Alt)	Dennis L. Krulder Richard T. Robinson	NEW YORK 125 NEW YORK 015
03 (Alt)	Denise M. De Blois Mason J. Sullivan	NEW HAMPSHIRE 019 NEW HAMPSHIRE 007
04 (Alt)	John J. Grone Joseph J. Harris	NEW JERSEY 044 NEW JERSEY 044
05 (Alt)	Shawn Scott Hope Lawrence F. Kelly	PENNSYLVANIA 076 PENNSYLVANIA 003
06 (Alt)	Gregory N. Jones Milton Jacobs	MARYLAND 017 VIRGINIA 021
07 (Alt)	David L. Tannenbaum John E. Markiewicz	FLORIDA 004 FLORIDA 001
08 (Alt)	Carl L. Bailey Renold I. Faulk USAF Re	ALABAMA 045 LOUISIANA 002
09 (Alt)	Larnell Reece Wanda D. Autrey	NORTH CAROLINA 045 NORTH CAROLINA 020
10 (Alt)	Morris Pennermon Karl H. Brown	MICHIGAN 114 MICHIGAN 102
11 (Alt)	Robert H. Bertschy David K. Farrell	OHIO 047 OHIO 074
12 (Alt)	Mark M. Aaron Howard D. Bateman	ILLINOIS 001 ILLINOIS 024
13 (Alt)	Michael A. Whelihan Duane M. Carr	INDIANA 052 INDIANA 003
14 (Alt)	Kevin R. Grantier Van D. Karg	MONTANA 003 MINNESOTA 037
15 (Alt)	Kristine S. Childers Larry D. Miller	NEBRASKA 007 MISSOURI 017
16 (Alt)	Kenneth G. Musselmann Stephanie L. Ruscigno	CALIFORNIA 019 CALIFORNIA 009
17 (Alt)	Waylon B. Burlingame Isidro Salcido	NEW MEXICO 032 NEW MEXICO 003
18 (Alt)	Floyd W. Buell Thomas E. Mullalley	NEVADA 012 NEVADA 013
19 (Alt)	Glenn M. DiCenso Michele L. Colpaert	WASHINGTON 005 WASHINGTON 005
20 (Alt)	Eldon L. Armstrong Donald R. DuPree	TEXAS 042 TEXAS 084
21 (Alt)	D Brandon McKinney Ray Burks	ARKANSAS 007 OKLAHOMA 056
BLIND VETS (Alt)	Richard D. Holden Clyde C. Wyant	BLIND VETERANS 001 BLIND VETERANS 001

ADVISORS: Kenneth G. Musselmann - Barry A. Jesinoski

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03 (Alt)	Russell R. Tanguay Richard J. Vaccari	NEW HAMPSHIRE 001 RHODE ISLAND 009
04 (Alt)	Mary J. Bencivenga Ronnie E. Revels	NEW JERSEY 024 DELAWARE 006
05 (Alt)	John E. Ogozaly Scott Charles Havelka	PENNSYLVANIA 114 PENNSYLVANIA 008
06 (Alt)	Sloan H. Hoopes Stephanie A. Cooper	VIRGINIA 003 MARYLAND 017
07 (Alt)	Frank C. Tracy John R. Houyou	FLORIDA 087 FLORIDA 067
08 (Alt)	Ricky L. Vickery Dennis R. Bell	TENNESSEE 076 LOUISIANA 030
09 (Alt)	Horace Adams Linda S. Mingo	SOUTH CAROLINA 014 SOUTH CAROLINA 046
10 (Alt)	Gerald N. Cool Frank T. Shepherd Jr.	MICHIGAN 020 MICHIGAN 007
11 (Alt)	Paul F. Snider Jr. Will L. Davis	OHIO 027 OHIO 003
12 (Alt)	Louis Vargas James R. Mc Dermott	ILLINOIS 103 ILLINOIS 028
13 (Alt)	Andrew N. Zawistowski Benjamin Flores	INDIANA 017 INDIANA 017
14 (Alt)	Roderick S. Olin Shane L. Liermann	NORTH DAKOTA 031 MINNESOTA 002
15 (Alt)	Charles M. Johns Robert A. Griffith	KANSAS 001 IOWA 010
16 (Alt)	David E. Stewart Salvador C. Ayala	CALIFORNIA 023 CALIFORNIA 055
17 (Alt)	Donald L. Reed Robert E. Lougee	COLORADO 007 COLORADO 007
18 (Alt)	Aunjel L. Anderson Kathie S. Stanley	ARIZONA 020 ARIZONA 002
19 (Alt)	Don C. Smith Donna M. Mc Kay	OREGON 001 WASHINGTON 018
20 (Alt)	John E. Hill Timothy C. Johniken	TEXAS 020 TEXAS 084
21 (Alt)	Gregory L Wells Nicholas R. Miller	OKLAHOMA 029 OKLAHOMA 056

ADVISORS: Michael E. Dobmeier - Anthony Baskerville

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03 (Alt)	Ronald W. Brodeur Joseph E. Wafford	MAINE 001 MAINE 001
04 (Alt)	Herman M. Wischmann Charles F. Richardson	DELAWARE 001 CONNECTICUT 018
05 (Alt)	Darlene Bielecki John E. Ogozaly	PENNSYLVANIA 073 PENNSYLVANIA 114
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07 (Alt)	Martha S. Lyon Deborah J. Blanton	FLORIDA 149 FLORIDA 149
08 (Alt)	Charles D. Richmond Charles K Trenchard	ALABAMA 004 LOUISIANA 002
09 (Alt)	Jimmie B. Frazier Moses A. McIntosh Jr.	GEORGIA 023 GEORGIA 018
10 (Alt)	Douglas K Wells Jr. Carl W. Poest	MICHIGAN 001 MICHIGAN 014
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12 (Alt)	Steven B. Hicke Cledith JoAnn Jordan	WISCONSIN 014 ILLINOIS 060
13 (Alt)	Ralph C. Purcell Kerry L. Baker	INDIANA 003 KENTUCKY 155
14 (Alt)	Dean R. Ascherman James V. Hamann	MINNESOTA 028 MINNESOTA 001
15 (Alt)	Ronald G. Lechner Francis Mc Allister	NEBRASKA 007 IOWA 004
16 (Alt)	Ruben R. Trejo Archie L. Smith Jr.	CALIFORNIA 039 CALIFORNIA 081
17 (Alt)	Terry D. Schow Eric D. McGinnis	UTAH 004 UTAH 002
18 (Alt)	Jose P. Garcia Richard D. Lemons	NEVADA 013 ARIZONA 002
19 (Alt)	Larry W. Metzler Francis P. Reding	ALASKA 007 IDAHO 025
20 (Alt)	Douglas G. Herrle William P. Brown	TEXAS 061 TEXAS 009
21 (Alt)	John L. Wilson Gary B. Gray	OKLAHOMA 007 ARKANSAS 007

ADVISORS: Alfred C. Reynolds - Brian E. Lawrence

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COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND DUES

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02 (Alt)	Frank J. Cassella David H. Wilson	NEW YORK 082 NEW YORK 082
03 (Alt)	Louis T. Folcarelli Ira W. Erickson	RHODE ISLAND 001 RHODE ISLAND 001
04 (Alt)	Albert E. Church II Harry R. Newell	CONNECTICUT 005 CONNECTICUT 047
05 (Alt)	Carmen De Santi Raymond A. Thomas	PENNSYLVANIA 000 PENNSYLVANIA 053
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07 (Alt)	Roger H. Sullivan Larry O. Kyser	FLORIDA 087 FLORIDA 023
08 (Alt)	Cecil R. Morrison Esq. Leo J. Aragon	ALABAMA 004 LOUISIANA 007
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10 (Alt)	Daniel P. Kozlowski Todd M Peddle	MICHIGAN 129 MICHIGAN 129
11 (Alt)	Joseph W. Johnston Thomas K. Keller	OHIO 063 OHIO 103
12 (Alt)	Kenneth L. Kuehnl Jr. Dennis W. Thompson	WISCONSIN 020 ILLINOIS 103
13 (Alt)	James S. Huff James J. Daugherty Jr.	KENTUCKY 004 INDIANA 017
14 (Alt)	Keith E. Beach Richard S. Krajewski	MONTANA 019 NORTH DAKOTA 002
15 (Alt)	Brenda D. Reed Charles Lovings Jr.	IOWA 020 KANSAS 004
16	Lou Gysin	CALIFORNIA 073
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19 (Alt)	Ernest E Hume Robert L. Bigness	WASHINGTON 041 IDAHO 022
20 (Alt)	Jose T. Garcia Percy A. Spence III	TEXAS 014 TEXAS 017
21 (Alt)	Wilbur Johnson Carroll Kempin	OKLAHOMA 029 OKLAHOMA 018

ADVISORS: Edward S. Barnshaw - Richard E. Patterson

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COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

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02 (Alt)	Chester Wisnesky Jr. Ronald D. Tears	NEW YORK 182 NEW YORK 015
03 (Alt)	James E. Bixby Rick Maynard	NEW HAMPSHIRE 001 VERMONT 003
04 (Alt)	Chester W. Swift Derrick L. Williams	DELAWARE 009 NEW JERSEY 001
05 (Alt)	Vincent P. Darcangelo Timothy E. Birtle	PENNSYLVANIA 055 PENNSYLVANIA 034
06 (Alt)	Sarah V M Costa Wilbert B. Forbes	VIRGINIA 013 MARYLAND 017
07 (Alt)	James E. Sursely Franklin E. Jenkins	FLORIDA 016 FLORIDA 016
08 (Alt)	A. R. Grimmer Jr. Billy R. Worley	LOUISIANA 005 LOUISIANA 030
09 (Alt)	Ernest H. Stroud USAF Re Clarence Brown	SOUTH CAROLINA 014 SOUTH CAROLINA 044
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13 (Alt)	Joseph F. Sanchez Lee S. Ewing	INDIANA 017 KENTUCKY 089
14 (Alt)	Loren L. Murren Gene L. Kouba	SOUTH DAKOTA 003 NORTH DAKOTA 003
15 (Alt)	Steven R. Holsworth Roger Franklin	MISSOURI 002 NEBRASKA 002
16 (Alt)	Dr. Mariana M. Raba MD Ronald G Hoffman Jr.	CALIFORNIA 006 CALIFORNIA 095
17 (Alt)	Thomas G. Daubert Frank J. Mestas	NEW MEXICO 003 NEW MEXICO 003
18 (Alt)	Jane B. Overy Gerald L. Ogle Sr.	NEVADA 012 NEVADA 012
19 (Alt)	Sarah J. Royse Bruce O. Young	WASHINGTON 046 OREGON 001
20 (Alt)	Clemille J. Bergeron Jr. Timothy W Lindsey	TEXAS 005 TEXAS 020
21 (Alt)	Virgil L. Williams Paul D. Parham	OKLAHOMA 033 OKLAHOMA 060

ADVISORS: Garry J. Augustine - Adrian Atizado

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03 (Alt)	Ronald W. Reilly Beth A. Greenwood	NEW HAMPSHIRE 004 RHODE ISLAND 017
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05 (Alt)	Timothy E. Birtle Timothy J Grossman	PENNSYLVANIA 034 PENNSYLVANIA 115
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07 (Alt)	Salvator E. Uccello Maryann Keckler	FLORIDA 042 FLORIDA 067
08 (Alt)	Joseph W. Menard Charles J. Lobdell Jr.	LOUISIANA 002 ALABAMA 012
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12 (Alt)	Michael Hiley Stephen K Garrett	ILLINOIS 083 WISCONSIN 019
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14 (Alt)	Alvy A. Chapman OSF Amber M. Niemi	MONTANA 006 MINNESOTA 039
15 (Alt)	Mark Cyr Frank J. Tentler	MISSOURI 002 NEBRASKA 018
16 (Alt)	Delphine Metcalf-Foster Michael Joe O'Neal	CALIFORNIA 021 CALIFORNIA 019
17 (Alt)	Dorothy M. Pridmore Michelle A. Martin	COLORADO 011 COLORADO 011
18 (Alt)	Gary K. Nakamura Johnie W. Treadway	HAWAII 001 ARIZONA 002
19 (Alt)	Jeffery A. Sugai Linda S. Mims	IDAHO 022 IDAHO 022
20 (Alt)	James H. Scott Roland A. Paquette	TEXAS 128 TEXAS 020
21 (Alt)	Bobby R. Eddy Gregory A Dubin	OKLAHOMA 057 OKLAHOMA 088
BLIND VETS (Alt)	Floyd O. Britting Gerard R. Boucher	BLIND VETERANS 001 BLIND VETERANS 001

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

2007 NATIONAL CONVENTION
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COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION AND VETERANS RIGHTS

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02 (Alt)	William Novak Jr. Tony Lee	NEW YORK 212 NEW YORK 126
03 (Alt)	Ronald W. Brodeur William E. Henshaw	MAINE 001 MAINE 011
04 (Alt)	Timothy Thomas	NEW JERSEY 042
05 (Alt)	James E. Uckele Timothy J. Dunn	PENNSYLVANIA 092 PENNSYLVANIA 111
06 (Alt)	Glynn E. Parker Eric L Sellers	MARYLAND 017 VIRGINIA 004
07 (Alt)	Albert H. Linden Jr. John L. Haynes	FLORIDA 090 FLORIDA 005
08 (Alt)	Harold J. Hicks Hollis O. Bridges	ALABAMA 011 ALABAMA 026
09 (Alt)	Emanuel J. Dixon Freddie Swint	GEORGIA 001 GEORGIA 010
10 (Alt)	Duane F. Getzmeyer Robert Landis Lawton	MICHIGAN 016 MICHIGAN 114
11 (Alt)	Edward D Monroe Martha J. Tepker	OHIO 006 OHIO 015
12 (Alt)	Ted Buck Al Labelle	ILLINOIS 028 WISCONSIN 057
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14 (Alt)	Warren J. Tobin Paul A. Wekenmann	NORTH DAKOTA 031 SOUTH DAKOTA 001
15 (Alt)	Esther D. Dean Lee A. Smith	KANSAS 007 MISSOURI 049
16 (Alt)	Gary A. Crossland Jeffrey D. Young	CALIFORNIA 002 CALIFORNIA 077
17 (Alt)	James E. Moore Richard W. Morgan	COLORADO 016 COLORADO 007
18 (Alt)	Thomas W. Linton II Christopher S. Cheney	ARIZONA 001 ARIZONA 001
19 (Alt)	Gregory Georgoff Brian L. Alspach	OREGON 001 IDAHO 022
20 (Alt)	Edgar H. Meiser Donald H. Fritz	TEXAS 047 TEXAS 017
21 (Alt)	Timothy D. Hedgecock USA Ret Jonathan M. Trimble	OKLAHOMA 056 ARKANSAS 001
BLIND VETS (Alt)	Harold E. Humphrey Buddy B. Spivey	BLIND VETERANS 001 BLIND VETERANS 001

ADVISORS: Joseph A. Violante - Brian E. Austin

2007 NATIONAL CONVENTION
New Orleans, LA

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATION OF NATIONAL OFFICERS

DISTRICT	NAME (DELEGATE & ALTERNATE)	CHAPTER NO. & STATE
01 (Alt)	Daniel P. Stack Alan W. Bowers	MASSACHUSETTS 017 MASSACHUSETTS 046
02 (Alt)	Sidney Siller Donald A. Sioss	NEW YORK 023 NEW YORK 076
03 (Alt)	Robert D. Wayss Justin B Hart	NEW HAMPSHIRE 004 RHODE ISLAND 021
04 (Alt)	Salvatore LoSauro Charles F. Richardson	NEW JERSEY 015 CONNECTICUT 018
05 (Alt)	Aaron M. Montague James T. Marszalek	PENNSYLVANIA 025 PENNSYLVANIA 076
06 (Alt)	Jeffrey B. Martin Mary H. Beamer	VIRGINIA 013 VIRGINIA 002
07 (Alt)	Dennis A. Joyner Kenneth D. Wolfe	FLORIDA 016 FLORIDA 101
08 (Alt)	Kevin A. Wenthe Helen H Holston	LOUISIANA 020 ALABAMA 012
09 (Alt)	Brian E. Wilner Moses A. McIntosh Jr.	GEORGIA 018 GEORGIA 018
10 (Alt)	Thomas A. McMasters III John P. Lamphere	MICHIGAN 129 MICHIGAN 039
11 (Alt)	Frank D. Williams David T. May	OHIO 013 OHIO 050
12 (Alt)	Alfred C. Reynolds Roger F. Dorman	ILLINOIS 017 WISCONSIN 060
13 (Alt)	James V. Thurau USA Ret. C. N. Wright Jr.	INDIANA 052 INDIANA 052
14 (Alt)	Eugene A. Murphy Joseph M. Litzinger	SOUTH DAKOTA 001 NORTH DAKOTA 002
15 (Alt)	Lyle J. Dean Brian K Gray	IOWA 010 KANSAS 004
16 (Alt)	Michael W. Tempesta Astro A. Tortolano	CALIFORNIA 001 CALIFORNIA 011
17 (Alt)	Floyd Watson Jr. Frank D. Maughan	WYOMING 002 UTAH 004
18 (Alt)	Robert S. Di Girolamo Thomas W. Linton II	ARIZONA 001 ARIZONA 001
19 (Alt)	Fay A Lyon Jay E. Woodbury	WASHINGTON 046 OREGON 001
20 (Alt)	Bruce W. Burgess Luz H. Gallegos	TEXAS 006 TEXAS 014
21 (Alt)	Irvin D. Eddy Domonique N Maestas	OKLAHOMA 057 OKLAHOMA 029
BLIND VETS (Alt)	Anthony Martino Joseph B. Link	BLIND VETERANS 001 BLIND VETERANS 001

ADVISORS: Gene A. Murphy - Richard E. Marbes

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

ADJUTANT WILSON: The Committee advisors are: Credentials, Michael Dobmeier and Anthony Baskerville; General Resolutions and Membership, Garry Augustine and Adrian Atizado; Legislation and Veterans Rights, Joseph Violante and Brian Austin; Constitution and Bylaws is Kenneth Musselman and Barry Jesinoski; Finance, Edward Barnshaw and Richard Patterson; Employment, Alfred Reynolds and Brian Lawrence; Hospital and Voluntary Services, Delphine Metcalf-Foster, Joy Ilem and Ed Hartman; Nomination of National Officers, Gene A. Murphy and Richard Marbes. The Committee Advisors, as you know, can pick up their Committee folders at the Resolution Coordinating Office located in the Cambridge Room on the Second Floor.

COMMANDER BARTON: Adjutant Wilson, are there any announcements?

ADJUTANT WILSON: As a reminder, the Committee meetings have already started. (Laughter) They're going to start as soon as you get there. They're scheduled to meet. Please go directly to the rooms where the Committees have been assigned.

The National Commander's Reception begins this evening at 7:00 o'clock in the Grand Ballroom. And, Commander, with your permission I would like to read the five names of the winners of the DAV jackets that I mentioned this morning. We're going to do this at the end of each session.

The names—and you have to be present to win. And for those of you if your name is called would you please come up on the stage and meet with Membership Director Baskerville who will assist you in receiving your gift—Henry Fleming, Junior, from New Jersey; Elaine Mitchell from New Mexico; Horace Roundtree from Virginia; Al Labelle from Wisconsin; and Edmond Stepnowski from Florida. That's all I have.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thanks, Art. Ladies and gentlemen, that concludes today's agenda. Please rise and I will ask Chaplain Bastille to lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN BASTILLE: I have a story. (Laughter) A man went to visit his friend. As he stepped inside his friend's house a large, dirty dog walked in with him. The house was beautiful, with white carpet and couches and was elegantly decorated.

The dog proceeded to mess on an expensive Oriental rug and jump up on the couch with his muddy paws. In the process he also overturned and broke a rare vase, all within five minutes. Exasperated the homeowner said, "You're going to have to do something about your dog." "My dog," the man exclaimed, "I thought it was your dog."

Let us pray. Oh, God, giver of all knowledge and protector of all that has meaning in our lives, be with us as we adjourn our meeting to prepare for our Commander's reception. Help us absorb all that we have learned and keep us safe until we gather again to do the work of the DAV. If we should blame or fault our neighbor, help us to be sure of our facts for things may not always be what they appear to be. In the name of the God who loves us all, Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

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

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 2:51 o'clock, p.m., on Saturday, August 11, 2007.)

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION

August 12, 2007

The Second Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans 86th National Convention convened in the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana, on Sunday morning, August 12, 2007, and was called to order at 9:32 o'clock, a.m., by National Commander Bradley S. Barton.

COMMANDER BARTON: Good morning. The Convention will please come to order. Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited followed by a hand salute.)

COMMANDER BARTON: I will now ask the Reverend Bastille to lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN BASTILLE: I have a story. (Laughter) A young second lieutenant at Fort Bragg—you cannot shut a chaplain up, especially on Sunday. (Laughter) A young second lieutenant at Fort Bragg discovered he had no change when he was about to buy a soft drink from the vending machine.

He stopped a passing private and asked him, "Do you have change for a dollar?" The private said cheerfully, "I think so. Let me take a look." The lieutenant drew himself up stiffly and said, "Soldier, that's no way to address an officer. We'll start all over again, do you have change for a dollar?" The private came to attention, saluted smartly and said, "No, sir." (Laughter)

Let us pray. It's working now. Let us pray. Lord God, author of all that has meaning and purpose in our lives, be with us as we meet as the Disabled American Veterans. As we gather to do the work of our organization help us as leaders to be confident in the future and dedicated to the special part we will play in it.

Oh, Lord, many disabled veterans count upon us to make the best choices we can for them. Help us not to disappoint them. Oh, Lord, as we meet this day should we get a little confused or impatient, then help us realize that there is more than one way to get the job done and our mission accomplished. But help us always remember that the job is also done by the folks we lead. In the name of the God who loves us all, Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

COMMANDER BARTON: As a reminder, please turn off your cell phones. I would like to call on the Credentials Committee for its report, Chairman Mary Bencivenga.

MS. BENCIVENGA: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

COMMANDER BARTON: Good morning.

MS. BENCIVENGA: Comrade Commander, Comrade Adjutant, state officers, and delegates, the Credentials Committee met this morning in Rosedown in the Chicago New Orleans Riverside Hotel. Roll call showed 1,091 delegates and 59 alternates. This is a partial report for informational purposes only and reflects the registration at the close of registration at 4:00 p.m., Saturday, August 11th, 2007.

At the present time we have 468 Chapters, 46 Departments, and 33 National Officers, 11 Past National Commanders, and for a total of 1,091 delegates and 59 alternates for a total vote of 9,715. This completes my partial report for the Credentials Committee.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Mary. I'd like to call on the Board of Directors' Treasurer, Ed Barnshaw, for a report.

TREASURER EDWARD BARNSHAW: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

TREASURER BARNSHAW: National Commander Barton, 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 30th, 2007.

The DAV's gross contributions from direct-mail fundraising through that date were \$59.6 million. By year's end we expect to mail 63.8 million pieces of fundraising mail and generate \$106.5 million in gross contributions.

Under the Department Fundraising Program distribution to Departments in December 2006 and June 2007 totaled \$3.3 million. Since the program began in 1994, \$56.2 million has been distributed to the 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.

As of June 2007 DAV received total support and revenue from all sources of \$98.5 million. Through June 2007 DAV had total expenditures of \$83.9 million, of which \$58.1 million was for service programs, an increase of 2.1 percent over the first six months in 2006. Over the same period expenditures for fundraising and administration increased by 8.8 percent due, primarily, to mailing 3.6 million more solicitation pieces.

DAV's unrestricted net assets have increased to \$291 million, a 6.9 increase from year-end 2006. As of June 30th, 2007, the value of General Fund long-term investment portfolio grew to \$309.3 million, an increase of 16.1 percent over the same period in 2006.

The financial stability of the Life Membership Fund has been an ongoing source of concern. Based primarily upon actions taken the last five years by this board and our predecessor, the National Finance Committee, we are pleased to report that at June the 30th, 2007, the Life Membership Fund reserve was \$69.2 million, a 10.10 percent, a 10.2 percent increase from last year.

At a projected earnings rate on investments of 6.66%, we estimate that the fund would be depleted by the year 2018, with 565,000 members remaining. I would like to thank National Adjutant Art Wilson and his staff for their hard work which makes this report possible.

Let me thank you, Commander Barton, 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. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Ed, for that informative report. At this time I would entertain a motion to adopt the treasurer's report.

DR. MARIANA M. RABA: Mic 1, Dr. Mariana Raba.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 1.

DR. RABA: Dr. Mariana Raba, District 16, Sacramento, California, so moves.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you.

MR. ROLAND A. PAQUETTE: Commander, Mic 2.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 2.

MR. PAQUETTE: Roland Paquette, Chapter 20 Adjutant, Fort Worth, Texas, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

Disabled American Veterans

*Financial Statements as of and for the
Year Ended December 31, 2006 and
Independent Auditors' Report*

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2006

ASSETS		LIABILITIES AND UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	
ASSETS:		LIABILITIES:	
Cash—interest bearing	\$ 3,790,099	Accounts payable	\$ 2,606,446
Receivables	777,067	Accrued expenses:	
Solicitation materials	2,822,438	Salaries and related taxes and withholdings	1,678,755
Prepaid expenses	5,436,757	Medical	762,748
Investments	308,208,505	Pension	9,418,387
Property and equipment—net	10,847,161	Postretirement benefits	38,856,974
Life Membership:		Deferred dues and service fees collected	
Cash—interest bearing	1,957,549	in advance	3,033,002
Receivables	55,964	Other liabilities	2,415,510
Investments	61,050,900	Life Membership:	
		Accounts payable	222,332
		Reserve for future distribution of life	
		membership dues	
			62,842,079
		Total liabilities	121,836,233
		UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	273,110,207
		TOTAL	\$394,946,440

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006

SUPPORT AND REVENUE:

Support:

Contributions received primarily from direct mail solicitations
Contributed services and facilities, primarily services
Bequests

Total support

Revenue:

Membership dues and fees
Income from investments—net
Realized investment gain
List royalties
Miscellaneous revenue

Total revenue

Total support and revenue

EXPENSES:

\$ 109,368,941	
34,331,612	
<hr/>	
6,177,056	
<hr/>	
149,877,609	

6,198,367	
8,395,102	
4,387,108	
637,826	
<hr/>	
447,280	
<hr/>	
20,065,683	

169,943,292	
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DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:	
Excess of support and revenue over expenses	\$ 14,962,492
Adjustments to reconcile excess of support and revenue over expenses to net cash provided by operating activities:	
Noncash contributions	(239,818)
Depreciation	2,958,593
Loss on disposal of property and equipment	41,711
Realized investment gains	(4,387,108)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:	
Receivables	408,925
Solicitation materials	434,985
Prepaid expenses	(2,211,018)
Accounts payable	(820,551)
Accrued expenses	(2,671,920)
Deferred dues and service fees and other	252,647
Additions to the life membership fund	11,048,635
Distributions from the life membership fund	<u>(11,252,212)</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>8,525,361</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:	
Payments for property and equipment	(2,028,222)
Proceeds from sales of property, plant, and equipment	60,341
Purchase of investments	(320,860,926)
Proceeds from the sale of investments	<u>314,705,006</u>
Net cash used in investing activities	(8,123,801)
NET INCREASE IN CASH	
CASH—Beginning of year	<u>5,346,088</u>
CASH—End of year	<u>\$ 5,747,648</u>

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS OF AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006

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, 2006, are summarized below:

General	Cost	Market Value	Unrealized Appreciation (Depreciation)
Cash equivalents	\$ 20,790,595	\$ 20,790,595	\$ -
Corporate bonds	79,201,654	78,923,167	(278,487)
U.S. Treasury obligations	22,167,186	21,763,500	(403,686)
Common stocks	139,917,959	164,254,704	24,336,745
Common stock funds	<u>12,912,533</u>	<u>21,480,965</u>	<u>8,568,432</u>
Subtotal	<u>\$ 274,989,927</u>	<u>307,212,931</u>	<u>\$ 32,223,004</u>
Interest and dividends receivable		<u>995,574</u>	
Total		<u>\$ 308,208,505</u>	
Life Membership			
Cash equivalents	\$ 2,705,869	\$ 2,705,869	\$ -
Corporate bonds	12,559,122	12,533,405	(25,717)
U.S. Treasury obligations	3,639,609	3,584,078	(55,531)
Common stocks	30,641,932	35,150,561	4,508,629
Common stock funds	<u>7,109,865</u>	<u>6,952,378</u>	<u>(157,487)</u>
Subtotal	<u>\$ 56,656,397</u>	<u>60,926,291</u>	<u>\$ 4,269,894</u>
Interest and dividends receivable		<u>124,609</u>	
Total		<u>\$ 61,050,900</u>	

Investment income is composed of interest and dividend income of \$9,555,922, net of fees of \$1,160,820.

Property and Equipment—Property and equipment are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation, and at December 31, 2006, are composed of the following:

	Cost	Accumulated Depreciation	Net Book Value
Land and improvements	\$ 974,053	\$ 313,127	\$ 660,926
Buildings and improvements	10,340,595	5,828,385	4,512,210
Machinery and other equipment	20,981,180	15,613,611	5,367,569
Construction in process	<u>306,456</u>		<u>306,456</u>
Total	<u>\$ 32,602,284</u>	<u>\$ 21,755,123</u>	<u>\$ 10,847,161</u>

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 the portion of those hours, that are donated to veterans at medical facilities of the VA, are tabulated. Of the 2,367,447 hours accounted for in 2006—1,814,906 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 \$32,740,904. 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 552,541 hours—valued at \$9,967,840, 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—DAV has been recognized by the IRS as an organization exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (the "Code"). Furthermore, the IRS has determined that donors may deduct contributions to DAV as provided in section 170 of the Code.

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 2006, DAV incurred joint costs of \$48,738,761 for informational materials and activities that included fund-raising appeals. Of those costs, \$21,932,443 was allocated to public awareness outreach (program services) and \$26,806,319 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 2006 in the reserve for future distribution of membership dues:

Balance—January 1, 2006	<u>\$58,107,139</u>
Additions:	
Membership dues received	5,081,764
Earnings on invested assets, net	1,838,706
Gain on sale of investments	4,424,607
National Organization Support	4,000,000
Other Income	<u>128,165</u>
Total	<u>15,473,242</u>
Distribution of membership dues:	
National Headquarters	6,196,624
Local Chapters	2,522,655
State Departments	<u>2,532,933</u>
Total	<u>11,252,212</u>
Increase in unrealized appreciation of investments	<u>513,910</u>
Balance—December 31, 2006	<u>\$62,842,079</u>

Earnings on invested assets is comprised of interest and dividends of \$1,909,058, net of fees paid of \$70,352.

4. PENSION PLAN AND POSTRETIREMENT BENEFITS

Pension Plan—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 2006, 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.

Other Postretirement Benefit Plans—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 DAV adopted Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 158, "Employers' Accounting for Defined Benefit Pension and Other Postretirement Plans — an amendment of FASB Statements No. 87, 88, 106, and 132(R)," as of December 31, 2006. SFAS No. 158 requires full balance sheet recognition of the net overfunded or underfunded status of each pension and other postretirement plan. The measurement date for the plans is December 31, 2006. Summarized information for the plans is as follows:

	Pension	Other Postretirement Benefits
As of December 31, 2006:		
Accumulated benefit obligation	<u>\$ 71,780,839</u>	
Projected benefit obligation	<u>\$ 81,772,334</u>	
Accumulated postretirement benefit obligation (APBO)	<u>\$ 38,856,974</u>	
Fair value of plan assets	<u>72,353,947</u>	
Funded status recognized	<u><u>\$ (9,418,387)</u></u>	<u><u>\$ (38,856,974)</u></u>

The following indicates the incremental effect of applying SFAS No. 158 on incremental line items in the consolidated balance sheets for the pension and other postretirement plan:

	Adjustments		After Application of Statement 158
	Before Application of Statement 158	Pension	
Prepaid pension asset	\$ 22,224,087	\$ (22,224,087)	\$ -
Accrued pension		9,418,387	9,418,387
Accrued postretirement benefits	41,548,287	(2,691,313)	38,856,974
Unrestricted net assets	302,061,368	(31,642,474)	273,110,207

Prior to the adoption of FAS 158, the DAV would have recorded an increase to their unrestricted net assets of \$28,445,432 in 2006. The adoption of FAS 158 resulted in a decrease in the DAV's unrestricted net assets of \$28,951,161, resulting in a net decrease to the DAV's unrestricted net assets of \$503,729.

Amounts not yet recognized as a component of periodic pension cost at December 31, 2006:

	Pension	Other Postretirement Benefits
Prior transition obligation	\$ -	\$ 2,444,004
Prior service cost (benefit)	(985,581)	745,729
Net actuarial (gain)/loss	<u>32,628,055</u>	<u>(5,881,046)</u>
Amounts recognized as reduction (increase) in unrestricted net assets	<u><u>\$ 31,642,474</u></u>	<u><u>\$ (2,691,313)</u></u>

The estimated net actuarial loss and prior service cost for the pension plan that will be amortized from unrestricted net assets and into net periodic benefit cost in 2007 are \$1,900,000 and (\$673,722), respectively. The estimated net actuarial gain, transition obligation and prior service cost for the postretirement plan that will be amortized from unrestricted net assets and into net periodic benefit cost in 2007 are (\$132,846), \$408,998 and \$32,034, respectively.

	Pension	Other Postretirement Benefits
For the year ended December 31, 2006:		
Benefit expense (including pension settlement cost of \$6,685,008 related to lump sum payment option under the plan)	\$ 10,982,081	\$ 2,498,160
Employer contribution	14,900,000	1,513,042
Plan participants' contributions		158,129
Benefits paid	(13,759,254)	(1,671,241)
Weighted-average rate assumptions used for the December 31 valuation:		
For year-end benefit obligation:		
Discount rate	6.00 %	5.50 %
Rate of compensation increase	3.50 %	3.50 %
For annual benefit cost:		
Discount rate	5.75 %	5.75 %
Expected return on plan assets	8.25 %	n/a
Rate of compensation increase	3.50 %	3.50 %

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 13.0% in 2006 to 5.0% in 2014, after which the trend rate is expected to stabilize.

The DAV expects to contribute \$6,900,000 to its pension plan and \$1,482,913 to its other postretirement benefits plan in 2007.

The DAV's pension plan investment allocation at December 31, 2006, is as follows:

Asset Category	Percentage of Plan Assets at Year-End
Equity securities	58.4 %
Fixed Income securities	33.7
Cash and cash equivalents	7.9
Total	100 %

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 0.5%–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.

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
2007	\$ 12,432,049
2008	7,077,301
2009	10,568,560
2010	12,102,673
2011	6,783,194
2012-2016	29,671,906

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 *Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003*. This expected subsidy offset the employer's share of the cost of the underlying postretirement prescription drug coverage on which the subsidy is based.

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
2007	\$ 1,619,222	\$ (136,309)	\$ 1,482,913
2008	1,773,502	(150,989)	1,622,513
2009	1,900,090	(167,056)	1,733,034
2010	2,073,615	(178,134)	1,895,481
2011	2,216,600	(191,001)	2,025,599
2012-2016	12,040,476	(1,318,027)	10,722,449

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 2006 were \$1,448,443 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, 2006, net assets of the Foundation were \$69,149,092. During 2006, DAV provided the Foundation with the use of DAV personnel, facilities and equipment. For the personnel services, DAV

charged the Foundation \$215,359. Facilities and equipment are provided by DAV at no charge. Additionally, in 2006, DAV contributed \$82,775 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, 2006, the Foundation owed \$146,129 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”) has been recognized by the IRS as 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 2006, DAV provided the Trust with the use of DAV personnel, facilities and equipment. For the personnel services, DAV charged the Trust \$185,382. Facilities and equipment are provided by DAV at no charge. At December 31, 2006, the Trust owed \$171,550 to DAV which is recorded as a receivable in the accompanying statement of financial position. In 2006, the Trust allocated \$300,000 to the DAV in support of DAV’s Mobile Service Office and Transition Service Assistance Programs.

Disabled Veterans’ LIFE Memorial Foundation, Inc.—Disabled Veterans’ LIFE Memorial Foundation, Inc. (“DVLMF”) has been recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt entity which was established in 1998. The DVLMF is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. During 2006, the DAV donated \$72,875 to the DVLMF. During 2006, the DAV purchased books from the DVLMF in the amount of \$87,881.

* * * * *

***Disabled American
Veterans Auxiliary
National Headquarters***

*Financial Statements as of and for the Year
Ended December 31, 2006, and Independent
Auditors' Report*



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INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

To the National Finance Committee of
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, 2006, 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 2005 financial statements and, in our report dated April 12, 2006, 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, 2006, 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 12, 2007

Member of
Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

**STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2006 (WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 2005)**

ASSETS	2006	2005	LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	2006	2005
GENERAL ASSETS			LIABILITIES		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 660,929	\$ 816,737	Accounts payable—DAV National Headquarters	\$ 164,698	\$ 35,228
Investments	6,051,436	5,725,597	Contributions distributable to state departments	4,174	6,258
Accrued interest receivable	52,638	34,697	Accrued vacation and sick leave pay	395,829	432,260
Materials and supplies	77,601	100,920	Deferred membership fees	10,182	10,414
Repaid expenses	22,026	35,110	Other		
Other assets	11,455	11,362	Life Membership:		
Accounts receivable from the DAV	33,876		Cash overdues	28,500	673,097
SERVICE PROGRAM ASSETS—			Reserve for future distribution of life		
Cash and cash equivalents	382,472	379,404	membership dues	5,881,196	6,015,413
DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAM ASSETS—			Total liabilities	6,484,579	7,332,513
Cash and cash equivalents	13,168	12,518	NET ASSETS		
EDUCATION LOAN PROGRAM ASSETS			Unrestricted—General	6,335,078	6,080,390
Cash and cash equivalents	1,074,160	1,086,094	Temporarily restricted—Service Program	382,472	379,404
Notes receivable (less allowance of \$2,925 in 2006 and 2005)	261,402	217,609	Temporarily restricted—Disaster Relief Program	13,168	12,518
LIFE MEMBERSHIP ASSETS:			Permanently restricted—Education Loan Program	1,335,562	1,303,703
Accrued interest receivable	59,339	49,472	Total net assets	8,066,280	7,776,015
Investments	5,850,357	6,639,038			
TOTAL	\$14,550,859	\$15,108,558	TOTAL	\$14,550,859	\$15,108,558

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006 (WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 2005)

	2006			2005		
	Unrestricted General	Temporarily Restricted Service Program	Temporarily Restricted— Disaster Relief Program	Permanently Restricted— Education Loan Program	Permanently Restricted— Disaster Relief Program	Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:						
Admistrative and general	\$ 238,804	\$ 10,861	\$ 6,698	\$ 267,563	\$ 501,966	
Life membership dues	521,072	5,735	650	521,072	547,197	
Contributions	245,755			293,443		
Contributed facilities	25,300			25,300		
Sale of membership items—less related direct costs of \$56,665	(12,822)			(11,822)		
Concerts and meetings	18,450			17,872		
Conventions	21,151			21,340		
Investment income	307,628	6,394	18,664	312,056	355,555	
Net assets released from restrictions	19,623	(19,623)		302,604		
Other	26,379	(299)	650		15,093	
Total revenues	1,221,210	3,068		26,080	1,611,196	
EXPENSES:						
Salaries and wages	399,642			399,642	395,755	
Employee benefits	115,803			115,803	139,561	
Depreciation of state, departmental, and institutional expenses	84,818			84,818	88,599	
Professional fees	105,307			105,307	136,664	
Postage and mailing	30,472			30,472	31,716	
Conferences and meetings	75,128			75,128	76,772	
Expenses of national convention	93,066			93,066	85,541	
Printing, stationery, and office supplies	28,372			28,372	33,286	
Entertainment, community and officers	19,166			19,166	25,300	
Contributed facilities	25,300			25,300		
Passage	36,010			36,010	45,446	
Travel	41,849			41,849	40,345	
Professional fees	26,000			26,000	24,875	
Service program benefits	19,623			19,623	25,355	
YATs, memberships, and other awards	19,555			19,555	14,175	
Other	212,995			212,995	144,175	
Total expenses	1,375,506				1,360,941	
EXCESS OF SUPPORT AND REVENUE OVER EXPENSES					1,375,506	
CHANGE IN UNREALIZED APPRECIATION (DEPRECIATION) OF INVESTMENT						
Change in net assets	45,704	3,068	650		31,859	81,281
NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	208,984					208,984
NET ASSETS—End of year	254,688	3,068	650		31,859	45,745
Change in net assets	6,080,290	27,404	12,518		290,265	296,000
NET ASSETS	\$ 6,335,078	\$ 382,472	\$ 13,168		\$ 1,335,562	\$ 7,776,015

See notes to financial statements.

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006 (WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 2005)**

	2006	2005
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Change in net assets	\$ 290,265	\$ 296,000
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to cash provided by (used in) operating activities:		
Permanently restricted contributions and interest income	(31,859)	(26,944)
Change in unrealized appreciation in investments	(208,984)	(45,745)
Uncollectible education loan expense		(2,950)
Change in assets and liabilities:		
Accrued interest receivable	(27,808)	(6,532)
Materials and supplies	23,319	24,417
Prepaid expenses, other assets, and accounts receivable	(20,885)	16,077
Accounts payable	(35,228)	8,695
Contributions distributable to state departments	4,825	9,543
Deferred membership fees	(36,431)	(176,758)
Reserve for future distribution of life membership dues	(134,217)	44,137
Other liabilities	(2,316)	(9,729)
Total adjustments	<u>(469,584)</u>	<u>(165,789)</u>
Net cash (used in) provided by operating activities	<u>(179,319)</u>	<u>130,211</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Increase in general fund investments	(116,855)	(78,836)
Decrease (increase) in Life Membership investments	788,681	(189,564)
Education loans	(67,675)	(36,640)
Collections from repayment of education loans	<u>23,882</u>	<u>13,130</u>
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	<u>628,033</u>	<u>(291,910)</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES—Permanently restricted education fund contributions and interest income		
	<u>31,859</u>	<u>26,944</u>
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS:		
Beginning of year	<u>480,573</u>	<u>(134,755)</u>
End of year	<u>\$ 2,102,229</u>	<u>\$ 1,621,656</u>

See notes to financial statements.

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

**NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AS OF AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006**

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 2005 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 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 fair value of General investments in securities and the net unrealized gain (loss) at December 31, 2006 are summarized below:

	Cost	Market Value	Unrealized Net Gain (Loss)
Money market investments	\$ 223,835	\$ 223,835	
Corporate bonds	4,872,659	4,865,668	\$ (6,991)
U.S. Treasury obligations	114,654	127,520	12,866
Mutual funds	<u>787,423</u>	<u>834,413</u>	<u>46,990</u>
Total	\$ 5,998,571	\$ 6,051,436	\$ 52,865

The components of investment return reported for the year ended December 31 are as follows:

	2006			
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
Investment income (dividends and interest)	\$ 306,441	\$ 6,394	\$ 18,064	\$ 330,899
Net realized gains on investments	1,187			1,187
Change in unrealized gains and (losses) on investments	<u>208,984</u>	—	—	<u>208,984</u>
Total investment return	\$ 516,612	\$ 6,394	\$ 18,064	\$ 541,070

The cost and fair value of Life Membership investments in securities and the net unrealized gain (loss) at December 31, 2006 are summarized below:

	Cost	Market Value	Unrealized Net Gain (Loss)
Money market investments	\$ 241,322	\$ 241,322	
Corporate bonds	5,068,024	5,050,378	\$ (17,646)
U.S. Treasury obligations	199,641	199,093	(548)
Mutual funds	<u>393,250</u>	<u>359,564</u>	<u>(33,686)</u>
Total	\$ 5,902,237	\$ 5,850,357	\$ (51,880)

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 \$18,066 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 2006 in the reserve for future distribution of life membership dues:

Balance—January 1, 2006	<u>\$6,015,413</u>
Additions:	
Membership dues received	256,246
Earnings on invested assets	272,179
Change in unrealized appreciation of investments	20,218
Total	<u>548,643</u>
Deductions:	
Dues to National Headquarters	521,197
Dues to Local units	32,226
Dues to State Departments	58,001
Loss on sale of investments	55,234
Investment fee	12,662
Other expenses	3,540
Total	<u>682,860</u>
Balance—December 31, 2006	<u>\$5,881,196</u>

5. DONOR RESTRICTED NET ASSETS

Education Loan Program—Donations from individuals and amounts received from each unit (local chapters) as a mandate for educational loans are recorded 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 \$2,500 per year for a maximum of five 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 Programs 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 \$1,000 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 2006, DAV charged the DAV Auxiliary \$115,803 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 2006, 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 2006, 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. In addition, the DAV receives contributions on behalf of the DAV Auxiliary and subsequently remits them to the DAV Auxiliary.

* * * * *

COMMANDER BARTON: The DAV receives a lot of support for our mission to build better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families and some of those helping are the stars of Major League Baseball.

This year as part of our DAV Day at the Ballpark program we produced a remarkable new video that is being shown at ballparks and other venues around the nation. "Heroes Helping Heroes" is about the players who are devoting their time and earnings on behalf of our newest generation of wounded warriors.

Barry Zito of the San Francisco Giants has donated more than \$500,000 in direct aid to wounded veterans as part of his "Strikeouts for Troops" program. Mike Maroth of the Saint Louis Cardinals is a regular in the DAV Celebrity Entertainment Program.

And other stars of Major League Baseball are doing much to continue the DAV's mission to honor and to remember the service of disabled veterans. When "Heroes Helping Heroes" was shown in Phoenix this year at a DAV Day at the Ballpark game, fans stood silently in tribute to disabled veterans and gave a standing ovation to the production.

In Wilmington, Delaware, it was shown three times during a DAV game sponsored by the Department of Delaware. This video is about our current generation of heroes who are being helped by the stars of baseball and the DAV and includes excerpts from our inspiring game for wounded veterans last spring. Please enjoy some very special moments on the diamond.

(Whereupon, the film "Heroes Helping Heroes" was presented.)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you. I know you all enjoyed this program of compassion and sacrifice as much as I did. Since just before World War II the USO has been the bridge between the American people and the men and women who serve in uniform.

For more than a half century USO has also served our nation's disabled veterans, giving them hope in their suffering and reminding them of the way of life for which they have sacrificed. Leading this great American entity is the Honorable Ned Powell, president and CEO of USO Worldwide Operations.

Mr. Powell is a former Navy Yeoman. Using his GI Bill Benefits after serving he earned his MBA from Washington and Lee University, his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Following a broad range of experience as an entrepreneur and university educator, Mr. Powell was named by President Clinton to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Financial Management and subsequently to Deputy Secretary for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

He was named president of the USO at the beginning of 2002 and has honorably continued his service to our military men and women, our veterans, and the nation. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Ned Powell. (Applause)

THE HONORABLE EDWARD A. "NED" POWELL: Commander, Adjutant, thank you very much. It's good to be here. Just a couple of quick questions for the audience, some of which will be kind of foolish but on the other hand it helps me a little bit, how many people here have experienced a USO somewhere in their career? (Applause) Good. I hope they took good care of you; otherwise, it could be a real short speech.

I wanted to share a couple of things with you this morning. When I first came to the VA, President Clinton had asked me to work in the financial management side and I didn't have that much contact with veterans, until, it turns out, the Winter Sports Clinic and the special programs part fell under my purview.

My wife and I had a chance to go out at that time to Crested Butte and in many ways, much like your baseball program, it was one of those transformational experiences.

Watching Chad—I know you're here—Chad Colley—we saw him last night—and others bomb down the ski hills, watch the new veterans to the program come and change so completely from the beginning to the end, and seeing the energy and the dynamism of that program really touched us.

I also got a chance to know someone I think that you know very well by the name of Jesse Brown. And Jesse taught me a lot. He taught me a lot about saying thank you and caring for this community. One of the aspects, however, that always bothered me just a little bit—not a lot but just a little—is that what we were doing at the VA was really kind of after, after something happened, after service.

And I always felt it was important to take individuals like yourselves who have served this country to let you know upfront. And when we had the opportunity to go to the USO we had that opportunity. We get a chance to make sure that our men and women in uniform understand and know that we care for them.

General Wayand I think, as many of you know, was the Chief of Staff of the Army during a lot of Vietnam. And he's written fairly extensively about how the American military—he uses the term "Army," of course because of his affiliation but he really is talking about the military—belonged to the American people.

My goal is to make sure that our men and women in uniform, whether they be at Fort Bliss, Fort Drum, Bagram Air Base, Camp Victory, in Korea, know that people back here, one, know about them and, most especially, care about them. We, like you, have seen a tremendous outpouring of support by the American people for our men and women in military service.

My goal here this morning, one, is to thank you. You have been good supporters and staunch partners with us. Many of you volunteer at USO activities, particularly the homecomings, whether they be in Atlanta or Dallas or wherever they might be.

You help us with any number of activities and for that we are grateful. That's the continuity of service that all of you are proud of. I really don't have a lot to say beyond that. I do want you to recognize, if nothing else, we are bookends on the same shelf.

We take care of the military in the beginning. We provide that touch of home. We provide a safe environment. We provide a reminder that people here care. You take care of those who need us most, after their service. And that is a remarkable and valuable and extraordinary achievement and for that I offer you my greatest congratulations.

And, lastly, I would just like to show you what we do today. We all recognize the passing of Bob Hope. We are still alive and very well. We still do entertainment. We do it globally. But most particularly we touch our military family every day all over the world in small and wonderful ways.

And the one thing I want to leave you with is we are absolutely committed to fulfilling our only mission. We only have one, and that is to make sure that we deliver the most powerful message we can and that is one of thank you, the thank you to our men and women from a grateful nation.

(Whereupon, a film about the USO was presented.)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you for being here today, Mr. Powell and thank you for the fine work of the USO at VA hospitals around the country and just behind the front lines in Iraq and Afghanistan. (Applause)

A program that is very dear to the DAV is the plan for the American Veterans' Disabled for LIFE Memorial. Today, we have with us Victor Biggs, the Executive Director of the Disabled Veterans' for LIFE Memorial Foundation.

Victor is a passionate advocate for the memorial, disabled veterans and the Foundation's mission. He was selected to head the organization because of his exemplary record of integrity and leadership in the nonprofit sector.

Throughout his career, Victor has helped raise millions of dollars to provide outreach, education and training to prepare thousands of people, including disabled veterans, to become more self-sufficient and acquire permanent housing. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in a warm welcome to Victor Biggs, Executive Director of the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation. (Applause)

MR. VICTOR BIGGS: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MR. BIGGS: Thank you, Commander Barton, for that kind introduction. Appreciate it. I would also like to thank our Foundation's chairman, Lois Pope, and our national, your National Adjutant, Art Wilson, who is also the Foundation president for his continuous support and encouragement in raising this, the funding needed for this important memorial, which is yours.

Also, I'd like to remember a great champion of the DAV and also former Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the late Jesse Brown. Together Jesse Brown, Art Wilson, and Lois Pope established our Foundation.

And my purpose here today is to update you on the progress that we are making at the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation in building your memorial. Let me also recognize two board members that are here with us today. They are Ken Musselmann of California and Gene Murphy of South Dakota. (Applause)

I'm sure that Lois Pope, Art Wilson, Gene Murphy and Ken Musselmann and our other board members would want me to make a point about the American Veterans' Disabled for LIFE Memorial Foundation today and that is this is your memorial.

It is uniquely yours. It belongs to the men and women in this room and the millions that you represent around the country, those that made enormous sacrifices. And this memorial will honor you forever. This memorial is about you. It's about no one else.

On the legislative front we have some good news. The memorial's authority expires in the next month but our reauthorization to extend that authority has passed the House unanimously. It's now in the Senate and it has passed through committee and it's moving towards a vote.

Also, you may have noticed the article in this month's edition of the DAV Magazine regarding the Memorial's Commemorative Coin Bill. It also passed the House unanimously and is waiting on action by the Senate. We are confident and have good authority that both the reauthorization and the Coin Bill will be enacted in mid to late September.

The commemorative coins will generate \$3.5 million or more in revenues for this needed memorial. And we deeply appreciate the support from National and District officers in getting this and other legislative issues passed. We also need your continued assistance and support in other areas.

Let me briefly touch on our fundraising efforts to date. We have raised more than \$20 million in pledges and commitments towards the design and construction budgets. That represents two-thirds of our projected requirements. Our staff and consultants are actively seeking grants and donations from the corporate community foundations and also from philanthropic individuals.

Yesterday, one of those foundations and companies, the Ford Motor Company, was represented here. They are also a major supporter of your memorial. We're also approaching different segments of the Major League sports committees and those associated with support for military related causes.

We're all deeply grateful for everything that the DAV and the Auxiliary have done to sustain this project at the National, District and Chapter levels. I want to say thank you to each DAV and Auxiliary member and to their family members who have contributed so much to this memorial.

I had a conversation yesterday with one of the Chapters and he has challenged at our booth many, many other Chapters to raise a sizeable amount and make a sacrificial contribution. His Chapter is committing \$1,000 and you're probably heard that number going around. Well, that came from the Delray Beach Chapter and we want to thank Mike for his help there also.

And to those of you who have not yet joined this cause let me ask, will you join Mrs. Lois Pope and Art Wilson in this great endeavor? Will you join the countless other DAV Auxiliary members who stand at their sides? And will you also join in this shared vision of Jesse Brown?

I know your answer is yes, yes because this memorial is yours. Now I'd like to relinquish the podium to the memorial's project executive Mr. Barry Owenby. He will be giving you an update on the memorial design and construction.

In his previous life with the federal government Barry was the project executive for the National World War II Memorial on the Mall in Washington. Please help me welcome Mr. Barry Owenby.

MR. BARRY OWENBY: Thank you, Victor. National Commander, Adjutant, ladies and gentlemen, it's a privilege this morning to join Victor Biggs in representing the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation.

I feel very honored to be able to speak to you about the progress that we're making towards the design completion and the final construction of the memorial. And I hope yesterday's virtual tour was both informative and encouraging for you.

On behalf of the project team I want you to know that we are committed to two fundamental objectives, first to produce a memorial that properly commemorates the enduring courage of the disabled veteran through our nation's history and, secondly, to build that memorial sooner rather than later.

I'd like to briefly let you know where we are in the design completion and the construction planning. As you may recall from the video, we have both an approved site and an approved design concept.

In November of last year the United States Congress transferred control of our site from the District of Columbia to the National Parks Service. And we have ongoing coordination with the Parks Service as well as the architect of the Capitol.

We have substantially completed schematic design and we're moving towards design development. And by that I mean we are determining the specific quotations that will be engraved on the glass panels. We're determining the nature of the sculpture elements, the integration of all the art work and the engraving, the fountain and pool refinements, landscape planning plans, and finish details.

We have had discussions, preliminary discussions, with three top-rated construction firms, all with proven track records of building prominent national memorials. And they are all eager to be selected and to start work.

When Congress enacted the land transfer last November, specifically for this memorial, our site became more useful and suitable for its purpose but there was some reconfiguration required for the bordering streets. The Foundation agreed to pay for the design necessary for that street realignment and our engineers this month are completing that design work.

We are very hopeful that the funding required to construct this street realignment will be forthcoming from the Congress so that we can break ground for the memorial in 2009 and have dedication of the memorial in 2010.

We have a way to go but I want to assure you that we are well on the road to finally and permanently establishing this overdue tribute to America's disabled veterans. Thank you for having me this morning. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Victor and Barry, for that report. It is my pleasure now to introduce a gentleman who has helped guide the DAV Airshow Outreach Program for the past five years. Mike McCabe is the owner of AirSupport LLC, a top-flight air show and special event planning and production company.

Mike and B-25 pilot Larry Kelley, along with all of our DAV Flight Team members perform a remarkable job of promoting the DAV at air show events all across the country. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Mike McCabe. (Applause)

MR. MIKE McCABE: Good morning. My name is Mike McCabe. In 2003 our company, AirSupport LLC, had the privilege of teaming with DAV to launch one of the most successful DAV outreach programs ever.

Sixty-five years ago 16 B-25 Mitchell Bombers launched off an aircraft carrier to conduct the famed "Doolittle Raid" over Japan. The mission proved to be one of the most galvanizing events of the Second World War. The B-25 became a symbol of American strength and determination.

Today, alongside DAV, the B-25 continues to symbolize strength and determination. In its modern-day mission the B-25 represents the DAV at air shows throughout the country. With the help of DAV local Chapter volunteers the Aviation Outreach Program serves as a high-visibility platform from which DAV shares its message of support and service to America's disabled veterans.

Now approaching its fifth season, the program takes place at as many as 20 air shows per year. It reaches out to tens of thousands of people at each event and has received significant local, regional and national media attention.

As you may know, the B-25 Panchito is currently parked on Spanish Plaza in front of the hotel. You might wonder how a 70-year old World War II bomber could have possibly made its way to this address.

On Wednesday morning Panchito began its journey from the Lakefront Airport here in New Orleans to Spanish Plaza via the Mississippi River. The process, which took the entire day, was captured on tape for a documentary that we'll show on national television later this year. We are pleased to be able to share a preview of that documentary with you this morning. Here are some highlights from the journey.

(Whereupon, a film of Panchito being moved up the Mississippi River was shown.)

MR. McCABE: As you can see, this is a remarkable story and we expect that the completed documentary will serve as a very effective tool to tell the story of DAV and its mission of service to disabled veterans and their families. The production of that documentary is continuing as we speak.

You may have noticed some of the videographers working here this morning, and the team from Sleeping Dog Productions, Scott Guyette, Staff Sergeant Chris Hibdon, and John Tennyson, right here. Guys, if you give the crowd a wave. Excellent work. (Applause) So everybody is smiling. You may be on TV. (Laughter)

What you have seen in the last several minutes clearly demonstrates the strength and success of the DAV Aviation Outreach Program. I'm proud to be a part of that program that promotes a cause so critical and timely. The team that helps make each outreach event possible is here with us today.

Please allow me to introduce to you the owners of the B-25 who have been with this program since its beginning, Mr. Larry Kelley and Ms. Laurie Thompson Kelley. (Applause)

Also with us today are the members of the AirSupport team. We are all enormously proud of this program and grateful to DAV for the opportunity to provide service to this organization. May I introduce our team: AirSupport DAV Aviation Event Outreach Coordinators, Marana Welsh; Justin "Bravo" Groudin and Liz Johnson. (Applause)

It has been our pleasure to work with many of you at air shows around the country and we look forward to continuing this great program. As you may know, at the B-25 introduction

event on Friday evening we were honored to receive an F-15 flyby by the Louisiana Air National Guard.

I'd like to acknowledge some of the folks who helped make that possible. First of all, the pilots of the demo aircraft who are not with us here this morning—they are actually standing alert duty—that is Lieutenant Colonel Jack "Buster" Heideman and Lieutenant Colonel Rick "Tico" Pierce. A round of applause for those gentlemen, please. (Applause)

Representing the 159th Fighter Wing here today with us are Major Jim "Roper" Worley and Lieutenant Quinton "God" Lakowski. (Applause) Gentlemen, thank you for your support this week and thank you to everyone in your unit for your continuing service.

Lastly, we're going to introduce the newest edition to the DAV Aviation Outreach Program. It is a limited edition B-25 lapel pin. Each of these pins has been flown in Panchito over New Orleans and then traveled with her upriver on the barge to this Convention.

The pins are available at the DAV store in the Marlborough Room. All the funds from the sale of these high-quality collector pins will go to support the services of DAV. I thank you again for the opportunity to share the highlights of the DAV Aviation Event Outreach Program.

Larry, Laurie and the AirSupport team will be here throughout the Convention and we would love to talk with you about our efforts. Please stop out and visit us at the airplane. We love to show her off and we love to share her story. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thanks, Mike, and to your first-rate staff for the outstanding airborne efforts keeping the American public informed of our mission and services. Experience, intelligence and wise leadership are the hallmarks of our organization's management team. And Dave Gorman certainly embodies all of those qualities and more, much more.

Dave served with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, the famed "Sky Soldiers" of the Vietnam War. After being severely wounded he was discharged from the Army in 1970, and immediately joined the DAV.

Dave was appointed Executive Director of our Washington Headquarters in 1995. His responsibilities include oversight of our National Service, Legislative, and Voluntary Service Programs. He is the organization's principal spokesman before Congress, the White House, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Dave enjoys a reputation as one of the nation's foremost experts on VA's complex array of services and programs designed to assist American veterans and their families. His comprehensive understanding of the VA's inner workings has resulted in the appointment to many VA and congressionally-chartered advisory committees, as well as many ad hoc groups, seeking ways to better serve America's veterans.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce to the National Convention our Washington Headquarters Executive Director, Dave Gorman. (Applause)

(The following written annual report was submitted by David W. Gorman, Executive Director, DAV Washington Headquarters:)

**Annual Report of
David W. Gorman
Executive Director
Washington Headquarters
to the 86th National Convention
of the
Disabled American Veterans
New Orleans, Louisiana
August 12, 2007**

National Commander Barton, distinguished guests, and delegates to the 86th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans:

As Executive Director of National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, it is truly an honor and a privilege to present this annual report to the membership.

First, I want thank National Commander Bradley S. Barton 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 Commander Barton has been a powerful motivational force for the DAV, not only as our National Commander, but earning the respect of government officials in Washington and the admiration of countless people all across this great country of ours.

He has been a steadfast advocate for our cause, and all 2.6 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 amazing 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 organization. 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 organization 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 Richard E. Patterson and his great staff and our employees in Cold Spring, Kentucky.

Auxiliary National Commander Donna Tanner 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. Randy and his staff have done a remarkable job leading our corps of National Service Officers (NSOs) in the 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

Our largest endeavor in fulfilling that mission is our National Service Program. In 88 offices throughout the United States and in Puerto Rico, the DAV employs a corps of approximately 260 NSOs and 25 Transition Service Officers (TSOs), who represent veterans and their families with claims for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, and other government agencies. Veterans need not be DAV members to take advantage of this outstanding assistance, which is provided free of charge. With outlays of over \$42 million in 2006, these direct hands-on services make up the largest item in the DAV's budget for program services. Between January 1, 2006, and December 31, 2006, our NSOs and TSOs represented nearly a quarter of a million veterans and their families in their claims for VA benefits, obtaining more than \$3.2 billion for them in new and retroactive benefits.

The Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) is the highest level of appeal at the VA responsible for the final decision with respect to entitlement to veterans' benefits. About 94 percent of the claims before the Board involve disability compensation issues. DAV's highly skilled National Appeals Officers (NAOs) provide an invaluable service to appellants in the preparation of informal hearing presentations, and by conducting formal hearings for BVA review. DAV maintains the largest staff of any advocacy group, representing more than 32 percent of all cases decided by the BVA in 2006.

During 2006, the DAV maintained its leading position among veterans' service organizations representing veterans and their dependents before the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC). The DAV Judicial Appeals Office filed over 230 appeals in 2006 and continues to achieve outstanding results for veterans and their dependents. The DAV continues to identify decisions of the Board that should be appealed to the CAVC. During this reporting year, the Judicial Appeals Office reviewed over 6,700 Board decisions. The DAV remains one of the few organizations that take this initiative to ensure wrongful denials are overturned.

The National Service Department is fortunate to have the cooperation, support, and assistance of Department and Chapter Service Officers (DSOs/CSOs) from around the nation. In 2002, we initiated the Department and Chapter Service Officer Certification Training Program. This program guarantees the vitality and growth of our local service programs, as well as an environment where Hospital Service Coordinators, Department and Chapter Service Officers, and volunteers work together for the common goal of service to America's disabled veterans. In 2006 alone, the DAV provided training to and certified over 1,271 DSOs/CSOs in 35 states.

Information Seminars are another outreach initiative offered by the National Service Department. During 2006, our NSOs conducted 45 Information Seminars at various DAV Chapters around the country with over 2,108 individuals in attendance. Information Seminars not only provide the opportunity for veterans to discuss VA benefits with DAV National Service Officers in their own community; they are a great way for local DAV Chapters to recruit new members and encourage Chapter grassroots involvement.

The DAV has reached a milestone in outreach in the local community by having NSOs offer services at various air shows throughout the nation. Other community-based outreach programs include involvement with Major League Baseball, NASCAR, Golden Corral Military Appreciation Day, and other events. We also expanded our outreach efforts to the National Football League and presented autographed player cards.

For those service members making the all-important transition back into civilian life, the DAV participates in formal Transition Assistance Programs and Disability Transition Assistance Programs. DAV's 25 Transition Service Officers provide benefits counseling and assistance to service members filing initial claims for VA benefits at more than 80 military installations throughout the nation. By filing compensation claims at separation centers where service medical records and examination facilities are readily available, DAV is able to provide better, more prompt service to these future veterans. Over the last year, TSOs conducted over 1,847 formal presentations to approximately 92,115 transitioning service members. During that same time, our TSOs filed more than 34,589 claims for VA benefits. In addition, NSOs provided representation before Physical Evaluation Boards, Discharge Review Boards, and Boards for Correction of Military Records. Counsel and representation was provided for active duty service members during their transition through the military's Disability Evaluation System. In 2006, DAV devoted \$1,527,400 to this program.

By literally putting our service offices on the road, assisting veterans where they live, the DAV is increasing accessibility to the benefits our nation provides to its veterans. This outreach effort generates a considerable amount of claims work from those veterans who may not otherwise have the opportunity to seek assistance at DAV National Service Offices.

The DAV currently has 10 of these specially equipped Mobile Service Offices (MSOs) to visit communities across the country. One of the 10 MSOs has been dedicated only for use during air show activities. During 2006, our MSOs traveled more than 72,018 miles while visiting over 500 cities and towns. NSOs interviewed 12,485 veterans and other potential claimants. The MSOs remain on the road and we look forward to another successful year. In August 2006, the Harley-Davidson Foundation pledged one million to the DAV earmarked for the purpose of providing outreach services to veterans in the community. To date, we have visited over 100 Harley-Davidson dealerships during our MSO Tour. During 2006, the DAV allocated \$563,300 to the Mobile Service Office program.

The DAV National Service Program is responsible for the organization's employment-related programs, and works alongside the Department of Labor, the VA, Office of Personnel Management, Congress and other government agencies to ensure disabled veterans are treated fairly and equitably in the work force.

Disabled veterans have historically fared far worse than non-disabled veterans and other workers in the job market. The primary goal is to seek legislation to enhance programs and services provided by the Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs, the Small Business Administration, the Office of Personnel Management, and other government agencies.

The 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 the homeless initiatives in their respective communities.

Throughout history, women have served our country with pride, patriotism, and honor equal to their male counterparts. Women veterans, however, use VA health care facilities and other earned benefits in lower numbers than their male counterparts. The DAV is continuing its advocacy for women veterans on a variety of fronts. We have organized top-level forums designed to bring women veterans and government policy-makers together to openly address topics of concern.

The DAV is actively involved in the congressionally chartered VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, and its activities are monitored by a member of our National Service and Legislative Headquarters staff. In addition, the DAV has its own Women's Advisory Committee, made up of women veterans from DAV's membership across the country, which meets annually at DAV National Conventions. DAV continues its quest to enhance our NSO corps with eligible disabled women veterans.

Legislative

We continued to take a lead role in advocating for veterans rights and programs in the public policy arena. Included among our top priorities is the need to shift the funding process for VA health care from a discretionary to mandatory program and eliminate the longstanding funding shortfall that erodes the VA health care system. Together, we have advanced this agenda in recent years, and we must secure the goal while it is within our grasp. Now, the DAV has launched a major campaign to establish an assured funding mechanism to meet the health care needs of current and future disabled veterans. Our goal is shared by a number of organizations eager to assist in this reform. We are leading an effort with a number of key agencies, lawmakers and their staffs, and other knowledgeable individuals, to seize the opportunity to create a historic enhancement to veterans' benefits.

Another major initiative is to identify and eliminate gaps in outreach and screening for mental health readjustment problems and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) in returning veterans. The VA and the Department of Defense (DoD) lack the coordination necessary to address mild and moderate TBI and concussion injuries. Too little is known about the nature and consequences of these injuries. Veterans need a standardized follow-up protocol with appropriate clinical assessment techniques so providers can recognize and treat neurological and behavioral consequences of TBI. The influx of service members returning with mild and moderate brain trauma must engender research into the evaluation and treatment of these injuries. VA should include in this research veterans of past conflicts who may have also suffered similar injuries that went undetected, undiagnosed, and untreated. Part of our agenda is to make pre- and post-deployment self-assessment tools a prominent part of the veteran's transition to VA health care, to ensure those with needs are identified early and provided assistance by DoD, with an effective transition to VA care.

We are also engaging in an effort to establish an innovative and integrated program of support to family members who serve as close, continuing caregivers to home-based veterans with poly-trauma from military service in Iraq and Afghanistan. The current caregiver assistance provision that was established by Public Law 109-461 does not adequately address the array of challenges facing these families. Limited to an expenditure of \$5 million annually, this program needs to be reinforced or restructured with new authority, higher funding and a new mandate for a comprehensive program.

Budget & Appropriations

Fiscal Year 2007

The House passed its Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 appropriations bill for Military Construction, Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs, on May 19, 2006. The Senate passed its version on November 14, 2006. Nevertheless, the two chambers failed to make it to conference to resolve differences between their respective measures prior to the adjournment of the 109th Congress. Therefore, no final version was sent to the President for enactment. In the absence of an annual appropriation bill, FY 2007 funding was sustained through a series of continuing resolutions.

The final continuing resolution, H.J. Res. 20, included a \$3.6 billion increase for the VA, which had been operating at FY 2006 funding levels until mid-February, nearly halfway through the fiscal year. Further enhancement occurred on May 25, 2007, when President Bush signed a supplemental spending bill, H.R. 2206, which increased the VA FY 2007 budget for health care

and other programs by \$1.8 billion. Again, while the increase was welcomed, VA could have made better use of the funding if it had been appropriated at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Fiscal Year 2008

The Administration submitted its FY 2008 budget to Congress on February 5, 2007. The budget plan contained \$86.7 billion in budget authority for the VA, more than half of which was for mandatory funding for disability compensation, pension, vocational rehabilitation, and education benefits. For VA health care, the Administration proposed a budget of \$34.2 billion, an increase of approximately \$1.9 billion over the FY 2007 appropriation level. *The Independent Budget (IB)*, a comprehensive budget policy document co-authored by the DAV, AMVETS, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, recommended \$36.3 billion in funding for veterans' health care for FY 2008. This amount would be an increase of \$4 billion over the projected FY 2007 appropriations level, and it is designed to meet realistic inflation and health care demand increases. The Administration's budget submission was also about \$700 million below the IB recommendation for the Veterans Benefits Administration.

On March 23, the Senate passed S Con Res 21, its budget resolution for 2008, and on March 29, the House passed its 2008 budget resolution, H Con Res 99. Both the Senate and House budget resolutions exceeded the Administration's request by \$3.5 billion. Both chambers agreed to the conference report on May, 17, 2007. While the budget resolution is merely a blueprint for spending priorities, it is the House and Senate Appropriations Committees that determine the actual spending levels for government agencies.

Both the House and the Senate Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Committees approved their separate versions of a \$109.2 billion FY 2008 spending bill. Both bills included \$64.7 billion in discretionary spending and would appropriate nearly \$4 billion more than the Administration requested. The full House passed its bill, HR 2642, by a vote of 409-2 on June 15, 2007, and Senate placed its bill on the legislative calendar on June 18, 2007.

On September 20, 2006, National Commander Barton presented our views on various issues affecting disabled veterans to the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. Commander Barton expressed hope that the Committee would renew the time-honored commitment to hear the DAV's legislative priorities in a joint hearing. He reinforced our call for adequate funding and other improvements for veterans' programs and expressed our opposition to schemes to shift the costs of medical care to veterans themselves through enrollment fees and higher copayments. He reminded the Committee members of the solemn obligation to provide essential benefits and maintain an effective delivery system for disabled veterans. He emphatically opposed a change in law to permit attorneys and agents to charge claimants for services rendered in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of veterans' benefits claims. Finally, Commander Barton highlighted our legislative goals as contained in the resolutions adopted at our National Convention, and he urged the Committee to give its full support to efforts to meet the needs of America's disabled veterans and their families.

On September 28, 2006, in a hearing before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health, we presented the DAV's views concerning active duty service members and veterans suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or TBI. We urged the Subcommittee to examine current data to ascertain what initiatives may mitigate long-term mental health consequences, and to be mindful of medical findings that suggest even mild-symptom TBI patients may have long-term mental and medical health consequences. Our testimony discussed the variety of specialized mental health programs administered by VA and noted our nation's long-term obligations to provide care for veterans with TBI.

On October 19, 2006, we testified before the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission on the question of whether the Commission should recommend that veterans' disability compensation be paid in lump sums instead of monthly payments. The DAV testified on behalf of itself, the Air Force Sergeants Association, the American Legion, AMVETS, the Blinded Veterans Association, the Fleet Reserve Association, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA, the Military Officers Association of America, the National Association for the Uniformed Services, the Non Commissioned Officers Association, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. We stated that a lump-sum settlement for compensation would be inadvisable and expounded on the many reasons for our view. The DAV and its fellow organizations formed a united front in opposition to changes in the current mode of VA compensation payments to incorporate lump-sum settlements.

On November 6, 2006, we presented testimony before the Institute of Medicine (IOM). Under consideration were the various provisions by which the VA presumes certain diseases

to be service connected in cases where there is no evidence of the presence of such diseases during service. We urged IOM to be mindful that the military environment is complex, with an abundance of hazards that may constitute both known and unrecognized etiological factors for disease. The essential point of our testimony was that presumptions created through legislative judgments serve as equitable, practical, and rational solutions to complex questions of service connection.

On January 19, 2007, the DAV once again testified on behalf of a number of our fellow veterans' organizations before the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission. The focus of the hearing was on several key questions regarding the basis for service connection and compensation. The written statement presented to the Commission cited the extensive legal research supporting our responses to the questions posed.

On February 8, 2007, we presented to the House Veterans' Affairs Committee the IB recommendations for FY 2008, and compared them to the Administration's budget, which had been released three days earlier. As we customarily do, we limited our testimony to the benefit programs, predominantly, because our IB partners cover medical programs, construction, and the National Cemetery Administration. We emphasized the need to address the urgent situation with regard to the claims backlog. We urged the Committee to introduce legislation to adequately support a long-term strategy for improvement in claims processing and to provide funding for adequate staffing for the programs under VBA. To improve the administration of the benefit programs, we urged VA to invest more in information technology and training programs. With regard to the benefit programs themselves, we made a number of recommendations to adjust benefit rates and improve program features.

On February 13, 2007, we presented similar testimony to the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee regarding the IB recommendations for FY 2008, and addressed to the Administration's proposed budget.

During the 2007 Midwinter Conference, at the newly reinstated joint hearing before the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees, National Commander Barton presented our views on various issues affecting disabled veterans. He began his testimony with an expression of gratitude that the Committees had honored our requests to renew the joint hearing. Commander Barton reinforced our positions he succinctly presented during September 20, 2006 hearing. He again expressed our adamant opposition to fee-charging attorneys profiting from monies intended to compensate disabled veterans for disabilities related to their active duty. Commander Barton personalized his convincing argument by noting that he is an attorney and has provided thousands of hours of pro bono (free) work for veterans.

On March 6, 2007, we presented testimony before the House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans' Affairs, and Related Agencies. The focus of the hearing was TBI and its consequences on health care programs, including VA mental health services. The DAV testified on behalf of itself and the IB. We acknowledged positive developments within VA such as the designation of special emphasis program for TBI and the VA's commitment to working with DoD to provide comprehensive acute and long-term rehabilitative care for veterans with brain injuries. We noted concern about media accounts and reports from TBI patients and their family members who felt the need to seek specialized rehabilitation services in the private sector. We encouraged VA and Congress to ensure severely wounded TBI veterans are receiving the best rehabilitative care available. Our testimony also noted our concerns regarding gaps in mental health care coverage, specifically with regard to suicide prevention. Finally, we addressed the special needs of women veterans and stressed that VA needs to ensure women veterans' programs can provide quality health care and specialized services that are needed.

On March 7, 2007, before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, we addressed the necessity and means to improve timeliness and accuracy in the VA disability claims adjudication and appellate processes. Our testimony listed some of the factors that have led to the decline in VA's efficiency and accuracy over the years, and we noted the steps that must be taken to correct the problems and reverse the current trend.

On March 12, 2007, before a joint hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, we had the opportunity to bring greater awareness to a long-standing problem in the military disability evaluation system. The serious underrating of disabilities that render service members unfit for further service, adversely affects military personnel for years, perhaps the remainder of their lives. We noted that the disparity occurs because the military disability evaluation system does not adhere to the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD). We encouraged the Committees to introduce legislation to make it clear

that DoD must follow the VASRD, and that DoD does not have the authority to modify the schedule, and that the decisions of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims interpreting the rating schedule must be followed by the DoD.

On March 21, 2007, we again presented testimony before the House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans' Affairs, and Related Agencies. The purpose of the hearing was to discuss IB recommendations for FY 2008. As in the two previous IB hearings, the DAV focused on veterans' benefits. Both the written statement and oral remarks for this hearing were reflective of the testimony presented before the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees earlier in the year.

On April 17, 2007, the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing on four separate benefit bills. H.R. 67 would establish procedures for coordination of outreach activities between the various VA offices. It would also authorize \$25 million to be appropriated annually for grants to state veteran agencies for outreach services. While the DAV did not oppose this measure, we suggested that the funding for state veterans agencies would be better utilized if put toward hiring and training additional VA claims processing personnel. H.R. 1435 would establish a pilot program requiring VA offices in California, Florida, Ohio, South Carolina, and Texas to refer claims needing further development to County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO). CVSO staffs would act as claimant advocates in developing such claims. The DAV strongly opposed this legislation for a number of reasons. Primarily, because it is the federal government's responsibility to provide benefits and services to veterans of the Armed Forces, and the responsibility should not be shifted to local government officials. H.R. 1444 would require the VA to pay an interim benefit of \$500 per month when a claim for veterans' benefits is remanded by either the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims or the Board of Veterans' Appeals and the VA does not make a decision on the matter within 180 days of the date of the remand. The DAV does not support this legislation. If enacted, this bill could lead to abuse of the system. H.R. 1490 would provide a presumption of service connection to veterans presenting a claim for VA disability compensation or death benefits. The DAV does not support the idea of presumption of service-connection for submitted claims. The laws and regulations formulating the VA ratings system are complex and veterans would both knowingly and unknowingly file meritless claims for benefits. The resulting penalties and overpayments would create a hardship for those who were audited, and the massive increase in mandatory funding that would follow enactment of this legislation would place undue hardship on taxpayers.

On April 18, 2007, before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health we presented testimony on behalf of the IB organizations. The subject of the hearing was access to VA medical care services in rural areas. Several recommendations were made to support the right of rural veterans to VA health care. We urged the Subcommittee to support funding for rural care and outreach with a specific appropriation for this purpose. We stated that the distances veterans must travel should be considered in VA's policies in determining the appropriate location and setting for providing VA health care services, and that VA should use existing authority to establish a Rural Veterans Advisory Committee, to include membership by the veterans service organizations. We stated that VA rural outreach should include a special focus on Native American, Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native veterans' health care needs, and that VA should develop a policy to supply health-professions clinical personnel to VA facilities in rural areas. Finally, we suggested that Mobile Vet Centers should be established, at least on a pilot basis, to provide outreach and counseling to veterans in rural areas, and that VA must focus some of its homeless veteran program resources, including contracts with, and grants to, community-based organizations, to address the needs of homeless veterans in rural areas.

On April 20, 2007, DAV testified before the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission on whether the Commission should recommend a change in law to enable a veteran's survivor to pursue a benefits claim of the veteran that was pending and unresolved at the time of the veteran's death. We stated that a survivor should be able to assume the role of the veteran to take a claim to its resolution in the same manner the veteran could have.

On April 26, 2007, before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health, we testified on various bills under consideration by the Subcommittee. We urged the Subcommittee not to support H.R. 92, H.R. 315, H.R. 339, H.R. 463, H.R. 1462, H.R. 1471, and H.R. 1527, all of which were intended to help provide timely access to VA health care. While we expressed appreciation for the Subcommittee's intent, the plans imposed by these bills held negative consequences for VA. Such consequences included complications that might create a disincentive for private health care providers to accept and treat veterans, and diversion of funds from VA facilities

to private sector health care providers. We stated our support for provisions in H.R. 1944 to increase the level of health care services for disabled veterans with traumatic brain injury. Our one exception to a provision within the bill would encourage the VA to provide a comprehensive program for long-term traumatic brain injury rehabilitation through cooperative agreements with appropriate public or private entities. While we are cognizant of the opportunities a cooperative agreement may offer, we are concerned that the provision, as written, may over-time erode VA's special emphasis program of TBI care.

On May 9, 2007, we presented testimony before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. The hearing covered 28 bills and hundreds of provisions. Most of the provisions considered were favorable and warranted our full support. Many others fell outside the DAV mission but were beneficial and were not opposed by the DAV. Only one bill was opposed; S. 961 would provide a non-service-connected benefit, to certain Merchant Mariners or their surviving spouses, that exceeds the amount of compensation the VA pays to a 60 percent service-connected disabled veteran. Along with the disparity illustrated by this comparison, the DAV is concerned about the cost enactment of the legislation would have. The VA estimated the cost of the bill would be approximately \$234.1 million in the first fiscal year and an additional benefit cost of \$1.4 billion over 10 years. While the DAV acknowledges the bravery, sacrifice, and contributions of the Merchant Mariners of World War II, we opposed offsetting the costs associated with S. 961 against other VA programs. Among the most notable bills addressed in the hearing was a draft bill, the Comprehensive Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2007. As the title implies, the inclusive bill contains 21 provisions that are largely reflective of recommendations made within the IB.

On May 9, 2007, before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health, we testified on the current and future state of long-term VA health care programs. We stressed the need to ensure that veterans receive the benefits of institutional geriatric care services in a coordinated, integrated manner, as well as a full array of non-institutional extended care, which is available to all enrolled veterans. We stated that Congress must ensure that VA has the necessary resources to provide such care.

On May 22, 2007, the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing on challenges facing the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims. Our testimony stated that the greatest challenge facing the Court is the backlog of appeals, which translates to potential financial hardship for many veterans awaiting benefits. We supported recalling retired judges as a partial remedy to the backlog problem; but more importantly, we noted a primary cause for accumulation of cases at the Court. The Court over the years has shown a reluctance to reverse errors committed by the Board of Veterans' Appeals in its decisions. Rather than addressing allegations of error raised by an appellant, the Court has shown a propensity to vacate and remand such cases to the Board. The DAV encouraged the Subcommittee to introduce legislation to require the Court to decide all relevant questions of law, interpret constitutional, statutory, and regulatory provisions, and determine the meaning or applicability of the terms of an action of the VA. We believe that such changes would help break the perpetual cycle of remand and appeal. The DAV also believes that the Court should submit an annual report to Congress that would provide a clearer picture of the Court's accomplishments. Finally, the DAV urged the Subcommittee to support the establishment of a dedicated Veterans' Courthouse and Justice Center that features the design and location worthy of its status.

On May 23, 2007, before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee we presented testimony on 15 bills focused on VA health care services. We urged the Committee not to support S. 117, S. 815, S. 874, and S. 1147. While we expressed appreciation for the Committee's intent, the plans imposed by these bills could result in a series of potential unintended consequences for VA. Most of the foreseen complications were related to diversion of funds from established VA programs, and we recommended the Committee defer action on the bills until after Congress can assure funding for VA health care. Several of the bills considered fell outside the DAV legislative agenda, and we stated no position in that regard. We supported S. 383 to extend the period of eligibility for health care for combat service in the Persian Gulf War and future hostilities, from two years to five years after discharge, and S. 479 to establish a broad-based suicide prevention initiative in the VA. We suggested modifying the bill to make clear that the suicide prevention programs are intended to be applied to VA programs. We supported S. 610 to retroactively authorize full-time work credits for federal retirement purposes for VA registered nurses who worked part-time and retired from active service prior to April 7, 1986, and S. 692 to establish a "hospital report card" covering a variety of activities of hospital care. We urged the Committee to approve S. 994 to reform the VA beneficiary travel program to bring reimbursement rates

into line with those paid to federal officials and federal employees. Finally, we supported the provisions of S. 1233 to enhance and strengthen VA's rehabilitation program for veterans with TBI.

On May 24, 2007, we testified before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform in a hearing concerning active duty service members and veterans who may be suffering from readjustment issues, such as PTSD and other problems. Our testimony provided a background on the effects and statistics of PTSD from a historical and contemporary perspective. It addressed barriers to veterans' access to mental health care and recovery, mental health screening and referral, reducing mental health stigma, VA mental health programs and gaps in service, the special concern of suicide among veterans, the VA's capacity to address issues related to TBI, and the needs of women veterans who served in the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. We noted that the cost of programs addressing these issues is a continuing cost of national defense, and that the VA must be sufficiently funded to treat newly returning veterans with acute and emerging mental health issues without displacing older veterans with chronic mental illnesses. Finally, we stated that we must also ensure that family members of veterans devastated by the consequences of TBI, PTSD, and other injuries have access to appropriate services.

On June 7, 2007, we testified before the House Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity on the Specially Adapted Housing program. Our testimony urged the Subcommittee to support H.R. 675, which would increase the \$50,000 grant to \$60,000, and increase the \$10,000 grant to \$12,000. Additionally, the bill would provide for automatic annual adjustments based on the national average increase in the cost of residential home construction. We urged the Subcommittee to support H.R. 1315, which would provide specially adaptive housing grants to disabled members of the Armed Forces residing temporarily in housing owned by a family member. We recommended that such grants be in addition to the overall amount available to the veteran for later use.

On June 14, 2007, we presented our views on several veterans' health care measures to the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health. H.R. 1448 would establish a "hospital report card" covering a variety of activities of VA inpatient hospital care. We supported this bill but added that the report should include an assessment of VA primary care and extended care services. H.R. 1853 would require the VA to ensure that officers of the VA police service be trained with respect to officers' interactions with veterans possibly suffering from mental illnesses. We supported the bill with the recommendation that properly credentialed mental health practitioners be designated as training resources. H.R. 1925 would establish a 22nd Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) in the western Panhandle of Florida, far south Alabama, and eastern Mississippi. While the DAV does not have a resolution addressing this issue, we noted that the proponent of this bill makes a valid argument that perhaps a new alignment is in order and we expressed no opposition to its passage. H.R. 2005 would improve reimbursement rates for veterans for their travel expenses related to VA medical care. It would reimburse veterans at the same rate paid to federal employees, by increasing it from 11 cents per mile to 48.5 cents per mile. We urged the Subcommittee to approve this measure immediately. H.R. 2172 would ensure that the VA's prosthetics program should be able to provide all necessary prosthetic services, devices, and supplies for the proper treatment of service-connected disabled veterans. We agreed with the intent of the measure but we noted that most the bill's requirements are already being addressed by VA. We also expressed concern with the bill's requirement for VA to contract with a non-VA agency to repair and service prosthetic devices in certain circumstances. We urged the Subcommittee not to support H.R. 2173, H.R. 2192, H.R. 2378 which are well-intended bills to improve VA health care, but they could result in diversion of funds from established VA programs. Finally, we supported H.R. 2623 to prohibit the collection of copayments for VA hospice care.

On June 20, 2007 The House Veterans' Affairs Committee held a hearing to consider current VA policy regarding Priority Group 8 (PG8) veterans. New veterans who seek access to VA health care and fall into this category are presently barred from enrollment in the VA health care system. We stated that in order to remain a viable health care system, VA needs a wide range of patients, including those who are in good health, those with acute and chronic illnesses, and veterans with catastrophic health care problems who need highly specialized services. When VA manages a proper mix of patients, it offers a better health care plan to all patients and is a more attractive place of employment for clinical and health professions, educational, and research professional staff. For DAV, a better system for all veterans' care means a better system for service-disabled veterans. We urged the Committee to support legislation to provide VA health

care for PG8 veterans, but cautioned it to provide the necessary funds to VA before the system is reopened to PG8 veterans.

On June 21, 2007, we presented testimony before the House Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity. The purpose of the hearing was to consider various pending bills. We limited our remarks to the measures that address DAV resolutions. We encouraged the Subcommittee to support the following bills: H.R. 675 to provide a realistic increase in specially adapted housing grants, and an automatic annual adjustment based on the cost of living; HR 1315 to provide adaptive housing grants to disabled members of the Armed Forces residing with a family member; H.R. 1370 to establish a VA Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events; H.R. 2259 to ensure that members of the National Guard and Reserves can utilize the benefits delivery at discharge program. With regard to H.R. 1370, we recommended that it include language to place the Office under the Veterans' Health Administration. Currently, the programs are under the authority of the VA Public Affairs Office and VHA is almost completely removed from administrative decisions. Though the Public Affairs Office certainly has a role to play, the ultimate purpose of the events is to provide therapy to severely disabled veterans. Since VHA is responsible for providing such care, it should be the designated authority for the programs.

On July 12, 2007, before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health, we testified on the present and future needs of women and minority veterans seeking VA services. In part, our statement pointed to a June 2007 VA report, "Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the VA Health care System." We supported and applauded the Subcommittee for its efforts to increase awareness about minority veteran issues and advance the quality of the services they receive. We also urged the VA to continue its research and provide appropriate resources and policies to eliminate racial disparities in VA health care. We noted the increasing numbers of women serving in the military, and that it is essential that the VA be responsive to the unique demographics of this veteran population. In addition, we stated that the VA must ensure that its special disability programs are tailored to meet the unique health concerns of women who have served in combat theaters and those who have suffered catastrophic disabilities as a result of military service.

On July 18, 2007, we testified before the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission to present our views on IOM draft reports, "A 21st Century System for Evaluating Veterans for Disability Benefits" and "PTSD Compensation and Military Service." The extensive research and background information necessary to support the DAV positions on these complex subjects resulted in a written statement consisting of more than 100 pages of testimony. The DAV objective was to ensure that the VASRD is not altered in a way that is unfavorable to disabled veterans. We also wish to deter unwarranted changes that will lead to negative consequences for the VBA.

On July 19, 2007, before the before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health, the DAV presented our views on Veterans' Health Centers (Vet Centers). We expressed concern that a marked increased workload at Vet Centers is being met by a staffing level that remains relatively unchanged. Specifically, activity at Vet Centers for OIF/OEF veterans has grown from less than 20,000 visits in fiscal year 2004, to over 240,000 in fiscal year 2006. Concurrently, Vet Center staffing in fiscal year 2004 of 556 increased to 558.5 in fiscal year 2006. While the VA has announced its intention to create 23 additional Vet Centers, of which three will be opened this year, the DAV urged a more aggressive timeline in the establishment of these new Vet Centers, and the hiring of additional staff commensurate with the current and projected need for readjustment services.

On July 25, 2007, before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee we urged the Committee to support an assured funding mechanism for VHA. We pointed out that VHA is the largest direct provider of health care services in the nation, and is the primary back-up provider to DoD in times of war or national emergencies. We referenced a number of health care experts who have recognized that VHA provides the most cost-effective health care in the nation, significantly below the cost of Medicare. We noted that when sick and disabled veterans cannot get the health care services from the VA, they will go to another less efficient resource for care, which translates directly into higher national health care expenditures. We urged the Committee to transfer funding for VA health care from the current discretionary process and to make it a mandatory appropriation.

Legislation Enacted

Public Law 109-361. The Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Act of 2006 became Public Law 109-361 in October. The law increased, as of December 1,

2006, the rates of veterans' disability compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) for surviving spouses and children, and certain related benefits. The COLA was based on inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index. Last year's increase was 3.3 percent.

Public Law 109-461. S. 3421, the Veterans Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006, a massive 165-page omnibus bill, was enacted in the final hours of the 109th Congress. Despite the objection of the DAV, the bill included an amendment to authorize agents and attorneys to charge claimants a fee for services provided after a notice of disagreement has been filed. The DAV continues to seek legislation to eliminate the potential negative consequences this ill-advised provision holds for both individual veterans and the VA claims system. S. 3421 also contained provisions derived from several separate bills to improve veterans' and survivors' benefits, burial benefits, and other miscellaneous benefits.

Voluntary Service Program

The DAV VAVS program is the largest of our volunteer initiatives. Through it, our volunteers provide a broad array of services to veterans in VA health care facilities. Under this program, 16,070 DAV volunteers donated 2,367,447 hours in the 12 months ending September 2006.

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 18 State Chairmen, 145 VAVS Representatives, 185 Deputy Representatives, 18 Associate Representatives, and one Deputy Associate Representative.

The DAV volunteer effort is enhanced by a very active corps of 2,517 Auxiliary volunteers who donated 225,017 hours last year. Together, DAV and Auxiliary volunteers provided 2,367,447 hours of VAVS service over the past year – considerably more than any other service organization. This is equivalent to the VA having an additional 1,138 full-time employees with an estimated value of nearly \$43 million in hourly wages alone.

Because many sick and disabled veterans lack transportation to and from VA health-care facilities for needed treatment, 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 198 active programs. They've recruited 8,732 volunteer drivers who logged 27,774,391 miles last year, providing 772,755 rides for veterans to and from VA health-care facilities. Many of these veterans rode in vans DAV purchased and donated to VA facilities for use in the Transportation Network. DAV Departments and Chapters, together with the National Organization, have now donated 1,959 vans to VA health care centers nationwide at a cost of \$39,763,442.

At the DAV's 85th National Convention, Ford Motor Company donated 11 new 12-passenger vans to the Transportation Network. The VAMCs that received these vans were: Prescott, Arizona; Fayetteville, Arkansas; Gainesville, Florida; Danville, Illinois; Alexandria, Louisiana; St. Cloud, Minnesota; Omaha, Nebraska; Fayetteville, North Carolina; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Salem, Virginia; and Seattle, Washington.

As a further demonstration of its commitment to the DAV Transportation Network, Ford Motor Company has once again made it possible for the DAV to purchase and donate eight seven-passenger vehicles to the VA. The VAMCs receiving these new vehicles are: San Diego, California; Dublin, Georgia; Iowa City, Iowa; Grand Island, Nebraska; Canandaigua, New York; San Antonio, Texas; Hampton, Virginia; and Beckley, West Virginia.

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 29 years since its inception, this award has become one of the most prestigious honors presented at the 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. After reviewing the nominations of DAV and Auxiliary volunteers, the committee chose as this year's winners:

DAV – Joseph H. Smith

Joseph Smith, a regularly scheduled volunteer for 11 years and a member of DAV Chapter 1 in Reno, Nevada transports patients within the VA medical center to their medical appointments. With over 10,300 hours, all new escort volunteers are asked to work two days “shadowing” Joe as their on-the-job training. He has a direct effect on brightening the morale of patients with ambulatory problems. When Joe escorts a patient, he is a friendly presence that helps allay the patient’s anxiety. It gives the patients great comfort to know there is someone looking after them.

DAV Auxiliary – Joan Cook

Joan Cook, 78, is a member of Auxiliary Unit 13 in St. Petersburg Beach, Florida. With a total of 2,750 hours, Joan works in many different areas of the Bay Pines VA medical center, as well as serving as the DAV Auxiliary Representative on the VAVS Committee and is involved with many of the hospital’s programs.

The DAV and Auxiliary can be proud of people like Mr. Smith and Mrs. Cook 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 Joseph and Joan 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.

2007 Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program

The Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program was created to honor outstanding young volunteers who are active participants in the VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) program. The scholarships are awarded to deserving young men and women who have generously donated their time and compassion to sick and disabled veterans in their communities. The DAV is deeply appreciative of Ford Motor Company for helping DAV recognize the thousands of hours these outstanding students have donated to care for and comfort disabled veterans.

The winners of the 2007 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.

1 st Place	\$15,000 – Jamiya C. Harris, Bay Pines, FL VAMC
2 nd Place	\$10,000 – Andrew D. Wisneski – San Francisco, CA VAMC
3 rd Place	\$ 7,500 – Elizabeth Grondalski, St. Louis, MO VAMC
	\$ 7,500 – Sarah K. Black, Topeka, KS VAMC
4 th Place	\$ 5,000 – Sandeep Singh, Battle Creek, MI VAMC
	\$ 5,000 – Alicia E. Garcia, Albuquerque, NM VAMC
	\$ 5,000 – Jimmy C. Chester, Atlanta, GA VAMC
	\$ 5,000 – Jenna A. Greenman, Battle Creek, MI VAMC
	\$ 5,000 – Ashleigh Summers, Jackson, MS VAMC
	\$ 5,000 – Maya J. Williams, Lyons, NJ VAMC
	\$ 5,000 – Stephanie Smith, Columbia, SC VAMC
	\$ 5,000 – Michael G. Schultz, Milwaukee, WI 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.

Sports for the Disabled

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 National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic

During April 1-6, 2007, 366 severely disabled veterans took part in the 21st National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic at Snowmass Village, Colorado. With hundreds of

volunteers – including ski instructors, most of whom are certified in teaching the disabled – it was one of the best winter sports clinics ever conducted.

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.

The 2007 recipient was Jason Poole from Cupertino, California. He's a marine infantryman who was injured by a massive IED more than two years ago while on patrol near the Syrian border in Iraq. After two months in a coma, Jason woke up to find his world shattered. Blind in his left eye, deaf in his left ear, facing facial reconstruction and suffering from a brain injury that left him unable to speak, read and walk, Jason started out on the arduous road to recovery at the Poly Trauma Center at Palo Alto, California.

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 58th annual tournament at the Onion Creek Club in Austin, Texas, September 12-14, 2006, drew 88 entries, 35 of them veterans. The winner of the DAV National Commander's trophy was Roy D. McCoy of Round Rock, Texas.

First Swing Golf

This is the DAV's 18th 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 2006, 42 First Swing seminars and Learn to Golf Clinics included 373 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. 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.

Dozens of athletes from professional baseball and football teams and other celebrities sign autographs, present patients with photographs, and help brighten the day for sick and disabled veterans in VA health care 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 Edward R. Reese, Jr., National Service Director:)

ANNUAL REPORT
EDWARD R. REESE, JR.
NATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTOR
to the
Disabled American Veterans
86th NATIONAL CONVENTION
August 11 – August 14, 2007

OUR NATION'S HEROES: PRICE OF DEMOCRACY

As National Service Director, I take this opportunity to proudly present to the delegates this report on the achievements of the National Service Department.

For many years throughout the history of our great nation, men and women have answered the call to protect and defend the ideals and principles embodied in the Constitution of the United States. For the freedoms we enjoy to this very day, the American way of life, none would have envisioned the measure of sacrifice that would be made by ordinary citizens. Since the 1920's, DAV has long understood the vital importance of establishing a strong voice to advocate for the rights and interests of disabled veterans and their beneficiaries. Webster's Dictionary defines democracy as "government by the people; a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation." Our nation's noble heroes are willing to sacrifice all and serve as shining examples of front-line protectors and true believers. They know sacrifice is essential and democracy is the ultimate cause to fight for in order to sustain a free society; a government by and for the people.

Paramount is life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; words written by our founding fathers which are forever immortalized and imprinted in the hearts and minds of every American citizen. Yes, these basic inalienable rights are woven into the very fabric of American society and must be protected at all costs. Albeit, the cost of war is high and the price of democracy is very, very, steep.

From a human perspective, this price may be measured by the total casualties of all wars as of 2006. Over one million total deaths from all wars with almost 600,000 being killed in action and 1.5 million wounded. Since the beginning of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom has added another 4,000 fatalities with the majority of those being battle deaths. President Gerald R. Ford stated quite eloquently that "it's the quality of the ordinary, the straight, the square, that accounts for the great stability and success of our nation. It's a quality to be proud of."

Yet, battle injuries, illnesses, and scars in the aftermath of war are always inevitable and in the truest sense illustrate the price of democracy realized in the form of human pain, suffering, and disfigurement. Veterans returning home from the war today face new challenges such as finding employment and dealing with their personal injuries in everyday life. They also face bureaucracy and delays in claims processing and benefits delivery just as the veterans of the past when they returned home from war.

In the early years during the formation of DAV, its leaders then recognized the need for Congress to establish one cabinet-level department to handle all the programs and services for veterans. Initially called the Veterans' Bureau, then Veterans Administration, and now the Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans have an agency to apply for the benefits to which they are entitled. President Theodore Roosevelt certainly understood the federal government's role to honor those brave warriors when he stated: "A man who is good enough to shed his blood for his country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards." Obtaining compensation and pension benefits through the benefits delivery system of today is no easy task. It is an evidence-based system buttressed by some rather complex laws and regulations that prove to be a challenge to the layperson.

In fiscal year 2006, the VA processed more than 750,000 claims for disability benefits. Approximately 5.5 million veterans use the VA health care system and this number is expected to grow in the years to come. More than 184,000 Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring

Freedom (OIF/OEF) veterans have received treatment at VA medical facilities. In the aftermath of war, medical services for treatment of today's battlefield injuries must be analyzed to determine the health care needs of veterans today and into the future. Veterans returning home from the war should be given the very best medical care and their claims for compensation and pension benefits should be adjudicated in a timely fashion. The VA currently provides services to over 3.5 million veterans and beneficiaries.

DAV remains steadfast and focused to build better lives for disabled veterans and their families. The government's duty to ensure the betterment of lives for veterans returning from war is clear upon a review of American history. It is an honor for the DAV to ensure that the nation's promise to veterans is never broken and that the government never forgets the sacrifices made by those men and women proudly serving in uniform. DAV's corps of National Service Officers (NSOs) are disabled veterans helping other disabled veterans free-of-charge to receive all benefits entitled to them under VA laws passed by the government. NSOs act as attorneys-in-fact and also advocate the best interests of clients when they sign a power of attorney requesting DAV representation.

NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM

Since its beginnings in 1920, the DAV has never wavered in our commitment to serve our nation's service-connected disabled veterans, their dependents, and survivors.

Our largest endeavor in fulfilling that mission is our National Service Program. In 88 offices throughout the United States and in Puerto Rico, the DAV employs a corps of approximately 260 National Service Officers (NSOs) and 25 Transition Service Officers (TSOs), who directly and tirelessly represent veterans and their families with claims for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, and other government agencies. Veterans need not be DAV members to take advantage of this outstanding assistance, which is provided free of charge. With outlays of over 42 million in 2006, these direct hands-on services make up the largest item in the DAV's budget for program services. Between January 1, 2006, and December 31, 2006, our NSOs and TSOs, all wartime service-connected disabled veterans, represented nearly a quarter of a million veterans and their families in their claims for VA benefits, obtaining more than \$3.2 billion for them in new and retroactive benefits.

NSOs function as attorneys-in-fact, assisting veterans when they file claims for VA compensation and pension, vocational rehabilitation and employment services, home loan guaranty, veterans health care services, education programs, survivors' benefits, and much more. They also provide free services, such as information seminars, counseling, and community outreach. NSOs also represent veterans and active duty military personnel before Discharge Review Boards, Boards for Correction of Military Records, Physical Evaluation Boards, the Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP), the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), and other official military panels.

Our NSOs are highly trained professionals and skilled experts in developing and prosecuting veterans' claims through in-depth reviews of medical histories, in conjunction with sound application of current law and regulations. They also review rating board decisions, informing veterans and their families of the appeals process and of their appellate rights.

The expertise required for this outstanding assistance provided by NSOs involves extensive training. It begins with a rigorous 16-month on-the-job training program, which provides the foundation for new trainees, who also undergo a comprehensive continuing training program designed to keep them up to date on changes to the laws and regulations affecting veterans' benefits.

Trainees are instructed by tenured supervisory NSOs with subject matter expertise. The National Service staff at National Service and Legislative Headquarters administers and monitors the program and the instructors. NSOs are required to pre-test and successfully complete 32 training modules with testing on each. Full completion requires post-testing at the conclusion of the program.

Recognized by the highly regarded American Council on Education, the DAV's course of study uses the latest technology to continually upgrade each NSO's knowledge. In addition to this training program, supervisory staff and selected NSOs from field offices across the nation receive specialized training in management and leadership development. The goal of the DAV's National Service Program is to produce the most highly trained career NSOs possible for veterans and their families.

NATIONAL APPEALS OFFICE

The Board of Veterans' Appeals is the highest appellate level within the Department of Veterans Affairs, and is responsible for entering the final decision on behalf of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs concerning appeals for entitlement to veterans' benefits. 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 37.6 percent of all cases decided by the BVA as of June 30, 2007.

From July 2006 through June 2007, DAV's NAOs represented 13,866 appellants, either by submitting a written legal brief on their behalf or assisting them in a formal hearing. From those appeals decided by the Board, 2,967 appeals were allowed and, 4,903 appeals were remanded to the VA Appeals Management Center for additional development. 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 2006, the DAV maintained its leading position among veterans' service organizations representing veterans and their dependents before the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC). The DAV Judicial Appeals Office filed over 230 appeals in 2006 and continues to achieve outstanding results for veterans and their dependents. The DAV continues to identify decisions of the Board that should be appealed to the CAVC. During this reporting year, the Judicial Appeals Office reviewed over 6,700 Board decisions. The DAV remains one of the few organizations that take this initiative to ensure wrongful denials are overturned.

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

The National Service Department is fortunate to have the cooperation, support, and assistance of Department and Chapter Service Officers (DSOs/CSOs) from around the nation. We want to ensure that each receives the training and information necessary to assist those we serve. In 2002, we initiated the Department and Chapter Service Officer Certification Training Program. This program guarantees the vitality and growth of our local service programs, as well as an environment where Hospital Service Coordinators, Department and Chapter Service Officers, and volunteers work together for the common goal of service to America's disabled veterans. In 2006 alone, the DAV provided training to and certified over 1,271 DSOs/CSOs in 35 states.

Information Seminars are another outreach initiative offered by the National Service Department. During 2006, our NSOs conducted 45 Information Seminars at various DAV Chapters around the country with over 2,108 individuals in attendance. Information Seminars not only provide the opportunity for veterans to discuss VA benefits with DAV National Service Officers in their own community; they are a great way for local DAV Chapters to recruit new members and encourage Chapter grassroots involvement.

The DAV has reached a milestone in outreach in the local community by having NSOs offer services at various air shows throughout the nation. Other community-based outreach programs include involvement with Major League Baseball, NASCAR, Golden Corral Military Appreciation Day, and other events. We also expanded our outreach efforts to the National Football League and presented autographed player cards.

TRANSITION SERVICE PROGRAM

For those soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, guardsmen, and officers making the all-important transition back into civilian life, the DAV participates in formal Transition Assistance Programs and Disability Transition Assistance Programs. DAV's 25 Transition Service Officers provide benefits counseling and assistance to servicemembers filing initial claims for VA benefits at more than 80 military installations throughout the nation. By filing compensation claims at separation centers where service medical records and examination facilities are readily available, DAV is able to provide better, more prompt service to these future veterans. Over the last year, TSOs conducted over 1,847 formal presentations to approximately 92,115 transitioning servicemembers. During that same time, our TSOs filed more than 34,589 claims for VA benefits. In addition, NSOs provided representation before Physical Evaluation Boards, Discharge Review Boards, and Boards for Correction of Military Records. Counsel and representation was provided for active duty servicemembers during their transition through the military's Disability Evaluation System. In 2006, DAV devoted \$1,527,400 to this program.

MOBILE SERVICE OFFICE PROGRAM

By literally putting our service offices on the road, assisting veterans where they live, the DAV is increasing accessibility to the benefits our nation provides to its veterans. This outreach effort generates a considerable amount of claims work from those veterans who may not otherwise have the opportunity to seek assistance at DAV National Service Offices.

The DAV currently has 10 of these specially equipped Mobile Service Offices (MSOs) to visit communities across the country. One of the 10 MSOs has been dedicated only for use during air show activities. During 2006, our MSOs traveled more than 72,018 miles while visiting over 500 cities and towns. NSOs interviewed 12,485 veterans and other potential claimants.

The MSOs remain on the road and we look forward to another successful year. In August 2006, the Harley-Davidson Foundation pledged one million to the DAV earmarked for the purpose of providing outreach services to veterans in the community. To date, we have visited over 100 Harley-Davidson dealerships during our MSO Tour. During 2006, the DAV allocated \$563,300 to the Mobile Service Office program.

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The DAV National Service Program is responsible for the organization's employment-related programs, and works alongside the Department of Labor, the VA, Office of Personnel Management, Congress and other government agencies to ensure disabled veterans are treated fairly and equitably in the work force.

Disabled veterans have historically fared far worse than non-disabled veterans and other workers in the job market. DAV has spent countless hours devoted to programs aimed at assisting disabled veterans in the job market. The primary goal is to seek legislation to enhance programs and services provided by the Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs, the Small Business Administration, the Office of Personnel Management, and other government agencies.

HOMELESS VETERANS

The 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 the homeless initiatives in their respective communities.

WOMEN VETERANS

Throughout history, women have served our country with pride, patriotism, and honor equal to their male counterparts. Women veterans, however, use VA health care facilities and other earned benefits in lower numbers than their male counterparts. The DAV is continuing its advocacy for women veterans on a variety of fronts. We have organized top-level forums designed to bring women veterans and government policy-makers together to openly address topics of concern.

The DAV is actively involved in the congressionally chartered VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, and its activities are monitored by a member of our National Service and Legislative Headquarters staff. In addition, the DAV has its own Women's Advisory Committee, made up of women veterans from DAV's membership across the country, which meets annually at DAV National Conventions. DAV continues its quest to enhance our NSO corps with eligible disabled women veterans.

RETIREMENTS

It is important to recognize those in our professional ranks of the NSO corps who retired last year after many years of service. Their service to the veteran community over the years has improved the living conditions of thousands of veterans.

DAV NSOs are service-connected disabled veterans from all walks of life. They uphold the great principles of this organization and work to ensure that veterans and their families have legal representation and a voice when filing claims to the VA for benefits. NSOs understand their role as veteran advocates and are dedicated to the DAV's mission of service and improving the livelihood of veterans disabled during military service. Our NSO retirees for 2006 are Virgil Ahnberg, Michael Bargmann, Lawrence Bouska, Donald Crull, Lennox Gilmer, Gerald Humphries, Joseph Jurcak, and John Richard.

DEATHS

We call to remembrance our National Service Officers whose demise occurred this year. So many families have benefited from the work of these dedicated NSOs during their lifetime whose efforts made a difference in the lives of disabled veterans and their families. We honor them by recognizing their service and passion to help other veterans in dire need of expert assistance with their VA claims. Let's take this time to reflect on their accomplishments while employed with DAV as we announce the following departed NSOs: George Kolesar, Forrest Martin, Martin Sofie, William Stralo, William Bibbs, Elmer Sewell, Laroy Canady, and James Milton.

CONCLUSION

In my opinion, our success would not be possible without the collective guidance and leadership of National Commander Bradley Barton, 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.

All good leaders have the capacity to create a compelling vision, one that takes people to a new place, and then to translate that vision into reality. (Warren Bennis). So I wish to thank National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson for his continued leadership, vision, and direction. He has kept us focused on what it takes to bring to fruition our mission of service to disabled veterans and their families. In addition, I express my gratitude to National Headquarters Executive Director Richard E. Patterson and his team for their support of our goals and programs during the past year. Likewise, my appreciation goes out to Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman for his wisdom and guidance, his approach and participation in veteran affairs, and his direct involvement in management of the National Service Department.

My thanks to 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 J. Marc Burgess, National Director of Charitable Programs Nancy O'Brien, National Membership Director Anthony Baskerville, National Information Technology Director Greg Nichols and all of their staffs for their support of the National Service Department.

My appreciation is extended also to my staff at the National Service Department who work hard to ensure the success of our programs and services all across the country. So, many thanks to Deputy National Service Director Garry Augustine, Assistant National Service Directors Brian Austin, Brenda Kecske, Scott Trimarchi, and Associate National Service Director Isaac Abnathay. Congratulations to Barry Jesinoski, a former member of my service staff, who was promoted to the position of Deputy Director of Human Resources. We wish Barry the very best in his new job assignment at DAV National Headquarters in Cold Spring, Kentucky.

At the state level, we have a team of dedicated individuals who assist us on a day-to-day basis in ensuring our message of service reaches the veterans in their local communities. So at this time, I thank the members of the DAV Auxiliary, Department and Chapter Service Officers, and Hospital Service Coordinators. We appreciate all that you do in the local veteran communities where you reside.

Last and most important, I express my sincere thanks to our dedicated and professional corps of National Service Officers, Transition Service Officers, and our Support Staff who work daily assisting veterans by providing quality claim services while advocating for veteran rights around the nation. They can be counted on to do everything possible to make sure our programs and services will be beneficial to veterans and their beneficiaries as they pursue VA benefits.

In closing, we reflect on our accomplishments last year and appreciate all of those who gave their time each and every day to help veterans and their families. We measure the success of our programs and services by the number of people who have benefited in a positive way. In that regard, our record speaks for itself. Our services are provided by individuals who are truly dedicated to the mission of the DAV. Individually and collectively our efforts have not gone unnoticed and have touched the lives of so many veterans who needed someone to advocate for their best interests. United in a strong common bond, we send this message loud and clear that we will forever seek better benefits and programs for those who served and sacrificed for our great nation.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
Recapitulation of Service Activities
July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007

Office: National Totals

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	55,014
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	47,789
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	72,676
4. PENSION	7,256
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	6,934
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	3
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	26,242
8. MISCELLANEOUS	2,802
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	2,112
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	123
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	6
12. DEATH PENSION	1,149
13. INSURANCE	6
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	2,373
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	328
16. TOTAL AWARDS	224,813
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$191,169,660.66
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$316,007,546.08
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$32,377,206.74
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	232,460
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	73,419
22. INTERVIEWS	132,143
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	169,015
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	46,019
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	42
26. NEW CLAIMS	187,807
27. MEMBERSHIP	7,490

Office: Phoenix, Arizona

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,048
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	935
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,864
4. PENSION	130
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	77
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	860
8. MISCELLANEOUS	41
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	55
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	6
13. INSURANCE	1
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	45
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	5,062
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$4,161,600.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$395,264,259.69
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$399,425,859.69
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,581
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,339
22. INTERVIEWS	4,053
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,119
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	44
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
26. NEW CLAIMS	3,634
27. MEMBERSHIP	42

Office: Montgomery, Alabama

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,055
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,305
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,742
4. PENSION	244
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	317
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	726
8. MISCELLANEOUS	55
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	32
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	22
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	35
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	5,533
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$3,926,002.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$65,917,536.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$69,943,536.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,985
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,975
22. INTERVIEWS	3,563
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,477
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,176
27. MEMBERSHIP	97

Office: Little Rock, Arkansas

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,319
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,734
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,225
4. PENSION	253
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	112
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	67
8. MISCELLANEOUS	62
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	64
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	31
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	83
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	5,950
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$4,771,719.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$73,926,149.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$78,697,868.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	8,406
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	766
22. INTERVIEWS	5,043
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,790
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	25
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	4
26. NEW CLAIMS	3,758
27. MEMBERSHIP	87

Office: Anchorage, Alaska

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	233
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	165
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	300
4. PENSION	7
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	4
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	194
8. MISCELLANEOUS	6
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	3
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	3
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	916
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$702,039.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$10,219,969.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$10,922,008.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	78
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	133
22. INTERVIEWS	353
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	57
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	18
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	515
27. MEMBERSHIP	0

Office: Los Angeles, California

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,018
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	998
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,241
4. PENSION	284
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	206
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	741
8. MISCELLANEOUS	6
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	28
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	29
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	26
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,578
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$3,811,670.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$49,322,980.24
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$53,134,650.24
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,548
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,867
22. INTERVIEWS	2,786
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,860
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	771
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,469
27. MEMBERSHIP	566

Office: Sacramento, California

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	368
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	171
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	321
4. PENSION	37
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	17
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8. MISCELLANEOUS	0
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	13
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	928
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$746,054.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$12,577,828.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$13,323,882.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,216
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	98
22. INTERVIEWS	1,042
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,129
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	3
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
26. NEW CLAIMS	528
27. MEMBERSHIP	0

Office: Denver, Colorado

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	2,839
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,243
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,366
4. PENSION	168
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	90
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	2,387
8. MISCELLANEOUS	521
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	79
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	2
12. DEATH PENSION	10
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	58
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	10,764
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$7,405,414.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$103,666,862.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$111,072,276.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	5,515
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	3,546
22. INTERVIEWS	4,563
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,680
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2,112
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
26. NEW CLAIMS	7,795
27. MEMBERSHIP	122

Office: Oakland, California

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	844
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,227
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	982
4. PENSION	91
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	55
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	565
8. MISCELLANEOUS	60
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	37
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	26
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	5
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	43
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	3,935
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$3,091,505.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$46,838,398.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$49,929,903.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	4,346
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,607
22. INTERVIEWS	1,879
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,200
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	895
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,002
27. MEMBERSHIP	86

Office: Newington, Connecticut

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	294
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	377
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	772
4. PENSION	32
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	154
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	128
8. MISCELLANEOUS	5
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	19
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	6
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	11
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,798
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$1,466,813.43
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$23,388,936.16
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$24,855,749.59
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,787
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	871
22. INTERVIEWS	1,149
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,351
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	5
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,419
27. MEMBERSHIP	0

Office: San Diego, California

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	2,039
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,116
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,930
4. PENSION	117
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	52
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	641
8. MISCELLANEOUS	5
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	18
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	4
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	1
12. DEATH PENSION	6
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	18
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	5,947
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$4,828,996.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$78,358,820.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$83,187,816.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	10,091
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,974
22. INTERVIEWS	10,703
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,724
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	18,511
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
26. NEW CLAIMS	6,001
27. MEMBERSHIP	116

Office: Wilmington, Delaware

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	101
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	109
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	84
4. PENSION	8
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	3
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	44
8. MISCELLANEOUS	0
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	4
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	353
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$214,793.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$3,330,331.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$3,545,124.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,849
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	313
22. INTERVIEWS	1,667
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,691
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,298
27. MEMBERSHIP	47

Office: Washington, D.C.		Office: St. Petersburg, Florida	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	58	1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	3,867
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	160	2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	3,496
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	182	3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	4,947
4. PENSION	146	4. PENSION	292
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	124	5. PENSION MAINTAINED	1,412
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	3	6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	263	7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	1,470
8. MISCELLANEOUS	19	8. MISCELLANEOUS	299
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	7	9. DEATH COMPENSATION	178
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1	10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0	11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	1	12. DEATH PENSION	35
13. INSURANCE	1	13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	2	14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	227
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	57	15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,024	16. TOTAL AWARDS	16,223
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$8,053,131.00	17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$11,876,347.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$18,342,573.00	18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$221,363,662.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$26,395,704.00	19. FULL AMOUNT	\$233,240,099.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	9,116	20. VA FILES REVIEWED	16,486
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	828	21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	3,837
22. INTERVIEWS	1,949	22. INTERVIEWS	3,965
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,118	23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	14,775
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	990	24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	221
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	10	25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	2
26. NEW CLAIMS	878	26. NEW CLAIMS	13,115
27. MEMBERSHIP	18	27. MEMBERSHIP	1,183

Office: Board of Veterans Appeals		Office: Orlando, Florida	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	0	1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	174
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	0	2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	221
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	0	3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	203
4. PENSION	0	4. PENSION	10
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	0	5. PENSION MAINTAINED	3
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0	6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	0	7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8. MISCELLANEOUS	0	8. MISCELLANEOUS	74
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	0	9. DEATH COMPENSATION	7
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0	10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0	11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0	12. DEATH PENSION	3
13. INSURANCE	0	13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0	14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	8
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0	15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	0	16. TOTAL AWARDS	703
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$0.00	17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$331,162.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$0.00	18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$4,931,300.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$0.00	19. FULL AMOUNT	\$5,262,462.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	9,154	20. VA FILES REVIEWED	937
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	246	21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	637
22. INTERVIEWS	279	22. INTERVIEWS	489
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	495	23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	683
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2	24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0	25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	454	26. NEW CLAIMS	1,341
27. MEMBERSHIP	7	27. MEMBERSHIP	16

Office: DC Nat'l Svc & Legis Hqrs.		Office: West Palm Beach, Florida	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	0	1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	14
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	0	2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	36
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	0	3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	20
4. PENSION	0	4. PENSION	3
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	0	5. PENSION MAINTAINED	2
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0	6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	0	7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8. MISCELLANEOUS	0	8. MISCELLANEOUS	0
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	0	9. DEATH COMPENSATION	0
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0	10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0	11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0	12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0	13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0	14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	1
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0	15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	0	16. TOTAL AWARDS	77
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$0.00	17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$50,678.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$0.00	18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$689,823.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$0.00	19. FULL AMOUNT	\$740,501.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	19	20. VA FILES REVIEWED	95
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2	21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	339
22. INTERVIEWS	12	22. INTERVIEWS	1,710
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	12	23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	87
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	161	24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1	25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	9	26. NEW CLAIMS	696
27. MEMBERSHIP	0	27. MEMBERSHIP	44

Office: Atlanta, Georgia

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,180
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	726
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,343
4. PENSION	99
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	92
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	378
8. MISCELLANEOUS	61
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	27
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	10
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	29
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	3,945
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$3,083,613.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$45,002,149.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$48,085,762.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,335
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	790
22. INTERVIEWS	4,447
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	884
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	685
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
26. NEW CLAIMS	3,114
27. MEMBERSHIP	11

Office: Indianapolis, Indiana

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,007
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	873
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	707
4. PENSION	152
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	42
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	626
8. MISCELLANEOUS	141
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	43
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	27
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	112
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	3,730
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$2,300,229.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$69,817,873.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$72,118,102.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,982
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	664
22. INTERVIEWS	1,453
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,626
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	4
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	2,873
27. MEMBERSHIP	2

Office: Boise, Idaho

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	482
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	559
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	697
4. PENSION	65
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	33
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	274
8. MISCELLANEOUS	2
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	23
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	9
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	17
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,163
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$1,417,511.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$19,428,266.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$20,845,777.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,340
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	388
22. INTERVIEWS	1,310
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,098
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,663
27. MEMBERSHIP	30

Office: Des Moines, Iowa

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	709
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	449
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	812
4. PENSION	156
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	101
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	279
8. MISCELLANEOUS	17
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	43
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	35
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	29
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,632
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$1,901,276.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$29,219,460.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$31,120,736.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,623
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	288
22. INTERVIEWS	312
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,508
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	2,054
27. MEMBERSHIP	51

Office: Chicago, Illinois

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	788
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	847
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,331
4. PENSION	166
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	159
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	215
8. MISCELLANEOUS	79
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	34
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	3
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	11
13. INSURANCE	1
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	46
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	3,680
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$2,907,655.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$56,892,521.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$59,800,176.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,384
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	681
22. INTERVIEWS	2,141
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,001
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	15
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	3,640
27. MEMBERSHIP	66

Office: Wichita, Kansas

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	589
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	351
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	897
4. PENSION	78
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	209
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	351
8. MISCELLANEOUS	15
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	31
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	5
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	47
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,574
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$2,082,213.08
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$28,001,643.65
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$30,089,856.73
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,364
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	753
22. INTERVIEWS	1,759
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,026
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,590
27. MEMBERSHIP	81

Office: Louisville, Kentucky

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,502
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,400
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,305
4. PENSION	473
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	74
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	212
8. MISCELLANEOUS	30
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	72
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. DEATH ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	105
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	80
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	5,253
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$4,043,179.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$73,269,718.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$77,312,897.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	6,481
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,749
22. INTERVIEWS	1,144
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	6,162
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1,028
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	5,111
27. MEMBERSHIP	79

Office: Baltimore, Maryland

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	318
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	251
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	376
4. PENSION	23
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	19
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	107
8. MISCELLANEOUS	4
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	8
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. DEATH ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	7
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	5
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,118
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$988,758.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$14,259,232.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$15,247,990.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,069
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	527
22. INTERVIEWS	1,649
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,607
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,580
27. MEMBERSHIP	7

Office: New Orleans, Louisiana

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	500
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	511
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	\$86
4. PENSION	132
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	39
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	153
8. MISCELLANEOUS	37
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	31
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	1
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	3
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,993
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$1,850,052.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$28,635,330.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$30,485,382.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,315
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	474
22. INTERVIEWS	853
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	953
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	144
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,368
27. MEMBERSHIP	0

Office: Cold Spring, Kentucky

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1
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	1
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$112.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$1,568.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$1,680.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	21
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	3
22. INTERVIEWS	16
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	11
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
26. NEW CLAIMS	9
27. MEMBERSHIP	1,998

Office: Togus, Maine

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	343
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	409
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	626
4. PENSION	59
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	119
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	201
8. MISCELLANEOUS	107
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	19
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	5
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	1
12. DEATH PENSION	6
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	14
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,900
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$1,597,987.51
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$21,267,639.65
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$22,865,627.16
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,587
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	433
22. INTERVIEWS	2,082
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,853
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,654
27. MEMBERSHIP	214

Office: Boston, Massachusetts

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	886
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,198
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,316
4. PENSION	69
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	29
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	334
8. MISCELLANEOUS	85
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	49
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	10
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	118
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,094
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$3,249,034.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$51,134,750.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$54,283,764.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,937
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	872
22. INTERVIEWS	1,829
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,071
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	11
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	2,705
27. MEMBERSHIP	1

Office: Detroit, Michigan

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	823
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	758
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,100
4. PENSION	239
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	323
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	738
8. MISCELLANEOUS	32
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	71
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	63
13. INSURANCE	1
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	168
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,317
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$2,975,864.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$43,344,888.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$46,320,752.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,689
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,282
22. INTERVIEWS	1,000
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,941
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	41
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	3,652
27. MEMBERSHIP	102

Office: St. Louis, Missouri

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,481
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,170
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,154
4. PENSION	274
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	189
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	697
8. MISCELLANEOUS	96
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	88
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	3
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	32
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	44
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	6,228
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$4,737,774.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$82,803,271.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$87,541,045.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	6,302
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,567
22. INTERVIEWS	1,794
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,468
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	358
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	5,199
27. MEMBERSHIP	99

Office: St. Paul, Minnesota

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	2,290
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	949
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,439
4. PENSION	94
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	110
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	239
8. MISCELLANEOUS	6
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	67
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	69
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	76
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	6,339
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$5,095,934.50
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$70,943,668.50
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$76,039,603.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	4,463
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,175
22. INTERVIEWS	1,279
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,951
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,146
27. MEMBERSHIP	171

Office: Fort Harrison, Montana

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	163
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	228
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	403
4. PENSION	45
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	46
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	115
8. MISCELLANEOUS	10
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	10
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	2
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	13
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,033
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$871,147.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$11,406,372.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$12,277,519.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	781
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	102
22. INTERVIEWS	346
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	577
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	316
27. MEMBERSHIP	26

Office: Jackson, Mississippi

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	227
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	211
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	292
4. PENSION	53
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	19
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	6
8. MISCELLANEOUS	2
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	9
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	8
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	5
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	832
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$655,633.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$10,442,974.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$11,098,607.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,029
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	142
22. INTERVIEWS	432
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	911
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	442
27. MEMBERSHIP	8

Office: Lincoln, Nebraska

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	213
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	110
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	346
4. PENSION	8
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	41
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	26
8. MISCELLANEOUS	4
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	15
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	5
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	25
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	794
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$786,187.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$10,222,362.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$11,008,549.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	944
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	157
22. INTERVIEWS	85
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	360
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,013
27. MEMBERSHIP	0

Office: Reno, Nevada		Office: Newark, New Jersey	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	680	1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	347
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	489	2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	602
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	694	3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	647
4. PENSION	84	4. PENSION	47
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	56	5. PENSION MAINTAINED	22
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0	6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	235	7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	111
8. MISCELLANEOUS	5	8. MISCELLANEOUS	1
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	25	9. DEATH COMPENSATION	28
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0	10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	14
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0	11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	3	12. DEATH PENSION	6
13. INSURANCE	0	13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	32	14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	63
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0	15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,303	16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,888
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$9,072,241.00	17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$1,963,139.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$28,142,599.00	18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$26,210,088.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$37,214,840.00	19. FULL AMOUNT	\$28,173,227.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,641	20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,987
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,399	21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	639
22. INTERVIEWS	4,027	22. INTERVIEWS	2,405
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,820	23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,447
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	48	24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0	25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	3,216	26. NEW CLAIMS	2,213
27. MEMBERSHIP	81	27. MEMBERSHIP	68

Office: Las Vegas, Nevada		Office: Albuquerque, New Mexico	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	0	1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	874
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	0	2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	972
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	0	3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,464
4. PENSION	0	4. PENSION	115
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	0	5. PENSION MAINTAINED	161
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0	6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	0	7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	371
8. MISCELLANEOUS	0	8. MISCELLANEOUS	20
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	0	9. DEATH COMPENSATION	42
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0	10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	12
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0	11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0	12. DEATH PENSION	12
13. INSURANCE	0	13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0	14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	20
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0	15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	0	16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,063
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$0.00	17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$3,932,437.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$0.00	18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$55,334,782.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$0.00	19. FULL AMOUNT	\$59,267,219.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	76	20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,922
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	113	21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	523
22. INTERVIEWS	147	22. INTERVIEWS	2,378
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	33	23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,845
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0	24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0	25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	159	26. NEW CLAIMS	2,426
27. MEMBERSHIP	0	27. MEMBERSHIP	0

Office: Manchester, New Hampshire		Office: New York, New York	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	249	1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	727
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	170	2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	797
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	520	3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	997
4. PENSION	11	4. PENSION	47
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	5	5. PENSION MAINTAINED	59
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0	6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	79	7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	47
8. MISCELLANEOUS	0	8. MISCELLANEOUS	7
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	7	9. DEATH COMPENSATION	32
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0	10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	10
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0	11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	1
12. DEATH PENSION	0	12. DEATH PENSION	7
13. INSURANCE	0	13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0	14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	39
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0	15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,041	16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,770
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$1,094,516.00	17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$2,086,183.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$13,287,087.00	18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$37,256,099.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$14,381,603.00	19. FULL AMOUNT	\$39,342,192.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,540	20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,615
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	211	21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	818
22. INTERVIEWS	1,107	22. INTERVIEWS	2,633
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,141	23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,778
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0	24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0	25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,402	26. NEW CLAIMS	2,824
27. MEMBERSHIP	45	27. MEMBERSHIP	54

Office: Albany, New York		Office: Winston Salem, North Carolina	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	4	1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	966
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1	2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,639
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1	3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,914
4. PENSION	0	4. PENSION	164
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	0	5. PENSION MAINTAINED	46
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0	6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	0	7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	804
8. MISCELLANEOUS	0	8. MISCELLANEOUS	0
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	0	9. DEATH COMPENSATION	24
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0	10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	4
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0	11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0	12. DEATH PENSION	7
13. INSURANCE	0	13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0	14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	1
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0	15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	6	16. TOTAL AWARDS	5,569
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$6,932.00	17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$4,647,643.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$119,503.00	18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$68,053,422.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$126,435.00	19. FULL AMOUNT	\$72,701,065.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	37	20. VA FILES REVIEWED	6,102
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	177	21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,550
22. INTERVIEWS	1,209	22. INTERVIEWS	4,302
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	28	23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,902
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1	24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	714
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1	25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
26. NEW CLAIMS	595	26. NEW CLAIMS	4,138
27. MEMBERSHIP	11	27. MEMBERSHIP	0

Office: Buffalo, New York		Office: Fargo, North Dakota	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	308	1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	551
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	427	2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	442
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	679	3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	806
4. PENSION	30	4. PENSION	80
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	40	5. PENSION MAINTAINED	61
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0	6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	536	7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	325
8. MISCELLANEOUS	26	8. MISCELLANEOUS	22
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	27	9. DEATH COMPENSATION	28
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1	10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0	11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	8	12. DEATH PENSION	50
13. INSURANCE	0	13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	69	14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	26
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0	15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,151	16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,391
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$1,858,181.00	17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$1,966,875.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$25,923,083.00	18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$24,228,628.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$27,781,264.00	19. FULL AMOUNT	\$26,195,503.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,559	20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,063
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	303	21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	563
22. INTERVIEWS	798	22. INTERVIEWS	731
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,393	23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,708
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1	24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1	25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	964	26. NEW CLAIMS	1,598
27. MEMBERSHIP	7	27. MEMBERSHIP	200

Office: Syracuse, New York		Office: Cleveland, Ohio	
1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	0	1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,613
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1	2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,567
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	6	3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,858
4. PENSION	0	4. PENSION	407
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	0	5. PENSION MAINTAINED	315
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0	6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	9	7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	342
8. MISCELLANEOUS	0	8. MISCELLANEOUS	53
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	0	9. DEATH COMPENSATION	68
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0	10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	4
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0	11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0	12. DEATH PENSION	129
13. INSURANCE	0	13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	1	14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	63
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0	15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	17	16. TOTAL AWARDS	7,419
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$17,890.00	17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$4,825,062.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$165,373.00	18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$77,022,801.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$183,263.00	19. FULL AMOUNT	\$81,947,863.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,020	20. VA FILES REVIEWED	6,217
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	228	21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,381
22. INTERVIEWS	610	22. INTERVIEWS	755
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	925	23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,480
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1	24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1	25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	687	26. NEW CLAIMS	4,113
27. MEMBERSHIP	7	27. MEMBERSHIP	33

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. SOCIAL 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	65
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	393
22. INTERVIEWS	240
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	36
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	162
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,238
27. MEMBERSHIP	0

Office: Portland, Oregon

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	433
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	480
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	730
4. PENSION	90
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	138
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	658
8. MISCELLANEOUS	1
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	13
10. SOCIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	31
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	14
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,588
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$2,195,127.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$29,905,397.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$32,100,524.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,325
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	370
22. INTERVIEWS	391
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,169
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,131
27. MEMBERSHIP	46

Office: Muskogee, Oklahoma

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,447
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	782
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,612
4. PENSION	92
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	225
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	704
8. MISCELLANEOUS	45
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	38
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	31
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	9
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,985
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$4,084,337.50
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$54,731,585.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$58,815,922.50
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,711
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,310
22. INTERVIEWS	1,721
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,452
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,592
27. MEMBERSHIP	45

Office: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	803
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	984
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,409
4. PENSION	121
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	125
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	221
8. MISCELLANEOUS	17
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	37
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	4
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	5
13. INSURANCE	2
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	78
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	3,806
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$3,174,015.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$47,399,384.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$50,573,399.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,798
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	634
22. INTERVIEWS	3,365
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,500
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
26. NEW CLAIMS	2,464
27. MEMBERSHIP	95

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	0
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	32
22. INTERVIEWS	51
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	0
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	117
27. MEMBERSHIP	0

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	1,555
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	344
22. INTERVIEWS	1,288
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,480
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,144
27. MEMBERSHIP	51

Office: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	502
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	601
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	790
4. PENSION	139
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	86
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	214
8. MISCELLANEOUS	33
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	46
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	21
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	134
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,566
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$1,919,458.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$29,233,284.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$31,152,742.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,308
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	562
22. INTERVIEWS	832
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	769
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	7
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,274
27. MEMBERSHIP	57

Office: Sioux Falls, South Dakota

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	312
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	422
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	705
4. PENSION	62
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	72
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	419
8. MISCELLANEOUS	16
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	20
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	22
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	24
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,074
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$1,550,236.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$18,751,185.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$20,301,421.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,465
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	230
22. INTERVIEWS	498
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,339
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,047
27. MEMBERSHIP	118

Office: Providence, Rhode Island

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	445
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	398
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,011
4. PENSION	11
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	37
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	51
8. MISCELLANEOUS	0
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	5
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	1
12. DEATH PENSION	2
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	1
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,963
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$1,804,147.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$24,974,213.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$26,978,360.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,419
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	553
22. INTERVIEWS	2,014
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,953
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,539
27. MEMBERSHIP	88

Office: Nashville, Tennessee

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	2,064
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,408
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,695
4. PENSION	289
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	167
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	803
8. MISCELLANEOUS	114
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	60
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	63
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	29
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	7,692
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$6,425,525.44
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$77,782,176.80
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$84,207,702.24
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	6,880
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	4,362
22. INTERVIEWS	1,168
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,940
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2,920
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	3
26. NEW CLAIMS	6,614
27. MEMBERSHIP	143

Office: Columbia, South Carolina

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,175
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	920
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,812
4. PENSION	111
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	67
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	390
8. MISCELLANEOUS	113
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	30
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	23
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	13
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,656
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$4,306,327.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$62,997,407.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$67,303,734.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,375
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	667
22. INTERVIEWS	2,720
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,762
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	3
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
26. NEW CLAIMS	2,536
27. MEMBERSHIP	0

Office: Waco, Texas

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	3,322
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,978
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	5,258
4. PENSION	466
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	452
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	2,772
8. MISCELLANEOUS	251
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	117
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	46
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	79
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	15,741
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$11,719,550.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$157,157,105.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$168,876,655.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	14,827
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	6,032
22. INTERVIEWS	2,589
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	10,268
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2,113
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	2
26. NEW CLAIMS	12,923
27. MEMBERSHIP	257

Office: Houston, Texas

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	2,143
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,183
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,911
4. PENSION	198
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	72
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	899
8. MISCELLANEOUS	13
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	49
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	14
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	25
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	6,507
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$4,971,473.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$75,577,852.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$80,549,325.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	4,011
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,635
22. INTERVIEWS	4,049
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,256
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	34
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	3,743
27. MEMBERSHIP	162

Office: San Antonio, Texas

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	3
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	0
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	251
16. TOTAL AWARDS	256
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$648,863.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$6,626,947.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$7,275,810.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	481
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,781
22. INTERVIEWS	6,569
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	183
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	2,562
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	2
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,157
27. MEMBERSHIP	76

Office: Salt Lake City, Utah

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	634
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	499
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	648
4. PENSION	70
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	40
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	556
8. MISCELLANEOUS	1
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	6
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	14
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	5
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	20
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,493
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$1,913,851.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$45,263,749.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$47,177,600.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	5,773
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	953
22. INTERVIEWS	1,938
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,763
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	189
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	2,428
27. MEMBERSHIP	43

Office: White River Junction, Vermont

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	162
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	110
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	191
4. PENSION	9
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	7
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	25
8. MISCELLANEOUS	0
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	3
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	1
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	15
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	523
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$472,943.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$7,084,217.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$7,557,160.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,235
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	176
22. INTERVIEWS	871
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	883
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,019
27. MEMBERSHIP	0

Office: Roanoke, Virginia

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,872
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,114
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,370
4. PENSION	87
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	49
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	424
8. MISCELLANEOUS	13
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	18
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	17
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	26
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,991
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$3,476,602.57
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$53,947,931.12
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$57,424,535.69
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,426
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	5,684
22. INTERVIEWS	1,266
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	753
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	3,875
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,105
27. MEMBERSHIP	87

Office: Seattle, Washington

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	2,765
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,475
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,912
4. PENSION	95
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	55
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	1,082
8. MISCELLANEOUS	11
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	52
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	2
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	8
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	18
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	20
16. TOTAL AWARDS	7,495
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$5,726,384.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$79,993,348.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$85,719,732.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	7,948
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,643
22. INTERVIEWS	2,422
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	6,802
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	3,148
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	4,883
27. MEMBERSHIP	164

Office: Huntington, West Virginia

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	360
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	417
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	525
4. PENSION	56
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	37
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	134
8. MISCELLANEOUS	34
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	9
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	11
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	3
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,586
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$1,552,477.34
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$24,527,669.69
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$26,080,147.03
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	2,431
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	464
22. INTERVIEWS	1,239
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,084
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
26. NEW CLAIMS	1,236
27. MEMBERSHIP	37

Office: San Juan, Puerto Rico

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	228
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	424
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	854
4. PENSION	191
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	112
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	137
8. MISCELLANEOUS	62
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	12
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	38
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	14
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	2,072
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$1,559,093.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$22,843,546.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$24,402,639.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,805
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	533
22. INTERVIEWS	665
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,594
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	4
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
26. NEW CLAIMS	884
27. MEMBERSHIP	5

Office: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	730
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	785
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,156
4. PENSION	140
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	133
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	581
8. MISCELLANEOUS	44
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	106
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	1
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	30
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	85
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	4,791
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$4,662,607.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$83,708,992.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$88,371,599.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	5,102
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	698
22. INTERVIEWS	2,650
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,641
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	1
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
26. NEW CLAIMS	3,369
27. MEMBERSHIP	2

Office: Honolulu, Hawaii

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	342
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	282
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	424
4. PENSION	16
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	10
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	196
8. MISCELLANEOUS	1
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	19
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	69
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	1,359
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$1,110,246.29
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$13,132,938.58
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$14,243,184.87
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	1,156
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	560
22. INTERVIEWS	1,251
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	951
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	3,996
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
26. NEW CLAIMS	904
27. MEMBERSHIP	60

Office: Cheyenne, Wyoming

1. NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	180
2. COMPENSATION INCREASED	126
3. COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	168
4. PENSION	23
5. PENSION MAINTAINED	13
6. SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7. EDUCATION BENEFITS	80
8. MISCELLANEOUS	17
9. DEATH COMPENSATION	7
10. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS	0
11. SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS MAINTAINED	0
12. DEATH PENSION	0
13. INSURANCE	0
14. BURIAL ALLOWANCES	11
15. PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
16. TOTAL AWARDS	625
17. TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	\$437,216.00
18. TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	\$6,392,129.00
19. FULL AMOUNT	\$6,829,345.00
20. VA FILES REVIEWED	3,730
21. POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,470
22. INTERVIEWS	2,108
23. RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,161
24. MILITARY AFFAIRS	181
25. SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
26. NEW CLAIMS	3,908
27. MEMBERSHIP	71

(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
86TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF THE
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
AUGUST 11-14, 2007

NATIONAL COMMANDER BRADLEY S. BARTON, NATIONAL OFFICERS, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, AND DELEGATES TO THE 86TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS:

Voluntary service to veterans and their families has always been the hallmark of the Disabled American Veterans 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, state and national levels serve veterans and their families through a wide range of volunteer 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, hospices, homeless shelters, and anywhere that disabled veterans need a hand.

For 61 years now, the DAV and Auxiliary VAVS programs have taken that raw material and used it to build a vital force of compassion in the lives of the veterans who populate the wards of the VA. They also built a fantastic nationwide Transportation Network, standing at the side of our VAVS program. And our members have done so much more in so many other ways.

Today, as we celebrate the accomplishments of the DAV and our VAVS program, we really celebrate the wonderful people who have made our organization and its programs the envy of the veterans' community. Today, I'd like to take a moment to salute those members and everything they've accomplished during the past year. This report focuses on the past year's achievements for which we should be extremely proud. However, we must also look ahead and determine where the DAV and Auxiliary will find new volunteers to meet the growing needs of our veterans, particularly those who are aging. If you're not already in the ranks of our volunteers, we need you. We need your time, your sensitivities, your ideas, and your help in making certain that America's veterans get the care they deserve.

As you consider your possible future role in our volunteer effort, please remember that there are more than enough opportunities to go around—not only at VA medical centers but in our communities where veterans live. Think of the unused skills and talents in our membership ranks! Think of the services we would offer veterans if more of us become 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.

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 health care facilities. Under this program, 16,070 DAV VAVS volunteers donated 2,367,447 hours in the 12 months ending September 2006.

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 18 State Chairmen, 145 VAVS Representatives, 185 Deputy Representatives, 18 Associate Representatives, and one Deputy Associate Representative.

The DAV volunteer effort is enhanced by a very active corps of 2,517 Auxiliary volunteers who donated 225,017 hours last year. Together, DAV and Auxiliary volunteers provided 2,367,447 hours of VAVS service over the past year – considerably more than any other service organization. This is equivalent to the VA having an additional 1,138 full-time employees with an estimated value of nearly \$43 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 health care facilities for needed treatment, 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 198 active programs. They've recruited 8,732 volunteer drivers who logged 27,774,391 miles last year, providing 772,755 rides for veterans to and from VA health care facilities. Many of these veterans rode in vans DAV purchased and donated to VA health care facilities for use in the Transportation Network. DAV Departments and Chapters, together with the National Organization, have now donated 1,959 vans to VA health care centers nationwide at a cost of \$39,763,442.

At the DAV's 85th National Convention, Ford Motor Company donated eleven new 12-passenger vans to the Disabled American Veterans Transportation Network. The VAMCs that received these vans were: Prescott, Arizona; Fayetteville, Arkansas; Gainesville, Florida; Danville, Illinois; Alexandria, Louisiana; St. Cloud, Minnesota; Omaha, Nebraska; Fayetteville, North Carolina; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Salem, Virginia; and Seattle, Washington.

As a further demonstration of its commitment to the DAV Transportation Network, Ford Motor Company has once again made it possible for the DAV to purchase and donate eight 2008 Ford Taurus X seven passenger vehicles to the Department of Veterans Affairs. DAV's donation will take place during the opening session at this National Convention. The VAMCs receiving these new vehicles are: San Diego, California; Dublin, Georgia; Iowa City, Iowa; Grand Island, Nebraska; Canandaigua, New York; San Antonio, Texas; Hampton, Virginia; and Beckley, West Virginia.

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 29 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 – Joseph H. Smith

Joseph Smith, a regularly scheduled volunteer for 11 years and a member of DAV Chapter 1 in Reno, Nevada transports patients within the VA medical center to their medical appointments. With over 10,300 hours, all new escort volunteers are asked to work two days "shadowing" Joe as their on-the-job training. He has a direct effect on brightening the morale of patients with ambulatory problems. When Joe escorts a patient, he is a friendly presence that helps allay the patient's anxiety. It gives the patients great comfort to know there is someone looking after them.

Joe was shocked when told he was being presented the Seal Award and thought he was getting a pin or something and was very happy and honored with this year's recognition. He's known to say, "veterans have their needs and I try my best to help them."

DAV Auxiliary – Joan Cook

Joan Cook, 78, is a member of Auxiliary Unit 13 in St. Petersburg Beach, Florida who is devoting her life to volunteering following the death of her veteran husband who received excellent care at the VA medical center where he was treated for many years." After his death, she vowed not to sit in a rocking chair and determined to volunteer until she could not walk any more.

With a total of 2,750 hours, Joan works in many different areas of the Bay Pines VA medical center, as well as serving as the DAV Auxiliary Representative on the VAVS Committee and is involved with many of the hospital's programs.

Joan volunteers several days each week, averaging 20-30 hours. She is also often around during weekends to help on special projects and national programs. Her wily smile accompanies her wherever she goes. She provides the veterans with a reason to smile. "I smile all the time, they tell me," said Joan. "I have a lot to be grateful for. I have so many good memories."

Mr. Smith and Mrs. Cook will be presented with their awards during the opening session of the 2007 DAV and Auxiliary National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The DAV and Auxiliary can be proud of people like Mr. Smith and Mrs. Cook 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 Joseph and Joan 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.

2007 JESSE BROWN MEMORIAL YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program was created to honor outstanding young volunteers who are active participants in the VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) program. The scholarships are awarded to deserving young men and women who have generously donated their time and compassion to sick and disabled veterans in their communities. The DAV is deeply appreciative of Ford Motor Company for helping DAV recognize the thousands of hours these outstanding students have donated to care for and comfort disabled veterans.

Candidates for the scholarships must be age 21 or younger and must have volunteered a minimum of 100 hours in a VA medical center during the previous calendar year. The scholarship will be available for any accredited institution of higher learning, to include universities, colleges, community colleges or vocational schools, etc. In addition, the recipient must utilize the scholarship prior to reaching age 25. Immediate family members of employees of the DAV national organization are eligible to receive a scholarship.

Nomination forms are mailed to each Department Commander and Voluntary Service Program Managers at all VA medical centers across the country.

The winners of the 2007 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.

1 st Place	\$15,000 – Jamiya C. Harris, Bay Pines, FL VAMC
2 nd Place	\$10,000 – Andrew D. Wisneski – San Francisco, CA VAMC
3 rd Place	\$ 7,500 – Elizabeth Grondalski, St. Louis, MO VAMC
	\$ 7,500 – Sarah K. Black, Topeka, KS VAMC
4 th Place	\$ 5,000 – Sandeep Singh, Battle Creek, MI VAMC
	\$ 5,000 – Alicia E. Garcia, Albuquerque, NM VAMC
	\$ 5,000 – Jimmy C. Chester, Atlanta, GA VAMC
	\$ 5,000 – Jenna A. Greenman, Battle Creek, MI VAMC
	\$ 5,000 – Ashleigh Summers, Jackson, MS VAMC
	\$ 5,000 – Maya J. Williams, Lyons, NJ VAMC
	\$ 5,000 – Stephanie Smith, Columbia, SC VAMC
	\$ 5,000 – Michael G. Schultz, Milwaukee, WI 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.

Jamiya Harris will be presented with her scholarship during the opening session of the 2007 DAV and Auxiliary National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The selection committee once again stated that all of the nominees are very special volunteers, and it was a very, very difficult job to choose a winner. Each nominee has been awarded a certificate of merit for outstanding volunteer performance in meeting the needs of disabled veterans.

SPORTS FOR THE DISABLED

Athletic programs for handicapped veterans have always been important to DAV. We have a long, proud history of leadership in efforts that encourage athletic activity among disabled veterans of all ages. Working together with the VA, DAV leaders are committed to providing these men and women with opportunities to participate in sports which many thought would not be possible with their disabilities.

The Veterans' Advisory Committee on Rehabilitation previously cited a study in which Kathy Stokes, Ph.D., reported that "the health care needs of those not involved in sports activities were three times higher than those involved in some type of sporting program." Modern Health care Magazine states that sports offer a better quality of life, improved self-confidence and self-esteem, and a way for many newly disabled people to adjust to their handicaps. Athletic activity provides a new and very necessary social outlet, while improving physical endurance and maintaining physical fitness.

More and more, doctors recognize it's not enough to stabilize patients medically and send them home. Without an introduction to sports or recreation, the hospital will see that person again and again. Disabled people involved in sports generally experience fewer medical problems than those who aren't, therapists say. Athletics help maintain cardiovascular conditioning, increase circulation to the extremities, and avert skin breakdowns. Another advantage is that sports are community-based rather than hospital-based undertakings. The DAV believes disabled veterans should have the same opportunity as non-disabled individuals to participate in these activities.

The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic – During April 1-6, 2007, 366 severely disabled veterans took part in the 21st National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic at Snowmass Village, Colorado. With hundreds of volunteers – including 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 and active duty service members with visual impairments, spinal-cord injuries, certain neurological conditions, orthopedic amputations, or other severe disabilities.

We want to thank the sponsors of the 2007 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 +): BearingPoint, Cisco Systems, Ford Motor Company, Health Net Federal Services, J.H. O'Brien Landscaping & Maintenance, Inc., Sprint Nextel and Veterans Canteen Service.

NATIONAL (\$20,000 – \$29,999): AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals, The Coca-Cola Company, DAV Chapter 1, Portland, Oregon, Independence Technology, A Johnson & Johnson Company, Johnson & Johnson Health Care Systems, Inc., QTC Medical Services, Inc., Town of Snowmass Village and TriWest Health care Alliance.

GOLD (\$10,000 – \$19,999): Baxter Health care Corporation, DAV California Rehabilitation Foundation, Inc., DELL, ELAN, Eli Lilly and Company, EMC, Fifth Third Asset Management, Inc., LIFE Foundation, MHN Government Services, Moore Wallace Response Marketing Services, Purdue Pharma Fund, Telebright Corporation, United Airlines and 3M Health Care.

SILVER (\$5,000 – \$9,999): APPTIS, BD Medical, Elks National Veterans Service Commission, Leadership VA Alumni Association, Lockheed Martin Corporation, M Squared Strategies, Inc., Mutual of Omaha Foundation, North Carolina DAV & DAV Auxiliary, Otto Bock Health care and Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 57.

BRONZE (\$2,500 – \$4,999): American Board for Certification in Orthotics & Prosthetics, AMSUS Sustaining Members Section, Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS), Bowlers to Veterans Link, Bula, DAV Auxiliary, DAV Department of Colorado,

DAV Department of Florida, DAV Department of Indiana, DAV Department of Maryland, DAV Department of Nebraska, DAV Department of New Jersey, DAV Department of Virginia, DAV State Commanders and Adjutants Association, EZ-ACCESS Ramps, A Homecare Products Company, The Fischer Family, Frank Pacello, Inc., Frontline Medical, GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals, Golden Technologies, Invacare, Mike Weiss, Network Appliance, Resironics, Inc., The ROHO Group, Rotech, Inc., Team Nordic, Thorlo and William Malcomb.

CONTRIBUTOR (To \$2,499): DAVA Unit 53, Granite City, Illinois; DAVA Unit 103, New Lenox, Illinois; DAV Will County Chapter 103, New Lenox, Illinois; DAV Thomas F. Durbin Chapter 70, Escondido, California; John W. Fitch and J. F. Garth, Jr.

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.

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."

Jason hails from Cupertino, California. He's a marine infantryman who was injured by a massive IED more than two years ago while on patrol near the Syrian border in Iraq. After two months in a coma, Jason woke up to find his world shattered. Blind in his left eye, deaf in his left ear, facing facial reconstruction and suffering from a brain injury that left him unable to speak, read and walk, Jason started out on the arduous road to recovery at the Poly Trauma Center at Palo Alto, California.

With courage, humility and the strength of a marine, Corporal Poole has hunkered down to do battle with the long-term effects suffered by the thousands of service members who have been injured by IED blasts in our current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

What's more, Jason has openly and honestly engaged with the press and the American public to shed light on the plight of our injured veterans. In doing so, Jason has helped focus the attention of the American public, which all too often forgets that for those who bear the scars of war, the battle never truly ends.

Those who have spoken with Jason notice not only his upbeat attitude, but also his British accent. Jason moved from England in his teens and still carries a love for his native land.

In fact, Jason was not sworn in as a US citizen until he was in recovery from his injuries at Palo Alto. If you want to know anything about this young man's character, know this: Jason Poole was walking point and placing himself in harm's way for our nation before he was fully vested as a US citizen. Jason is a walking, talking civics lesson and we are honored to have him here.

Last year, Jason had progressed enough in his recovery to attend his first Winter Sports Clinic, where he faced the intense challenge of the mountain on his snowboard. He then took the sense of renewed possibility and spirit of adventure bolstered by the clinic and went back to Palo Alto to encourage his friends there to come with him when he returned this year.

A friend of Jason's, Marine Staff Sergeant "AP" Apineru, said: "Jason has been a motivation for me and for tons of other people we meet. He's always helping people and setting an example. He has a huge heart. All of us who came from Palo Alto are here because he encouraged us. And we're all very glad that he did."

Everything Jason did at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic was accomplished with enthusiasm, cheerfulness and determination.

Clinic Statistics

Veterans: 366; women veterans: 47; active duty: 33; states represented: 41; VA's represented: 82; youngest participant: 19; oldest participant: 84

This year, 226 veterans served in combat in the wars or conflicts listed below. Of these, 84 veterans were wounded in combat.

World War II: 6; Korean War: 10; Vietnam War: 83; Gulf War: 31; Operation Iraqi Freedom: 62; Operation Enduring Freedom: 20; Tenth Mountain Veterans: 4; Multiple Wars or Conflicts: 12

Other Conflicts: Grenada 3; Panama 1; Grenada and Panama 1; Bosnia 2; Somalia 1; Central American 1; Lebanon 1; and the Cold War 3

Medical Conditions: spinal cord injured: 144; amputee: 69; visually impaired: 58; brain injury: 50; multiple sclerosis: 36; neurological damage: 5; stroke: 12; other or multiple diagnoses: 45

Branch of Service: Army: 190; Navy: 64; Air Force: 55, Marines: 60; Coast Guard: 5; National Guard: 2, Multiple Branches: 10

The 22nd Annual National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic promises to be better and bigger and will be held March 30 through April 4, 2008, in Snowmass Village, Colorado.

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 58th annual tournament at the Onion Creek Club in Austin, Texas, September 12-14, 2006, drew 88 entries, 35 of them veterans. The winner of the DAV National Commander's trophy was Roy D. McCoy of Round Rock, Texas.

First Swing Golf – This is the DAV's 18th 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 2006, 42 First Swing seminars and Learn to Golf Clinics included 373 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.

St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Mike Maroth has continued to visit veteran patients at the Ann Arbor and Detroit, Michigan, VA Medical Centers. During a Detroit visit he was presented with the DAV Going to Bat Award for his continued work with disabled veterans.

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 2005, he was 14-14 with a 4.74 earned run average and completed the season with an impressive 209 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 health care facilities in the future.

We continue to sponsor several other major and minor league baseball players at hospital visits like Mr. Maroth's. These DAV-sponsored celebrities sign autographs, present patients with photographs, and help brighten the day for sick and disabled veterans in VA health care 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 Bradley S. Barton and Auxiliary National Commander Donna M. Tanner, and their staffs, the National Line Officers, Board of Directors, National Finance Committee, DAV Interim Hospital Committee, National Service Foundation, and the Charitable Service Trust. Their assistance and support were essential ingredients of our 2006 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, Voluntary Services Program Coordinator Joyce Barrett and correspondent Wilma Henderson and Membership SharePoint Lead 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 and today's youth who care enough to make a difference in the lives of so many, the volunteer corps of the DAV and Auxiliary. As has often been said, "there is no higher distinction than service to others." And there are none more distinguished than the men and women who are out there right now, working to bring the comfort of love and the joy of life to our nation's disabled veterans and their families. 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, 2005 through September 30, 2006

NUMBER OF REGULARLY SCHEDULED VAVS VOLUNTEERS	16,070
NUMBER OF HOURS BY REGULARLY SCHEDULED VOLUNTEERS	2,295,799
NUMBER OF HOURS BY OCCASIONAL VOLUNTEERS	71,648
NUMBER OF HOURS BY ALL VAVS VOLUNTEERS	2,367,447
<u>VAVS APPOINTED POSITIONS</u>	
NUMBER OF STATE CHAIRMEN	18
NUMBER OF STATE CHAIRMEN ALSO SERVING AS REPRESENTATIVES	11
NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES	145
NUMBER OF DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVES	185
NUMBER OF ASSOCIATE REPRESENTATIVES	18
NUMBER OF DEPUTY ASSOCIATE REPRESENTATIVES	1
NUMBER OF HONORARY REPRESENTATIVES	3
NUMBER OF APPOINTED POSITIONS	381
ANNUAL JOINT REVIEWS RECEIVED FOR THE YEAR	49

DAV TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM
(January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006)

TOTAL NUMBER OF HOSPITAL SERVICE COORDINATORS (HSCs)	185
NUMBER OF VETERANS TRANSPORTED	772,755
TRANSPORTATION HOURS	1,564,666
TRANSPORTATION MILES	27,774,391

2006 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK GRANTS

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK HSC PROGRAM GRANTS \$ 494,946

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK VAN GRANTS \$ 2,528,472

(127 vans purchased and delivered in 2006)

2006 Total National Grant Expenditures \$ 3,023,418

(The following written annual report was submitted by Joseph A. Violante, National Legislative Director:)

ANNUAL REPORT
Of the
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
For 2006-2007
By JOSEPH A. VIOLANTE
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR
For presentation to
THE 86TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
AUGUST 11-14, 2007

NATIONAL COMMANDER BRADLEY S. BARTON AND DISTINGUISHED
DELEGATES:

On this occasion of the 86th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans, I am pleased to provide a report on the status of the National Legislative Department. This report includes both an outline of current and upcoming steps necessary to attain the legislative goals established by our 1.3 million members, and a summary of the legislative activities that occurred during the months since our previous National Convention.

DAV Benefits Protection Team members and DAV Commander's Action Network members realize early on that our nation's founding fathers intended for our legislative branch of government to be deliberative and careful in its approach to spending tax revenues and establishing public laws. As such, legislative changes normally occur in a slow moving, gradual process. The decelerated pace can sometimes make legislative advocacy seem like an effort in futility. Compelling Congress to make needed changes is often compared to the task of the mythological figure, Sisyphus, whose burden was to forever roll a huge rock up a mountainside. Every time Sisyphus neared the summit, the boulder slipped from his grasp and he had to begin again. So too, may seem the legislative process. But in spite of the inevitable frustrations, the effect of continuous legislative pressure over time can, like geological forces that give rise to mountains, result in wondrous long-term effects.

For years, our members have prompted Congress to appropriate an adequate level of resources for the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) to provide care to disabled veterans of our Armed Forces. I am pleased to report that the tenacity of our grassroots network is driving forward the most promising VA budget in recent memory. Also, consideration is finally being given to fixing the funding structure for VA health care. DAV members and DAV Auxiliary members should note with a great deal of satisfaction that their calls, letters, and visits to their Senators and Representatives are having an impact. More importantly, this momentum should harden our resolve to strive for both immediate and long-term goals on behalf of disabled veterans and their families.

Action Plan for the 110th Congress

As the struggle to advance our legislative agenda is analogous to the task of Sisyphus, our perspective on veterans' benefits is comparable to another mythological figure, Janus. Janus, which is depicted as the combination of one face looking forward and one looking backward, symbolizes progress based on past successes. The DAV embodies this notion because we are mindful of our origins, and we maintain the bearing that has brought us status as the foremost advocate for those who become injured while defending our nation.

The DAV was first to recognize the need to shift the funding process for VA health care from a discretionary to mandatory program, and eliminate the longstanding funding shortfall that erodes the VA health care system. Together, we have advanced this agenda in recent years, and we

must secure the goal while it is within our grasp. Now, the DAV has launched a major campaign to establish an assured funding mechanism to meet the health care needs of current and future disabled veterans.

Our goal is shared by a number of organizations eager to assist in this reform. We are leading an en masse effort with a number of key agencies, lawmakers and their staffs, and other knowledgeable individuals, to seize the opportunity to create an historic enhancement to veterans' benefits. Throughout the upcoming months, we will provide periodic reports regarding the status of this effort.

Another major initiative is to identify and eliminate gaps in outreach and screening for mental health readjustment problems and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) in returning veterans. VA and the Department of Defense (DoD) lack coordination necessary to address mild and moderate TBI and concussion injuries. Too little is known about the nature and consequences of these injuries. Veterans need a standardized follow-up protocol with appropriate clinical assessment techniques so providers can recognize and treat neurological and behavioral consequences of TBI. The influx of service members returning with mild and moderate brain trauma must engender research into the evaluation and treatment of these injuries. VA should include in this research veterans of past conflicts who may have also suffered similar injuries that went undetected, undiagnosed, and untreated. Part of our agenda is to make pre- and post-deployment self-assessment tools a prominent part of the veteran's transition to VA health care, to ensure those with needs are identified early and provided assistance by DoD, with an effective transition to VA care.

We are also engaging in an effort to establish an innovative and integrated program of support to family members who serve as close, continuing caregivers to home-based veterans with poly-trauma from military service in Iraq and Afghanistan. The current caregiver assistance provision that was established by Public Law 109-461 does not adequately address the array of challenges facing these families. Limited to an expenditure of \$5 million annually, this program needs to be reinforced or restructured with new authority, higher funding, and a new mandate for a comprehensive program.

Budget & Appropriations

Fiscal Year 2007

The House passed its Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 appropriations bill for Military Construction, Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs, on May 19, 2006. The Senate passed its version on November 14, 2006. Nevertheless, the two chambers failed to make it to conference to resolve differences between their respective measures prior to the adjournment of the 109th Congress. Therefore, no final version was sent to the President for enactment. In the absence of an annual appropriation bill, FY 2007 funding was sustained through a series of continuing resolutions: Div. B of H.R. 5631 (P.L.109-289) continued appropriations through November 16, 2006
H.J. Res. 100 (P.L. 109-369) continued appropriations through December 18, 2006
H.J. Res. 102 (P.L. 109-383) continued appropriations through February 15, 2007
H.J. Res. 20 (P.L. 110-5) was passed by the 110th Congress and enacted on February 15, 2007, continues appropriations through September 30, the end of FY 2007

The final continuing resolution, H.J. Res. 20, included a \$3.6 billion increase for the VA, which had been operating at FY 2006 funding levels until mid-February, nearly halfway through the fiscal year. Further enhancement occurred on May 25, 2007, when President Bush signed a supplemental spending bill, H.R. 2206, which increased the VA FY 2007 budget for health care and other programs by \$1.8 billion. Again, while the increase was welcomed, VA could have made better use of the funding if it had been appropriated at the beginning of the budget cycle.

Fiscal Year 2008

The Administration submitted its FY 2008 budget to Congress on February 5, 2007. The budget plan contained \$86.7 billion in budget authority for the VA, more than half of which was for mandatory funding for disability compensation, pension, vocational rehabilitation, and education benefits. For VA health care, the Administration proposed a budget of \$34.2 billion, an increase of approximately \$1.9 billion over the FY 2007 appropriation level. *The Independent Budget (IB)*, a comprehensive budget policy document co-authored by the DAV, AMVETS, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, recommended \$36.3 billion in funding for veterans' health care for FY 2008. This amount would be an increase of \$4 billion over the projected FY 2007 appropriations level, and it is designed to meet realistic inflation and health care demand increases. The Administration's budget submission was also about \$700 million below the IB recommendation for the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA).

On March 23, the Senate passed S Con Res 21, its budget resolution for 2008, and on March 29, the House passed its 2008 budget resolution H Con Res 99. Both the Senate and House budget resolutions exceeded the Administration's request by \$3.5 billion. Both chambers agreed to the conference report on May, 17, 2007. While the budget resolution sets the congressional budget, it is merely a blueprint for spending priorities. It is the House and Senate Appropriations Committees that determine the actual spending levels for government agencies.

Both the House and the Senate Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittees approved their separate versions of a \$109.2 billion FY 2008 spending bill. Both bills included \$64.7 billion in discretionary spending and would appropriate nearly \$4 billion more than the Administration requested. The full House passed its bill, H.R. 2642, by a vote of 409-2 on June 15, 2007, and Senate placed its bill on the legislative calendar on June 18, 2007. Hearings

On September 20, 2006, National Commander Barton presented our views on various issues affecting disabled veterans to the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. Commander Barton expressed hope that the Committee would renew the time-honored commitment to hear the DAV's legislative priorities in a joint hearing. He reinforced our call for adequate funding and other improvements for veterans' programs and expressed our opposition to schemes to shift the costs of medical care to veterans themselves through enrollment fees and higher copayments. He reminded the Committee members of the solemn obligation to provide essential benefits and maintain an effective delivery system for disabled veterans. He emphatically opposed a change in law to permit attorneys and agents to charge claimants for services rendered in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of veterans' benefits claims. Finally, Commander Barton highlighted our legislative goals as contained in the resolutions adopted at our National Convention, and he urged the Committee to give its full support to efforts to meet the needs of America's disabled veterans and their families.

On September 28, 2006, in a hearing before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health, we presented the DAV's views concerning active duty service members and veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or TBI. We urged the Subcommittee to examine current data to ascertain what initiatives may mitigate long-term mental health consequences, and to be mindful of medical findings that suggest even mild-symptom TBI patients may have long-term mental and medical health consequences. Our testimony discussed the variety of specialized mental health programs administered by VA and noted our nation's long-term obligations to provide care for veterans with TBI.

On October 19, 2006, we testified before the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission on the question of whether the Commission should recommend that veterans' disability compensation be paid in lump sums instead of monthly payments. The DAV testified on behalf of itself, the Air Force Sergeants Association, the American Legion, AMVETS, the Blinded Veterans Association, the Fleet Reserve Association, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA, the Military Officers Association of America, the National Association for the Uniformed Services, the Non Commissioned Officers Association, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. We stated that a lump-sum settlement for compensation would be inadvisable and expounded on the many reasons for our view. The DAV and its fellow organizations formed a united front in opposition to changes in the current mode of VA compensation payments to incorporate lump-sum settlements.

On November 6, 2006, we presented testimony before the Institute of Medicine (IOM). Under consideration were the various provisions by which the VA presumes certain diseases to be service connected in cases where there is no evidence of the presence of such diseases during service. This testimony provided a brief discourse on the current laws regarding presumption of service connection and explained, through a detailed historical account, how such laws came into effect. We urged IOM to be mindful that the military environment is complex, with an abundance of hazards that may constitute both known and unrecognized etiological factors for disease. The essential point of our testimony was that presumptions created through legislative judgments serve as equitable, practical, and rational solutions to complex questions of service connection.

On January 19, 2007, the DAV once again had the honor of testifying on behalf of a number of our fellow veterans' organizations before the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission. The focus of the hearing was on several key questions regarding the basis for service connection and compensation. The written statement presented to the Commission was a 50-page document with 182 footnotes referencing the extensive legal research supporting our responses to the questions posed. While the detailed argument supporting our views was somewhat complex, our responses themselves are easily understood and can be summarized as follows:

- No change should be made to the line-of-duty standard with regard to service connection.
- No differentiation should be made in the rates for compensation based on whether the disability is from wartime or peacetime or combat or noncombat circumstances.
- No change should be made to current provisions for recognition of a conditional discharge.
- Change should be made to repeal the unfair prohibition on the concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability compensation for all disabled career military retirees.

On February 8, 2007, we presented to the House Veterans' Affairs Committee the IB recommendations for FY 2008, and compared the IB recommendations to the Administration's budget, which had been released three days earlier. As we customarily do, we limited our testimony to the benefit programs, predominantly, because our IB partners cover medical programs, construction, and the National Cemetery Administration. We emphasized the need to address the urgent situation that has been developing for years in the VA claims processing system with regard to the claims backlog. We urged the Committee to introduce legislation to adequately support a long-term strategy for improvement in claims processing, and to provide funding for adequate staffing for the programs under VBA. To improve the administration of the benefit programs, we articulated the IB recommendation to invest more in information technology and training programs. With regard to the benefit programs themselves, we pointed to a number of IB recommendations to adjust benefit rates and improve program features.

On February 13, 2007, we presented similar testimony to the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee regarding the IB recommendations for FY 2008 and addressed the Administration's proposed budget.

During the 2007 Midwinter Conference, at the newly reinstated joint hearing before the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees, National Commander Barton presented our views on various issues affecting disabled veterans. He began his testimony with an expression of gratitude that the Committees had honored our requests to renew the joint hearing. Commander Barton reinforced our positions he succinctly presented during September 20, 2006 hearing. He again expressed our adamant opposition to fee-charging attorneys profiting from monies intended to compensate disabled veterans for injuries incurred on active duty. Commander Barton personalized his convincing argument by noting that he is an attorney and has provided thousands of hours of pro bono (free) work for veterans. So compelling was his delivery that it elicited standing applause from Senator Jim Webb.

On March 6, 2007, we presented testimony before the House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies. The focus of the hearing was TBI and its consequences on health care programs, including VA mental health services. The hearing also included consideration of the status of women's VA health programs. The DAV testified on behalf of itself and the IB. With regard to TBI, we acknowledged positive developments within VA such as the designation of special emphasis program for TBI, and the VA commitment to working with DoD to provide comprehensive acute and long-term rehabilitative care for veterans with brain injuries. We noted concern about media accounts and reports from veteran patients with TBI and their family members who felt the need to seek specialized rehabilitation services in the private sector. We encouraged VA and Congress to address these types of complaints to ensure severely wounded TBI veterans are receiving the best rehabilitative care available. Our testimony also noted our concerns regarding the need to fill the gaps in mental health care coverage, specifically with regard to suicide prevention. Finally, we addressed the special needs of women veterans and stressed that VA needs to ensure women veterans' programs can provide quality health care and specialized services that are needed.

On March 7, 2007, before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, we addressed the necessity and means to improve timeliness and accuracy in the VA disability claims adjudication and appellate processes. Our testimony listed some of the factors that have led to the decline in VA's efficiency and accuracy over the years, and we noted the steps that must be taken to correct the problems and reverse the current trend.

On March 12, 2007, before a joint hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, we had the opportunity to bring greater awareness to a longstanding problem in the military disability evaluation system. This problem, the serious underrating of disabilities that render service members unfit for further service, adversely affects military personnel for years, perhaps the remainder of their lives. We noted that the disparity occurs because the military disability evaluation system does not adhere to the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD). We encouraged the Committees to introduce legislation to make it clear that DoD must follow the VASRD, and that DoD does not have the authority to modify the

schedule, and that decisions of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims interpreting the rating schedule must be followed by the DoD.

On March 21, 2007, we again presented testimony before the House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies. The purpose of the hearing was to discuss IB recommendations for FY 2008. As in the two previous IB hearings, the DAV focused on veterans' benefits. Both the written statement and oral remarks for this hearing were reflective of the testimony presented before the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees earlier in the year.

On April 17, 2007, the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing on four different benefit bills. H.R. 67 would establish procedures for coordination of outreach activities between the various VA offices. It would also authorize \$25 million to be appropriated annually for grants to state veteran agencies for outreach services. While the DAV did not oppose this measure, we suggested that the funding for state veterans agencies would be better utilized if put toward hiring and training additional VA claims processing personnel. H.R. 1435 would establish a pilot program requiring VA offices in California, Florida, Ohio, South Carolina, and Texas to refer claims needing further development to County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO). CVSO staffs would act as claimant advocates in developing such claims. The DAV strongly opposed this legislation for a number of reasons. Primarily, because it is the federal government's responsibility to provide benefits and services to veterans of the Armed Forces, and the responsibility should not be shifted to local government officials. H.R. 1444 would require the VA to pay an interim benefit of \$500 per month when a claim for veterans' benefits is remanded by either the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims or the Board of Veterans' Appeals and the VA does not make a decision on the matter within 180 days of the date of the remand. The DAV does not support this legislation. If enacted, this bill could lead to abuse of the system. H.R. 1490 would provide a presumption of service connection to veterans presenting a claim for VA disability compensation or death benefits. The DAV does not support the idea of presumption of service-connection for submitted claims. The laws and regulations formulating the VA ratings system are complex and veterans would both knowingly and unknowingly file meritless claims for benefits. The resulting penalties and overpayments would create a hardship for those who were audited, and the massive increase in mandatory funding that would follow enactment of this legislation would place undue hardship on taxpayers.

On April 18, 2007, before the House Veterans Subcommittee on Health we presented testimony on behalf of the IB organizations. The subject of the hearing was access to VA medical care services in rural areas. Several recommendations were made to support the right of rural veterans to VA health care. We urged the Subcommittee to support funding for rural care and outreach with a specific appropriation for this purpose. We stated that the distances veterans must travel should be considered in VA's policies in determining the appropriate location and setting for providing VA health care services, and that VA should use existing authority to establish a Rural Veterans Advisory Committee, to include membership by the veterans' service organizations. We stated that VA rural outreach should include a special focus on Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native veterans' health care needs, and that VA should develop a policy to supply health-professions clinical personnel to VA facilities in rural areas. Finally, we suggested that Mobile Vet Centers should be established, at least on a pilot basis, to provide outreach and counseling to veterans in rural areas, and that VA must focus some of its homeless veteran program resources, including contracts with, and grants to, community-based organizations, to address the needs of homeless veterans in rural areas.

On April 20, 2007, DAV testified before the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission on whether the Commission should recommend a change in law to enable a veteran's survivor to pursue a benefits claim of the veteran that was pending and unresolved at the time of the veteran's death. We stated that a survivor should be able to assume the role of the veteran to take a claim to its resolution in the same manner the veteran could have.

On April 26, 2007, before the House Veterans' Subcommittee on Health, we testified on various bills under consideration by the Subcommittee. We urged the Subcommittee not to support H.R. 92, H.R. 315, H.R. 339, H.R. 463, H.R. 1462, H.R. 1471, and H.R. 1527, all of which were intended to help provide timely access to VA health care. While we expressed appreciation for the Subcommittee's intent, the plans imposed by these bills held negative consequences for VA. Such consequences included complications that might create a disincentive for private health care providers to accept and treat veterans, and diversion of funds from VA facilities to private sector health care providers. The DAV has no resolutions regarding the provisions within

H.R. 538 or H.R. 542, but both bills are relatively inert, so we stated no opposition. We did state our support for provisions in H.R. 1944 to increase the level of health care services for disabled veterans with traumatic brain injury. Our one exception to a provision within the bill would encourage the VA to provide a comprehensive program for long-term traumatic brain injury rehabilitation through cooperative agreements with appropriate public or private entities. While we are cognizant of the opportunities a cooperative agreement may offer, we are concerned that the provision, as written, may over time erode VA's special emphasis program of TBI care.

On May 9, 2007, we presented testimony before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. The hearing covered 28 bills and hundreds of provisions. Most of the provisions considered were favorable and warranted our full support. Many others fell outside the DAV mission but were beneficial and were not opposed by the DAV. Only one bill was opposed; S. 961 would provide a non service-connected benefit, to certain Merchant Mariners or their surviving spouses that exceeds the amount of compensation the VA pays to a 60 percent service-connected disabled veteran. Along with the disparity illustrated by this comparison, the DAV is concerned about the cost enactment of the legislation would have. The VA estimated the cost of the bill would be approximately \$234.1 million in the first fiscal year and an additional benefit cost of \$1.4 billion over 10 years. While the DAV acknowledges the bravery, sacrifice, and contributions of the Merchant Mariners of WWII, we opposed offsetting the costs associated with S. 961 against other VA programs. Among the most notable bills addressed in the hearing was a draft bill, the Comprehensive Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2007. As the title implies, the inclusive bill contains 21 provisions that are largely reflective of recommendations made within the IB.

On May 9, 2007, before the House Veterans' Subcommittee on Health, we testified on the present and future state of long-term VA health care programs. We stressed the need to ensure that veterans receive the benefits of institutional geriatric care services in a coordinated, integrated manner, as well as a full array of non-institutional extended care, which is available to all enrolled veterans. We stated that Congress must ensure that VA has the necessary resources to provide such care.

On May 22, 2007, the House Veterans' Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing on challenges facing the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims (the Court). Our testimony stated that the greatest challenge facing the Court is the backlog of appeals, which translates to potential financial hardship for many veterans awaiting benefits. We supported recalling retired judges as a partial remedy to the backlog problem; but more importantly, we noted a primary cause for accumulation of cases at the Court. The Court over the years has shown a reluctance to reverse errors committed by the Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) in its decisions. Rather than addressing allegations of error raised by an appellant, the Court has shown a propensity to vacate and remand such cases to the Board. The DAV encouraged the Subcommittee to introduce legislation to require the Court to decide all relevant questions of law, interpret constitutional, statutory, and regulatory provisions, and determine the meaning or applicability of the terms of an action of the VA. We believe that such changes would help break the perpetual cycle of remand and appeal. The DAV also believes that to provide Congress with an accurate measure of the Court's performance, the Court should submit an annual report to Congress that would give Congress a clearer picture of the Court's accomplishments. Finally, the DAV urged the Subcommittee to support the establishment of a dedicated Veterans' Courthouse and Justice Center that features a design and location worthy of its status.

On May 23, 2007, before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee we presented testimony on 15 bills focused on VA health care services. We urged the Committee not to support S. 117, S. 815, S. 874, and S. 1147, all of which were well-intended bills to improve VA health care. While we expressed appreciation for the Committee's intent, the plans imposed by these bills could result in a series of potential unintended consequences for VA. Most of the foreseen complications were related to diversion of funds from established VA programs, and we recommended that the Committee defer action on the bills until after Congress can assure funding for VA health care. Several of the bills considered fell outside the DAV legislative agenda, and we stated no position in that regard. We supported S. 383 to extend the period of eligibility for health care for combat service in the Persian Gulf War or future hostilities, from two years to five years after discharge, and S. 479 to establish a broad-based suicide prevention initiative in the VA. We suggested that the Committee consider modifying the bill to make clear that the suicide prevention programs the bill would establish are intended to be applied to VA programs. We supported S. 610 to retroactively authorize full-time work credits for federal retirement purposes for VA registered nurses who worked part-time and retired from active service prior to April 7,

1986, and S. 692 to establish a “hospital report card” covering a variety of activities of hospital care. We urged the Committee to approve S. 994 to reform the VA beneficiary travel program to bring reimbursement rates into line with those paid to federal officials and federal employees. Finally, we supported the provisions of S. 1233 to enhance and strengthen VA’s rehabilitation program for veterans with TBI.

On May 24, 2007, we testified before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform in a hearing concerning active duty service members and veterans who may be suffering from readjustment issues, such as PTSD and other problems. Our testimony provided a background on the effects and statistics of PTSD from a historical and contemporary perspective. It addressed barriers to veterans’ access to mental health care and recovery, mental health screening and referral, reducing mental health stigma, VA mental health programs and gaps in service, the special concern of suicide among veterans, the VA’s capacity to address issues related to TBI, and the needs of women veterans who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). We noted that the cost of programs addressing these issues is a continuing cost of national defense, and that the VA must be sufficiently funded to treat newly returning veterans with acute and emerging mental health issues without displacing older veterans with chronic mental illnesses. Finally, we stated that we must also ensure that family members of veterans devastated by the consequences of TBI, PTSD, and other injuries have access to appropriate services.

On June 7, 2007, we testified before the House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity on the Specially Adapted Housing program. Our testimony urged the Subcommittee to support H.R. 675, which would increase the \$50,000 grant to \$60,000, and increase the \$10,000 grant to \$12,000. Additionally, the bill would provide for automatic annual adjustments based on the national average increase in the cost of residential home construction. We urged the Subcommittee to support H.R. 1315, which would provide specially adaptive housing grants to disabled members of the Armed Forces residing temporarily in housing owned by a family member. We recommended that such grants be in addition to the overall amount available to the veteran for later use.

On June 14, 2007, we presented our views on several veterans’ health care measures to the House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Health. H.R. 1448 would establish a “hospital report card” covering a variety of activities of VA inpatient hospital care. We supported this bill but added that the report should include an assessment of VA primary care and extended care services. H.R. 1853 would require the VA to ensure that officers of the VA police service be trained with respect to their interactions with veterans possibly suffering from mental illnesses. We supported the bill with the recommendation that properly credentialed mental health practitioners be designated as training resources. H.R. 1925 would establish a 22nd Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) in the western Panhandle of Florida, far south Alabama, and eastern Mississippi. While the DAV does not have a resolution addressing this issue, we noted that the proponent of this bill makes a valid argument that perhaps a new alignment is in order, and we expressed no opposition to its passage. H.R. 2005 would improve reimbursement rates for veterans for their travel expenses related to VA medical care. It would reimburse veterans at the same rate paid to federal employees, by increasing it from 11 cents per mile to 48.5 cents per mile. We urged the Subcommittee to approve this measure immediately. H.R. 2172 would ensure that the VA’s prosthetics program should be able to provide all necessary prosthetic services, devices, and supplies for the proper treatment of service-connected disabled veterans. We agreed with the intent of the measure, but we noted that most the bill’s requirements are already being addressed by VA. We also expressed concern with the bill’s requirement for VA to contract with a non-VA agency to repair and service prosthetic devices in certain circumstances. We urged the Subcommittee not to support H.R. 2173, H.R. 2192, and H.R. 2378 which are well-intended bills to improve VA health care, but they could result in diversion of funds from established VA programs. Finally, we supported H.R. 2623 to prohibit the collection of copayments for VA hospice care.

On June 20, 2007, The House Veterans’ Affairs Committee held a hearing to consider current VA policy regarding Priority Group 8 (PG8) veterans. New veterans who seek access to VA health care and fall into this category are currently barred from enrollment in the VA health care system. We stated that in order to remain a viable health care system, VA needs a wide range of patients, including those who are in good health, those with acute and chronic illnesses, and veterans with catastrophic health care problems who need highly specialized services. When VA manages a proper mix of patients, it offers a better health care plan to all patients and is a more attractive place of employment for clinical and health professions, educational, and research

professional staff. For DAV, a better system for all veterans' care means a better system for service-disabled veterans. We urged the Committee to support legislation to provide VA health care for PG8 veterans, but cautioned it to provide the necessary funds to VA before the system is reopened to PG8 veterans.

On June 21, 2007, we presented testimony before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity. The purpose of the hearing was to consider various pending bills. We limited our remarks to the measures that address DAV resolutions. We encouraged the Subcommittee to support the following bills: H.R. 675 to provide a realistic increase in specially adapted housing grants, and an automatic annual adjustment based on the cost of living; HR 1315 to provide adaptive housing grants to disabled members of the Armed Forces residing with a family member; H.R. 1370 to establish a VA Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events; H.R. 2259 to ensure that members of the National Guard and Reserves can utilize the benefits delivery at discharge program. With regard to H.R. 1370 we recommended that it include language to place the office under the Veterans' Health Administration. Currently, the programs are under the authority of the VA Public Affairs Office and VHA is almost completely removed from administrative decisions. Though the Public Affairs Office certainly has a role to play, the ultimate purpose of the events is to provide therapy to severely disabled veterans. Since VHA is responsible for providing such care, it should be the designated authority for such programs.

On July 12, 2007, before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health, we testified on the current and future needs of women and minority veterans seeking VA services. In part, our statement pointed to a June 2007, VA report, Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the VA Health care System. We supported and applauded the Subcommittee for its efforts to increase awareness about minority veterans' issues and advance the quality of the services they receive. We also urged the VA to continue its research and provide appropriate resources and policies to eliminate racial disparities in VA health care. We noted the increasing numbers of women serving in the military, and that it is essential that the VA be responsive to the unique demographics of this veteran population. In addition, we stated that the VA must ensure that its special disability programs are tailored to meet the unique health concerns of women who have served in combat theaters and those who have suffered catastrophic disabilities as a result of military service.

On July 18, 2007, we testified before the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission to present our views on IOM draft reports entitled "A 21st Century System for Evaluating Veterans for Disability Benefits" and "PTSD Compensation and Military Service." The extensive research and background information necessary to support the DAV positions on these complex subjects resulted in a written statement consisting of more than 100 pages of testimony. The DAV objective was to ensure that the VASRD is not altered in a way that is unfavorable to disabled veterans. We also seek to deter unwarranted changes that will lead to negative consequences for the VBA.

On July 19, 2007, before the before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health, the DAV presented our views on Veterans' Health Centers (Vet Centers). We expressed concern about a marked increase workload at Vet Centers while staffing levels remain relatively unchanged. Specifically, activity at Vet Centers for OIF/OEF veterans has grown from less than 20,000 visits in fiscal year 2004, to over 240,000 in fiscal year 2006. Concurrently, Vet Center staffing in fiscal year 2004 of 556 increased to 558.5 in fiscal year 2006. While the VA has announced its intention to create 23 additional Vet Centers of which three will be opened this year, the DAV urged a more aggressive timeline in the establishment of these new Vet Centers, and the hiring of additional staff commensurate with the current and projected need for readjustment services.

On July 25, 2007, before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee we presented testimony on VA health care funding. The DAV urged the Committee to support an assured funding mechanism for VHA. We pointed out that VHA is the largest direct provider of health care services in the nation, and is the primary back-up provider to DoD in times of war or national emergencies. We referenced a number of health care experts who have recognized that VHA provides the most cost-effective health care in the nation, significantly below the cost of Medicare. We noted that when sick and disabled veterans cannot get the health care services from the VA, they will go to another less efficient resource for care, which translates directly into higher national health care expenditures. We urged the Committee to transfer funding for VA health care from the current discretionary process and to make it a mandatory appropriation.

As you can see, the National Legislative Staff has been heavily occupied during the past several months preparing testimony and attending numerous hearings dealing with a wide array of issues and pending legislation. The outlook for the upcoming months promises to be just as

busy. Already, the Committees are developing an industrious agenda for the fall that demands our focus even as we engage in the activities of this National Convention.

Legislation Enacted

Public Law 109-361. The Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Act of 2006 became Public Law 109-361 in October. The law increased, as of December 1, 2006, the rates of veterans' disability compensation, **dependency and indemnity compensation** (DIC) for surviving spouses and children, and certain related benefits. The COLA was based on inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index. The increase was 3.3 percent.

Public Law 109-461. S. 3421. the Veterans Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006, a massive 165-page omnibus bill, was enacted in the final days of the 109th Congress. Despite the objection of the DAV, the bill included an amendment to authorize agents and attorneys to charge claimants a fee for services provided after a notice of disagreement has been filed. The DAV continues to seek legislation to eliminate the potential negative consequences this ill-advised provision holds for both individual veterans and the VA claims system. S. 3421 also contained provisions derived from several separate bills to improve veterans' and survivors' benefits, burial benefits, and other miscellaneous benefits. The following list highlights a number of provisions which are beneficial to disabled veterans and their families:

- Directs VA to implement the following provisions to expand and improve programs and services intended to address the mental health needs of returning servicemen and women:
- Requires VA to ensure that each community-based outpatient clinic (CBOC) has the capacity to provide, or monitor the provision of, mental health services.
- Requires VA to submit a report to Congress not later than January 31, 2008, on its capacity to provide mental health services at each CBOC.
- Requires VA's National Center on PTSD to collaborate with DoD for the purposes of enabling DoD mental health care providers and clinicians to benefit from the unique and comprehensive expertise that VA has in the area of PTSD diagnosis and treatment.
- Authorized \$2 million to be appropriated for the purpose of carrying out the collaborative PTSD requirements.
- Requires VA to establish Blind Rehabilitation Outpatient Specialists at not fewer than 35 additional VA facilities not later than 30 months after the date of enactment.
- Requires VA to conduct an extensive outreach program to identify and provide information on eligibility to enroll in VA health care to veterans who reside in rural communities and served in OIF/OEF.
- Provides authority for Vet Centers to provide bereavement counseling to all immediate family members of a member of the Armed Forces who dies while on active duty.
- Authorizes \$180 million for fiscal year 2007, for readjustment counseling and related mental health services through Vet Centers.
- Expands eligibility for Dependents' Educational Assistance program to the spouse or child of a service-member who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient medical care, services, or treatment and is determined by VA to have a total disability permanent in nature or released from active duty service for such disability.
- Extends to December 31, 2007, VA authority to furnish a government marker or headstone for the marked grave of a veteran buried at a private cemetery.
- Requires VA to give procurement preferences to small businesses owned and controlled by veterans and service-disabled veterans
- Requires the Department of Labor Veterans Employment Training Service (VETS) to begin a program to promote credentialing and licensing of veterans in occupations related to their military training and experience.
- Provides permanent authority for the Homeless Grant and Per Diem Program and increases the amount of funds authorized for these efforts to \$130 million for fiscal year 2007 and each fiscal year thereafter.
- Authorizes \$36.8 million for advance planning of a collaboration project between the VAMC in Charleston, S.C., and the adjacent Medical University of South Carolina
- Authorizes \$300 million for the restoration, new construction or replacement of the VAMC in New Orleans, Louisiana.
- Authorizes \$310 million for the restoration of the VAMC in Biloxi, Mississippi and consolidation of services performed at the VAMC in Gulfport, Mississippi. Authorizes \$98 million for the replacement of the VAMC in Denver, Colorado

- Authorizes 22 other major construction projects in 15 states.
- Enhanced VA's ability to secure sensitive personal information.

Legislation Pending

H.R. 92, the Veterans' Timely Access to Health Care Act, would establish standards of access to care for veterans seeking health care from the VA.

H.R. 109, the Disabled Veteran Small Business Eligibility Expansion Act of 2007, would amend the Small Business Act to make service-disabled veterans eligible under the 8(a) business development program.

H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act, would permit certain additional retired members of the armed forces who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the VA and either retired pay by reason of their years of service or Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC), and to eliminate the phase-in period under current law.

H.R. 358 would make permanent the VA benefit for government markers for marked graves of veterans buried in private cemeteries.

H.R. 585 would expand the number of individuals qualifying for retroactive benefits from traumatic injury protection coverage under Service-members' Group Life Insurance.

H.R. 612, the Returning Service-members' VA Health care Insurance Act of 2007, would extend the period of eligibility for health care for combat service in the Persian Gulf War or future hostilities from two years to five years after discharge or release.

H.R. 634 would require the secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of veterans who became disabled for life while serving in the armed forces of the United States.

H.R. 675 would increase the amount of assistance available to disabled veterans for specially adapted housing and to provide for annual increases in such amount.

H.R. 704 would reduce from age 57 to age 55 the age after which the remarriage of the surviving spouse of a deceased veteran shall not result in termination of DIC.

H.R. 649 would provide that annuities paid by states to blind veterans shall be disregarded in determining Supplemental Social Security Income benefits.

H.R. 652 would make the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass available at a discount to certain disabled veterans.

H.R. 797 would improve compensation benefits for veterans in certain cases of impairment of vision involving both eyes.

H.R. 963 would provide that the rate of reimbursement for motor vehicle travel under the beneficiary travel program of the VA shall be the same as the rate for private vehicle reimbursement for federal employees.

H.R. 995 would extend the authorization for establishing a memorial in the District of Columbia or its environs to honor veterans who became disabled while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States.

H.R. 1137 would increase to \$2,000 the amount of the Medal of Honor special pension and provide for payment of that pension to the surviving spouse of a deceased Medal of Honor recipient.

H.R. 1197 would provide improved benefits for veterans who are former prisoners of war.

H.R. 1214 would expand and enhance educational assistance for survivors and dependents of veterans.

H.R. 1265 would authorize the Small Business Administration to award contracts to small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans under the section 8(a) program.

H.R. 1284 would increase effective as of December 1, 2007, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of DIC.

H.R. 1315 would provide specially adaptive housing assistance to certain disabled members of the Armed Forces residing temporarily in housing owned by a family member.

H.R. 1318 would repeal the authority for agent or attorney representation in veterans benefits cases before the VA.

H.R. 1477 would extend military commissary and exchange store privileges to veterans with a compensable service-connected disability and to their dependents.

H.R. 1589 would repeal the offset from surviving spouse annuities under Survivors Benefits Program (SBP) for amounts paid for DIC.

H.R. 1944, the Veterans' Traumatic Brain Injury Treatment Act of 2007, would establish a program to screen veterans for symptoms of TBI, and develop a program of long-term care

for post-acute TBI rehabilitation. The bill would establish a TBI transition office at each VA polytrauma network site to coordinate the provision of health care and veterans' services.

H.R. 1927 would repeal the offset of amounts paid in DIC against SBP annuities for the surviving spouses of former military personnel.

H.R. 2026, the Disabled Veterans Insurance Act of 2007, would increase the amount of supplemental insurance available for totally disabled veterans from \$20,000 to \$40,000 under the Service Disabled Veterans Insurance program.

H.R. 2239, the Early Access to Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Benefits Act, would authorize vocational rehabilitation benefits for any member of the Armed Forces determined to have a permanent total disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty; and likely to be discharged or released from active service for such disability.

S. 161, the Veterans' Disability Compensation Automatic COLA Act, would provide for annual cost-of-living adjustments to be made automatically by law each year in the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of DIC.

S. 326, the Disabled Veterans Tax Fairness Act of 2007, would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a special period of limitation when uniformed services retirement pay is reduced as result of award of disability compensation.

S. 423 would increase effective as of December 1, 2007, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of DIC.

S. 439 would provide concurrent receipt to military retirees, with 20 or more years of service, who are rated less than 50 percent. It would also eliminate the 10-year phase-in period for veterans who draw their disability and retirement pay.

S. 643 would increase the amount of supplemental insurance available for totally disabled veterans.

S. 383 would extend the period of eligibility for health care for combat service in the Persian Gulf War or future hostilities from two years to five years after discharge.

S. 698 would expand and enhance educational assistance for survivors and dependents of veterans.

S. 848 would provide improved benefits for veterans who are former prisoners of war.

S.935 would repeal the offset of amounts paid in DIC against SBP annuities for the surviving spouses of former military personnel.

S. 1096, the Veterans' Housing Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007, would authorize VA, in the case of a member of the Armed Forces determined to have a total disability permanent in nature which was incurred or aggravated in the line of active duty, to furnish home improvements and structural alterations for the member for the disability while the member is hospitalized or receiving outpatient care, medical services, or treatment, if the member is likely to be discharged or released from the Armed Forces for such disability. It would also authorize the provision of specially adapted housing assistance for disabled veterans whose disability is due to a severe burn injury. It would make veterans and members with a severe burn disability eligible for automobile and automotive adaptive equipment assistance.

S. 1265 would expand eligibility for veterans' mortgage life insurance to include members of the Armed Forces receiving VA specially adapted housing assistance.

S. 1266, the Veterans' Dignified Burial Assistance Act of 2007, would increase plot or interment allowance from \$300 to \$400, and it would repeal the time limit for states filing for reimbursement of interment costs. This bill would also authorize VA to make grants to states for the operation and maintenance of state veterans' cemeteries.

S. 1315, the Disabled Veterans' Insurance Improvement Act of 2007, would increase the amount of veterans' mortgage life insurance from \$90,000 to \$200,000. It would create a new level-premium life insurance for veterans with service connected disabilities who are less than 65 years of age.

S. 1454, the Veterans Burial Benefits Improvement Act of 2007, would increase burial and funeral benefits from \$2,000 to \$4,100 for veterans whose death was determined by VA to be service connected. The bill would increase plot or interment allowance from \$300 to \$745, and it would provide for an automatic annual COLA for the plot allowance to keep pace with rising costs.

Closing

Amid the roller coaster of activities that occurred this past year, the National Legislative Staff has had to adapt to significant changes among our team. Early this year, long-time Legislative Support Specialist, Lisa Bogle, accepted a new position at National Headquarters in

Cold Spring, Kentucky, as a member of the Human Resources Department. We will miss Lisa's expertise, but we are happy she is still a part of the DAV family and we wish her well. Taking her place is Angela D'Aguilar. Angela is a promising employee and we welcome her aboard. She is new to the organization so she has much to learn, but thankfully, Legislative Support Specialist Caren Wooley is well tenured, and the transition between support staff members is going smoothly.

While support staff changes are challenging, we will face a daunting adjustment in the very near future. Deputy National Legislative Director Rick Surratt has announced that he will retire this fall. Rick's contributions to the DAV legislative efforts over the past 15 years are incalculable. Few individuals possess the depth of understanding or level of technical ability with regard to veterans' laws as Rick does. While we wish him a splendid and happy retirement, he will be sorely missed. Though it will indeed be a challenge to carry forth without Rick's knowledge and expertise, we thankfully have a team of professionals who embrace challenge. Assistant National Legislative Directors Joy Ilem, Brian Lawrence, and Adrian Atizado, who make up the core of that team, have enjoyed several collective years of experience and continuity on staff, and we will continue in a steadfast manner.

Strive as we may, we know any measure of success we enjoy is directly attributable to support we receive from all levels of the organization: from our National Commander and Line Officers, our National Service Officers, our DAV department and chapter officers and members, our Benefits Protection Team, our Commander's Action Network, and our Auxiliary officials and members. I want to especially recognize our Interim Legislative Committee members, Gene Murphy, Al Linden, Donald Samuels, and Donald Peek. As always, I extend my sincere appreciation to National Adjutant Art Wilson and Washington Headquarters Executive Director Dave Gorman for all the support, guidance, and encouragement they provide. Finally, a special note of thanks is extended to our National Commander, Brad Barton. Commander Barton has maintained an intensive presence in Washington, D.C. and on Capitol Hill during his tenure in office. Especially compelling was his testimony before the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees on February 27, 2007, when he delivered a firebrand speech regarding fee-charging attorneys in the veterans' claims process. The crux of his memorable statement regarding this foreboding issue is worth repeating here:

I don't think any veteran should have to pay anything other than his [or her] blood on the battlefield to get the benefits he [or she] so rightly deserves. They have paid the price once and they shouldn't have to pay a second time.

We don't object to attorneys being involved in the process. We object to attorneys getting paid for it. I practiced law for 11 years. I worked with disabled veterans and their families all the time. I did not charge them a fee for my services, nor did I want to. I respected them, I respected their service, and I wanted them to be taken care of by our country....

I petition you, I beg you, I pray that you reconsider this inappropriate legislation and repeal it. It does a disservice to veterans. It does a disservice to their sacrifice for our nation. It does a disservice to America.

Without question, the leadership and influence that Commander Barton has brought to the position of National Commander has bolstered DAV's status as the predominant force on behalf of America's service-connected disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors.

This concludes my report on the status of the National Legislative Department.

WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAVID W. GORMAN: Thank you, Commander. With any luck the Commander's introduction may be longer than my remarks, but I wouldn't count on it. (Laughter) National Commander Barton, and distinguished guests, and delegates to the 86th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans, good morning, everybody.

(Response of "Good morning.")

WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GORMAN: As Executive Director of our Washington Headquarters it is truly an honor to be able to present this annual report to our Convention. I wanted to first thank National Commander Brad Barton. Brad, your steadfast dedication to our mission to build better lives for our nation's disabled veterans and their families has re-energized all of us in Washington.

Commander, you've been a powerful force and a motivational force, earning the respect of all those you've come in contact in Washington and I'm sure countless people across this great nation of ours. It's been an eventful year, Commander, and please accept our thanks for all that you have done to further our mission of service to veterans and their families. Thank you.

I also want to express my appreciation to National Adjutant Art Wilson whose wisdom, leadership, and his unwavering support have, as always, been invaluable in our efforts to serve you and your families. Art's vision and dedication has maintained DAV's standing as the very envy of every other veterans' service organization and thank you, Art.

I want to also recognize National Service Director Randy Reese, National Director of Voluntary Services Edward Hartman, and our National Legislative Director Joe Violante. Our job would not be possible without the support of National Headquarters Executive Director Rick Patterson and his great staff in Cold Spring, Kentucky, so I want to thank Rick and his staff, also.

At the very vanguard of our efforts to secure fair and adequate benefits for our nation's disabled veterans is our corps of National Service Officers. Today, our NSO corps number about 251, men and women who are dedicated to obtaining the benefits earned by a grateful nation. Our NSO efforts are bolstered by our Transition Service Officers assigned to 80 military installations throughout the nation.

Our role in veterans' advocacy is critically important today as our young men and women are engaged in combat in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere around the world.

Daily, wounded and injured arrive at military hospitals and VA medical centers to begin their lifetime journey of rehabilitation. They are taking the first steps that each of us has taken. We had the DAV there with us and now it's our turn to be there for them.

Our NSOs are at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, Bethesda National Naval Hospital, Brooke Army Hospital in Texas, and Madigan Army Hospital in Seattle as well as many, many more, ready to offer our services and extend whatever assistance they need to these new veterans. It has been heartwarming duty for us and one that we will continue.

Our dedicated professional staff of NSOs also operate our Mobile Service Offices. This outreach for those who are geographically isolated from our National Service Offices means they are getting the best service that we have to offer. We are doing our best to bring our services to veterans where they live.

The Harley-Davidson Foundation is helping us bring benefits, education, and counseling into the many communities of our veterans through the MSO program. Our MSOs are making appearances at special veterans' events at Harley-Davidson dealerships across the country.

We have been inundated with claims, new claims, from these deserving veterans. This is an unprecedented program which involves the close cooperation of the Fundraising, Membership, and the National Service Departments. So far this year we have visited 106 Harley-Davidson dealerships all across this country. Our veterans know that we are there for them.

As always, our dedicated, our thousands of dedicated and compassionate DAV volunteers will continue to play an important and crucial role. The men and women who volunteer at VA medical centers and our corps of drivers in the DAV Transportation Network are doing an absolutely super job.

It's been a busy year and it's very, very difficult to try to summarize the many accomplishments of our organization in the brief report that I have. But if I had to name one pivotal day it was July 25th, 2007. That day we witnessed two things, first, the dramatic results of over a decade of hard and tireless work. And we saw that despite all of our successes, the threat to disability and other VA benefits remains a constant reality.

On that day we saw the final report from the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors, the so-called Dole-Shalala Commission. And that same day we testified before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee at the very first hearing of its kind, discussing the crucial need for mandatory funding for the VA health care system.

Most of the Dole-Shalala Commission recommendations are positive and, not really surprisingly, are already being addressed in many ways by VA. For example, early-on the VA established polytrauma centers to treat traumatic brain injuries and VA has been the pioneering force and recognized expert in the areas of treatment and research regarding post traumatic stress disorder.

So in these ways the VA is way ahead of the Commission's recommendations. Sadly, however, some of the Commission's recommendations are terribly shortsighted and, we believe, ill-thought out.

Perhaps most troubling is an ill-advised recommendation for the wholesale overhaul of the VA disability evaluation and compensation system that would establish separate and complicated systems of adjudication only for those with combat-related injuries based on two separate factors—loss of earnings and quality-of-life issues—instead of the structured disability compensation now in use that collectively considers both of these factors.

Even more troubling is the recommendation to drastically reduce the level of compensation when the veteran stops working or starts to receive Social Security Disability Benefits, a far cry from where we are today.

While these recommendations apply only to combat-wounded service members from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, I'm sure you agree that it's only a short leap to replacing the compensation system which now applies to all veterans. Could this proposal take on a new life? And if it does, would it affect each one of us?

The Dole-Shalala Commission was created following the public outcry of the substandard living conditions and the confusing bureaucracy affecting soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington.

We were all justifiably outraged that our nation's wounded and disabled service members were forced to live in deplorable conditions and experience frustrating delays getting their disabilities adjudicated by the Army. But today injured service members continue to be denied benefits to which they are readily entitled.

The nightmarish Army Physical Evaluation Board system has left our most recent heroes stranded in a bureaucratic jungle with only the DAV there to help, as soldiers and their family members testified to at Congressional hearings. Only the DAV was there to help, they said. What better testament to our program of service?

DAV's testimony before the Commission calling for adequate staffing, a structured training program, and strict accountability for claims processing was ignored by the Commission. The Commission had the opportunity to take the first real steps toward eliminating the claims backlog which now has reached more than 600,000 cases.

And, sadly, it chose not to do so, not to address the accuracy and the timeliness problems that have plagued both VA and DoD. But without that vital mandate the VA can never be fully responsive to the needs of disabled veterans.

Frankly, I'm surprised the Dole-Shalala Commission recommendations are being given such attention considering the numerous, credible and responsive recommendations from an exhaustive two-year study by a President's Task Force to improve health care delivery for our nation's veterans which was issued in 2003 and to this day have literally not seen the light of day and have gone virtually nowhere.

Yet, the Dole-Shalala Commission recommendations, which could do serious harm to veterans and the VA system, are being put on a fast track. That is why the second event of July 25th, testifying before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee on mandatory funding, was so very, very important.

After more than a decade of urging Congress and the Administration to adequately fund VA health care, lawmakers finally agreed to hear testimony and ideas from experts on not only why such funding is necessary but also how it would work for the betterment of veterans and the VA.

You may remember that during our Mid-Winter Conference our members drafted letters calling for mandatory funding for VA health care and presented them to the chairmen of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees at Commander Barton's testimony. The Senate hearing, we believe, was a direct result of your efforts.

We have long sought a permanent solution for funding VA health care to guarantee that veterans will have a dependable, a quality and a viable and an accessible system now and for the foreseeable future. Mandatory funding is essential to allowing the VA to manage the delivery of health care and to plan effectively to meet the known and predictable needs of veterans.

At that hearing Senator Larry Craig, the ranking member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, said that mandatory funding is a bad idea and it's bad policy and it doesn't make economic sense.

Yet, if it is bad policy, why did Congressman and former House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Chris Smith testify that unless we fix the funding process for VA health care all efforts to improve its delivery will continue to be impeded and, worse, VA risks Walter Reed-like problems at VA facilities in the future.

And if mandatory funding doesn't make economic sense, why did esteemed and world-respected Princeton University Health Economist Uwe Reinhardt testify that mandatory funding of VA health care is not going to financially overwhelm either the federal government or the people of the United States and only serves as the vehicle to maintain a viable and a quality health care system?

If mandatory funding is bad policy, why did former VA Undersecretary for Health Ken Kizer testify that VA is often forced to operate under restrictive continuing resolutions, impose

hiring freezes, and take actions impeding the delivery of treatment services simply because it doesn't have an adequate and a timely budget.

Our message to Congress is simple—without reform we see no prospect for improvement in the current budget structure. Funding inadequacies and delays have become the norm every year and without reform will continue to the detriment of veterans.

This year we witnessed a change in the leadership of Congress. As a result, one of the most vocal proponents of mandatory funding for VA health care, Congressman Bob Filner of California, became chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, with all the powers that go with that leadership.

But so far the issue of mandatory funding has been mostly ignored by the committee. It's time for Chairman Filner to live up to his past convictions. He should do the right thing. He should hold hearings and he should support mandatory funding. (Applause)

The current process, the current funding process paralyzes VA officials from properly managing, planning, and operating the health care system and causes veterans to suffer. The time for change is now.

That's why the DAV has launched an expansive two-year program to promote legislation designed to ensure our newest generation of disabled veterans receive the rehabilitation and the health care they need to rebuild their lives.

Traumatic brain injury is said to be the signature disability emerging from the War on Terror. Yet, even as the world leader in this area and in the treatment of PTSD, VA is capable is doing so much more. Our legislative efforts will target these areas as well as, for really the very first time, focus on the needs of families and caregivers.

DAV's broad national public outreach campaign, ensuring greater awareness of the issues, is now underway. Your legislative staff, the DAV leadership, and all the resources of our great organization are going to be called on to action.

To do this we need the total support of our vast membership to urge individual legislators and the VA to develop appropriate benefits that are real, effective, and meaningful for those who have sacrificed so much on behalf of our nation.

We've waited a long time for a mandatory funding hearing and we have fought the annual budget battles sometimes with great successes and other times not so great. But you know what? We shouldn't have to do battle every single year in order for Congress to do the right thing for disabled veterans.

I, for one, just don't get it. Can't we once and for all come to the moral realization that as the richest nation on earth, and I would add a nation at war, we have no greater obligation than to care for our wounded and disabled veterans. (Applause) Are you with me on this and can I count on you?

(Response of "Yes.")

WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GORMAN: All right. Each of you, each of us has a role to play in this effort. Being a member of the DAV Commander's Action Network, DAV CAN, will give you timely information of what is needed and to whom you should address your concerns. A continuous and a relentless pursuit of these initiatives is going to be needed to advance them during a very active political environment.

We are also closely watching the changing of the guard at the VA. Secretary Nicholson has recently announced his resignation, which will become effective early this fall. DAV has demanded of the President in writing to appoint a new Secretary who will be a strong advocate for veterans and their issues.

We look forward to a nominee who will carry the torch for veterans, not use it to burn down the structures built on the lives and the limbs of millions of disabled veterans. (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, in closing, I want you to know that the staff at National Service and Legislative Headquarters, our NSOs, our TSOs, our support staff all across this country, have done an outstanding job providing the very best services to you and your families.

But there is another critical ingredient here. We, in Washington, would not be able to accomplish all that we have without you, our members, and that is 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 DAV's proud mission of service and hope for America's disabled veterans and their families. Thank you so very much. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Dave. May I have a motion to accept Mr. Gorman's report?

MR. LINDEN: Mic 2.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 2.

MR. LINDEN: Al Linden, delegate, Gator 90, Florida, moves that we accept that outstanding report by our Executive Director of Washington.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Al. May I have a second?

MR. ANGEL LOUIS ESCRIBANO: Angel Escribano from District 16, Chapter 2, I second it.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. The motion is carried.

WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GORMAN: Compassion, dignity and care are the standards and goals for thousands upon thousands of Department of Veterans Affairs employees, and many excel in their roles. They provide services to veterans that go far beyond the requirements of their job.

In recognition of their great service, three top VA employees, leaders in medical care, claims adjudication, and honoring fallen veterans, have been selected to receive the 2007 National Commander's Awards for Outstanding Employees.

The Outstanding Veterans Health Administration employee this year is Dr. Steven Scott, Medical Director for the Tampa, Florida, VA medical center's polytrauma center. Dr. Scott has been chief of rehabilitation medicine and spinal cord injury for more than 10 years at the James Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa, Florida.

Since becoming medical director of the Tampa medical center's polytrauma center he has become a national leader and outspoken spokesperson for the needs of the most severely-injured service members wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Dr. Scott has made a huge difference in the lives of these young service members and their families. He knows each wounded veteran and their family by name and works tirelessly with them. He is recognized as a selfless physician who is known and trusted by veterans and their families. So please join me in presenting the National Commander's Award for Veterans Health care to Dr. Steven Scott. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Dr. Steven Scott was presented with the National Commander's Award for Veterans Health care.)

STEVEN SCOTT, M.D.: I just want to say a couple of words here. First I want to accept this award on behalf of all the rehabilitation doctors in the VA whose mission is to prevent, care, and rehabilitate those who are disabled.

I also want to especially recognize several individuals, most of you know these people: Dennis Joyner, Al Linden, and Jim who basically live a life of ability, not a disability; Mary Keckler who is a go-to person down in Tampa and is a strong advocate of your organization, and that is a compassionate mother of a severely-injured individual; most importantly, my wife who—keep me on my time limit up here but who reminds me constantly that we all work for God.

I also want to remind everyone that this organization started with its founder, Robert Marx who sustained a blast injury and a polytrauma injury back in World War I who came back with numbers and thousands of shell shock individuals to this country and it led to the formation of this organization.

Currently, we're an OAF, excuse me, and in the War in Iraq individuals are coming back with IED blast explosions and polytrauma injuries. But there is a difference today. The difference is this organization. I have first-hand experience the difference that this organization has improved the lives of those returning.

And I want to thank each and every one of you for all you've done and all you contribute. When you step up today and leave this building or this chair today, when you return back throughout this whole country, I want to express that you have made a difference.

You have made a big difference in those lives of those that are coming back. And I want to thank you for that and also continue to serve in partnership so we can meet the goals that was just expressed, so that we can continue to move forward and improve those lives for now and for the rest of our years of our lives. Thank you and thank you for this award. Appreciate it. (Applause)

WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GORMAN: Kay Collins is manager of the Veterans Service Center in Boise, Idaho. She has worked for the VA in Boise since 1969 and she became manager there in 2003. She is recognized for her ability to identify issues and concerns quickly and deal with them.

She also actively participates in veterans' outreach and homeless veterans programs throughout the state of Idaho. Kay cares deeply about the mission of the VA. She is driven to provide the best possible service to veterans and their families in recognition of the sacrifices they have made for our country.

Ladies and gentlemen, the recipient of the National Commander's Award recognizing the outstanding member of the Veterans' Benefits Administration, Ms. Kay Collins. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Kay Collins was presented with the National Commander's Award for Outstanding Member of the Veterans Benefits Administration.)

MS. KAY COLLINS: I am very humbled by this recognition. I've written a little poem to explain how I feel. I call this, "Every day is a thank you."

"A young man signs a sheaf of papers knowing he may die. A young woman raises her right hand and offers up a leg or two if that's what it takes. A man approaching silver years once again dons his uniform and packs his bags, knowing he'll be missing the birth of his first grandson.

"An old man ardously muscles the wheel of his chair, chin on his chest, remembering. I murmur a thank you, simple words, easy to say. I try again louder and yet another time. It will never, ever be strong enough, long enough, loud enough.

"The gift to me of a life rich with freedoms I reopen and enjoy each and every day. Freely I voice my own thoughts, worship my chosen god, sleep in my warm bed, choose the books I wish to read, work the job I love, provide for my family, breath this U.S.A. air.

"How does one say thank you sufficiently to our veterans and their loved ones? There will never be a way. But I will make my life's work every day my heartfelt thank you." (Applause)

WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GORMAN: The National Commander's Award for Outstanding Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration is being presented to Mariano Pizzaro, head of the Marker Cleaning Section at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Mariano is not only the head of the Marker Cleaning Section, he is the only member of that section. That's because he volunteered to restore, to clean, align and level grave markers in the cemetery after public bids to do so failed.

Volunteering to "let me try," Pizzaro, who is a disabled veteran, perfected the process to do the work and established a sequence that streamlines processes for efficiency and effectiveness. His productivity permits him to work on 250 markers a month in the cemetery that holds approximately 33,000 grave markers.

Over the past three years, he has removed, cleaned, realigned and raised more than 8,500 stone markers, most of which are more than 50 years old. Mariano has a focused work ethic and he has had a wonderful impact on the lives of the next-of-kin of veterans, and for everyone who visits what most call the "Punchbowl."

He reflects the nation's highest regard for the dignity and honor that is bestowed on our nation's veterans. Please welcome Mariano Pizzaro. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mariano Pizzaro was presented with the National Commander's Award for Outstanding Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration.)

MR. MARIANO PIZZARO: Aloha from the great state of Hawaii.

(Response of "Aloha.")

MR. PIZZARO: It's an honor to stand here before you today to accept this prestigious award, an honor that is totally unexpected. I'd like to think that what I do is not a job, but a service to my fellow veterans and their families.

In the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific our motto includes these words, "To bury our veterans and their dependents with great dignity and honor." However, the care and services of veterans and his or her family does not end when the last spade of dirt is returned to the grave or the last screw is attached to the cover on the wall. Excuse me.

Care and service to our veterans is perpetual, almost a living, breathing thing. I read with humiliation the words that my director, Mr. Gene Castagnetti, wrote in my nomination letter that I thought I was just doing my job.

After reading Director Castagnetti's words I really realized my work was—excuse me—does not make a significant impact on the family and veterans we bury. I learned that what I and my fellow cemetery caretakers at the other 124 cemeteries have learned is we do make a tremendous impact on veterans, no matter how small we may feel our actions to be.

Veterans disabled or not are not looking for a handout but a hand up. I started as a veteran on the Compensated Work Therapy Program and progressed from the CWT worker to a fulltime caretaker with more and more responsibility and ability than I thought I would ever have. I didn't do this on my own but progressed and grew through the care and guidance of others around me.

If you show the veteran you care, great things will happen. To make a veteran self-sufficient is one of the most rewarding things you can do. Again, thank you for this prestigious award. May God bless the Disabled American Veterans association, our veterans, and our country. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Our deepest appreciation goes out to these outstanding individuals who put veterans first with service, compassion and dedication. Once again, let's give these outstanding VA employees a big round of applause. (Applause) I would like at this time to introduce Mr. Randy Reese, National Service Director, for the presentation of Employment Awards.

NATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTOR EDWARD R. "RANDY" REESE, JUNIOR: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

NATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTOR REESE: When veterans leave the service the paramount thought that goes through their minds is, what are they going to do? What kind of a job are they going to have with their disabilities that they've incurred? Can they make enough just to survive?

Finding a gratifying and productive job can make all the difference in restoring the confidence of disabled veterans. Work brings self-respect, pride in accomplishment, and a sense that there is a productive life with disability. Fulfilling this vital need takes people and it takes the dedication of veterans to help find jobs and employers who are eager to hire them.

Each year we recognize a select group of employment specialists and companies for their efforts on behalf of veterans with the National Commander's Employment awards. These awards recognize the professional service and dedication of those Disabled Veterans Outreach Programs and Specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives who help veterans find and keep jobs, and the large and small employers that hire those disabled veterans.

The 2007 Outstanding Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist of the Year is Mr. Ken Moon of the South Dakota Career Center in Rapid City, South Dakota. He was selected for this award in recognition of his remarkable record in finding jobs for disabled veterans. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Mr. Ken Moon. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Ken Moon was presented with the 2007 Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist of the Year Award.)

MR. KEN MOON: Good morning. I bring you greetings from the Rushmore State of South Dakota and the beautiful Black Hills. I'm honored to be here. And I am very humbled today to accept this award. For myself, I'm deeply grateful to be recognized by the Disabled American Veterans, the nation's premier veterans' service organization and thankful to be able to attend this great Convention.

I also wish to thank the South Dakota Department of the Disabled American Veterans and the South Dakota Department of Labor for their nomination and their support. And, most importantly, I wish to thank my wife, Priscilla, who is with me today, for her love and support and inspiration, also.

As a retired veteran with 23 years service in the United States Air Force, as a lifetime member of the DAV Chapter 3 in Rapid City, and a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Representative for 11 years in South Dakota, I proudly serve and I support the veterans every day.

When you recognize me today I stand here before you as a representative of almost 2,400 Veterans Employment Representatives and over 15,000 state employment agencies throughout the United States. We are dedicated to assisting all the nation's veterans find meaningful employment and training opportunities and helping them prepare for those opportunities.

We are also there to support, through the Transition Assistance Program, our separating and retiring active duty service members as they return to civilian life and work. These are solemn responsibilities. When those veterans are disabled, our mission becomes even more challenging and more rewarding.

With the support and inspiration of the Disabled American Veterans organizations we will continue to seek jobs for veterans and veterans for jobs. Once again, thank you very much for this honor and thank you for allowing me to be here. Commander. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTOR REESE: Mr. Robert Copeland of the Mesquite Workforce Center in Mesquite, Texas, has been selected as the Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative. He helps unemployed veterans find rewarding employment, utilizing compassion and professionalism in all phases of his work. I am pleased to present this award to Mr. Robert Copeland. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Robert L. Copeland, Junior, was presented with the 2007 Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative of the Year.)

MR. ROBERT L. COPELAND, JUNIOR: I'd just like to say that I'm very humbled. This is the most prestigious award that I've ever received in my life. I'll continue to do what I've been doing for the last 14 years. And I'd just like to say words can't express what I feel. Thank you. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTOR REESE: Two corporations are being recognized as Outstanding Employers of the Year. They enjoy the dedication of their disabled veteran employees in performing superlative work. They reach out to veterans because of the skills they possess, the knowledge they have, and the dedication and perseverance they exhibit as veterans.

Defense Support Service, headquartered in Greenville, South Carolina, has been selected as the Outstanding Large Employer of the Year. At Defense Support Service they feel that the support of veterans helps set the standard for corporate America. They believe veterans should be honored where it matters most, on the job. They view their veteran employees as a worthwhile investment. Accepting the award for Defense Support Service is Mr. John Keating. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. John Keating of Defense Support Service 2, LLC, was presented with the 2007 Outstanding Large Employer of the Year.)

MR. JOHN KEATING: This is really great. I'm going to go home and brag. I was just recently at the Grand Canyon and I said it was one of the greatest experiences of my life but I think it's been replaced with this experience. This is outstanding.

I'm joined tonight by Mr. Jackie Johnson and our Human Resource Management Team in representing Defense Support Services. On behalf of the over 5,000 employees of Defense Support Service I'd like to thank the DAV for this very prestigious award.

At DS 2 we do aviation and ground vehicle maintenance and basic operation support services for our military around the world. It is a great honor to be able to do that. Our motto in Defense Support Services is "We serve those who serve."

But with the fact that over a half, a great majority of our employees are veterans, we thought about changing that to "We serve those who serve with those who served." But it gets a little bit long. (Laughter)

But more important than this award I want to thank all of you for your personal sacrifice, your dedication, your bravery and courage, everything you have done to promote and spread freedom throughout the world. Your legacy will go down in history.

You will never be forgotten as the greatest military mankind has ever seen. So, again, I would like to thank the DAV for this award. It is a great honor. And God bless all of you, God bless our military and our families. Thank you. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTOR REESE: Navigation—correction, Navigator Development Group, Incorporated, headquartered in Enterprise, Alabama, has been selected as the Outstanding Small Employer of the Year.

While they are the recipients of the Small Employer of the Year award, their accomplishments are quite large. Navigator Development provides leadership in employing veterans. Here to accept the award is Mr. Keith Gay and Al Patterson. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Navigator Development Group, Incorporated, was presented with the 2007 Outstanding Small Employer of the Year award.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPOKESPERSON: National Commander and members of the DAV, the 140 employees of Navigator Development Group out of Enterprise, Alabama, are humbled by our selection.

I owe a personal thanks to Bill Baker, our former Commander from Chapter 9 and all the members of Chapter 9 for their support, and the Alabama Department for their selection of Navigator and then their subsequent nomination of us to now stand in front of you as your small business champion.

I was 26 years a soldier. My partner was 22 years a soldier and a marine so we have had the pleasure to walk amongst you. We both are life members of the DAV. We are very proud to operate Navigator Development Group as a service-disabled veteran-owned business.

We were surprised because we have built our company based upon the goodness of the people and the quality of the people that we have in our organization. And when Bill Baker pointed out that 62 amongst the 140 of us were service-disabled veterans it came as a surprise. We've been working hard for the last ten years to build our company and we've built it on the quality and the reputation of the people that work for us.

Again, humbled by the selection I would tell you that we have started some major new initiatives here in the recent months and we're going to dedicate the next years of our company to finding opportunities for hiring and training more service-disabled veterans. (Applause)

As all of us in the room who have served, we all have a legacy. The legacy is those young men and women that we all left out there on the line, on the wall, standing between us and the bad guys. Today there are 13,000 of them that are stuck in the system.

They're up there in the VA hospitals. They're up there at Walter Reed. They're in the press. And we've started some major new initiatives to try to establish the rapid training programs that would take these young men and women, rapidly get them the training in new and exciting technologies, out in our community colleges and universities, and rapidly integrate them back into their communities where they will have good, high-paying, quality, high-tech jobs and they would be able to rejoin their families with honor.

This is my pledge to you. Thank you, again, for your selection. And we look forward to serving. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTOR REESE: The DAV is grateful for the personal involvement of these employment specialists and companies who recognize the service and the sacrifice of veterans. They go beyond what is considered "good business practices."

Their efforts are personal, based on the deep gratitude they have for the contributions of disabled veterans. All of this year's employment award winners are helping build better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families and in turn they are reaping the great rewards for their dedication. Thank you all very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Randy. Carl Brown, an avid outdoorsman and accomplished turkey hunter who has devoted much of his life to the great outdoors, is the Chief Operating Officer for the National Wild Turkey Federation, located in Edgefield, South Carolina.

Carl has worked at the NWTF for 26 years where he has helped create the vision that has driven the organization to become one of the largest single-species conservation organizations in the world. The NWTF has raised and spent more than \$230 million upholding hunting traditions and conserving more than 11 million acres of wildlife habitat.

He is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the NWTF and has been instrumental in the development of the Federation's many outreach programs, including the JAKES youth program, Woman in the Outdoors, and the Wheelin' Sportsmen, as well as a new membership program for active military and a special membership for students age 17 to 22.

The NWTF has more than 584,000 members, more than 2,300 chapters in all 50 states, Canada and Mexico, and employs nearly 300 staff members. Mr. Brown is involved with the NWTF's award-winning television shows, Turkey Call, Turkey Country and Get in the Game, which all air on The Outdoor Channel. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm DAV welcome to Mr. Carl Brown. (Applause)

MR. CARL BROWN: You know, there aren't many times that I don't know where to start but being in such a wonderful environment with so many outstanding people I must tell you that I'm in awe. And being able to address a group like this of such veterans that have served our country and in such high regard really makes me kind of nervous, Commander, and I don't find myself in that position very often.

The National Wild Turkey Federation, as has been mentioned, is a national conservation organization. And you might say, what in the world is a turkey group going to do for the DAV? Well, you know, how many out there like to hunt and fish? I can't hear you. (Applause) You just answered the question.

The National Wild Turkey Federation, because it desires to do something more to help families, to serve the local communities, is shared by NWTF's more than 584,000 members and volunteers from across North America.

While our mission may be the conservation of wild turkey and upholding our hunting heritage traditions, we're far more than just a conservation organization. At one of our conventions General Norman Schwarzkopf came and he spoke and he told us if you want to be great you need to go back into your hometowns and do something that other people don't expect you to do. And we're doing just that.

Whether it's awarding more than a half a million dollars annually for scholarships to college-bound students or providing just frozen turkeys to families in need during the holidays, or introducing men, women and kids and people with disabilities to the great outdoors, NWTF is the kind of organization that believes in the traditional values that make America great, the kind of values that make our men and women in uniform have fought so courageously to protect.

We have for years been proud to wave our flag at our National Convention because we love what it stands for. There are literally thousands of NWTF events, meetings that are held across America, and most of them start off just like you did today, with a prayer and a pledge to our flag.

Conservation and patriotism go hand-in-hand for us. Many NWTF members served in our country's battles. And it's important for us that these brave men and women are recognized and their sacrifices, which is why we honor them each year at our annual Convention at our Veterans' Breakfast.

This breakfast is a powerful ceremony where we invite generals, congressmen, Medal of Honor winners and other military heroes, just like yourself, to present pins to our veterans, shake their hands and thank them for their service. This recognition doesn't stop here. It plays out at every one of our local chapter meetings, over 2,300 banquets across America.

We have also partnered recently with Fort Hood where we hosted a JAKES event. JAKES stands for Juniors Acquiring Knowledge and Ethics. This event, during an outdoor education fest, recognized more than 4,000 military children and had a good time outside. They all received a free membership to our JAKES program.

We hope to make it an annual event and expand this program to other military installations. We want even more young people to read about our JAKES Magazine and learn more about how to have fun in the outdoors. While introducing kids and women is a part of our outreach effort, what I'm here to talk to you about today is our program for people with disabilities. We call this program "Wheelin' Sportsmen."

Through our Wheelin' Sportsmen program we're hosting events that provide hands-on opportunities for all disabled people to try and hunt, fish, target shoot, and many outdoor activities. And I can tell from the response of the crowd that many of you enjoy the outdoors like I do.

We've done everything from airboat adventures to catfish roundups to deer hunts and everything in between. Wheelin' Sportsmen members can learn new ways to enjoy the outdoors through Wheelin' Sportsmen Magazine and also on our Website. We allow readers to share ideas, clips, stories about the challenges and rewards of getting outside. Let's take a look at what Wheelin' Sportsmen means up on the big screen.

(Whereupon, a video of Wheelin' Sportsmen was presented.)

MR. BROWN: Thank you. And now through a new partnership with DAV we can work together to help even more people. I can't think of a more perfect match for us to serve the disabled people using NWTF's more than 2,500 chapters and DAV's many chapters across this country.

Think of what we can accomplish, America, by working together. I know there is a great need to lend our support to the injured who are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan as well as those that have previously served. There are millions of other people with disabilities, also, that need our help, too.

I want to thank Ed Hartman and his staff in the National Headquarters in Washington, D.C., for helping us with this program. Ed took time out of his very busy schedule to come visit our headquarters in Edgefield, South Carolina, and discuss how we could partner together.

The bottom line is we could touch a lot more lives by combining our resources, whether it's hosting a turkey hunt or partnering with making a fishing pier accessible to wheelchairs. We'll be offering experiences to people that you just can't put a price tag on.

I want to share a story I heard from a great NWTF volunteer and friend in Florida, Lew Hobner, that I think illustrates the possibilities when you open the doors for people.

Denny Joyner and Jim Sursely—I think some of you might have heard of those guys (Laughter)—were involved both with DAV and the National Wild Turkey Federation and were out turkey hunting when I think Adjutant Art Wilson gave them a call on the phone. He called Denny on his cell phone.

He said, turkey hunting, if you have never been, requires that you be very quiet so Denny was carrying the conversation on in a whisper. Art said, "If it's a bad time, I'll call you back." However, Denny reassured him that it wasn't a bad time, just that him and Jim were turkey hunting. And Art said, "That's a scary thought," (Laughter) "two triple amputees with loaded firearms in the woods. I'll call you back later." (Applause)

That truly tells the story of where Wheelin' Sportsmen is and what is possible in life. Denny Joyner and Jim Sursely are living their lives to the fullest by enjoying it together in the outdoors. I really believe that we can offer something to every member of the DAV and build better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families.

It has been my pleasure to address such a prestigious group of American heroes. God bless you all and may the joint efforts of our two organizations produce results for thousands of disabled American veterans along with other disabled Americans and help them all to enjoy the fellowship and the camaraderie in the great outdoors.

And before I conclude I wanted to add just one small comment. One day the National Wild Turkey Federation will stand on this podium, not as a presenter but as a recipient of one of your outstanding service awards because we know how to get the job done, just like you do. Thank you for your support. We look forward to working with you. (Applause) Thank you very much, sir.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Carl, and to your organization for upholding hunting traditions and conserving vital wildlife habitat. And Jim and Denny, I think Art needs a trip out in the woods with you guys. (Laughter) I would like to call on the chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws for his report, Kenny Musselmann.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER KENNETH G. MUSSELMANN Thank you, Commander. Commander Barton and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Constitution and Bylaws was called to order for its first business session on August 11th, 2007, by the Committee Advisors, Kenneth G. Musselmann and Barry Jesinowski. 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 the resolutions submitted and no resolution were recommended for adoption by this National Convention. Comrade Commander, this completes the first report of the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws. Was that short enough? Okay. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Ken. In accordance with Rule 9, now is the time for any rejected resolutions to be read. Are there any rejected resolutions which you wish read? Thank you. We'll hear the final report of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee at Tuesday's business session. I would now like to call on the chairman of the Finance Committee for his report, Joseph W. Johnston. (Applause)

MR. JOSEPH W. JOHNSTON: Good morning and go Buckeyes. Commander Barton, Adjutant Wilson, officers and delegates and guests, the National Convention Committee on Finance was called to order on 11 August 2007 by the Committee advisors, Edward Barnshaw and Richard E. Patterson.

The first order of business was the election of a Convention Committee chairman and secretary. Joe Johnston was elected as chairman and Brenda Reed was elected as secretary. The Committee recommended no resolutions for adoption.

The Committee next reviewed the proposed 2008 budget with the Committee advisors and with the assistance of Comptroller Anita Blum. The proposed 2008 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 2008 budget. The Committee then expressed its thanks to the Committee advisors, Edward Barnshaw and Richard Patterson, and Comptroller Anita Blum for their assistance in performing the work of this important Committee.

Commander Barton, this completes the report of the Committee on Finance and I recommend its adoption. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you. You've heard the motion. May I have a second?

MR. RESNER: Mic 3. Mic 3, Norm Resner, Department of Illinois, Chapter 42, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Norm. All those in favor signify by saying aye; those opposed. Motion carried. (Applause) I would like to call on the chairman of the Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services for a report, Delphine Metcalf-Foster. (Applause) Thank you.

MRS. DELPHINE METCALF-FOSTER: Good morning.
(Response of "Good morning.")

MRS. METCALF-FOSTER: Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services was called to order on August the 11th, 2007, by the committee advisor, Delphine Metcalf-Foster, Joy J. Ilem and Edward E. Hartman.

The first order of business was to the election of a Convention Committee chairman and secretary. Delphine Metcalf-Foster was selected as chairman and Raymond Richards 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 resolutions.

- 029, support legislation to make VA health care funding mandatory.
- 030, ensure timely access to VA health care and services.
- 031, support equal medical services and benefits for women veterans.
- 032, increase the amount allowed for free-based care.
- 033, support an Alzheimer's facility for veterans under a Congressional Authorization Demonstrated Project through the VA.
- 034, support legislation to provide top medical screening and monitoring for all members of the armed forces of the United States exposed to depleted uranium.
- 035, support legislation to require the President, Vice President and members of Congress to receive health care solely from the VA. (Applause) I can't hear you.
- 042, support separate appropriations for VA national rehabilitative special events.
- 049, support repeal of beneficiary travel pay deductible for service-connected disabled veterans and increase beneficiary travel reimbursement rights.
- 077, support the provisions of comprehensive VA health care services to eligible veterans.
- 079, support enhancements of long-term health care service to service-connected veterans.
- 081, oppose collection of third-party payments for treatment of service-connected disabilities.
- 083, support top priority access for service-connected veterans within the VA health system.
- 107, encourage VA medical centers to submit a candidate for the Jesse Brown Scholarship.
- 108, encourage the VA medical centers to submit a candidate for the George H. Seal Memorial Award;
- 117, support extension of CHAMP VA benefits to dependent children if enrolled as full-time students until graduation.
- 175, support legislation to establish a comprehensive program for traumatic brain injuries rehabilitation.
- 176, support legislation for family caregivers of severely-wounded injured and ill combat veterans.
- 177, support program entitlement and enhanced resources for VA mental health programs.
- 178, support legislation to include dental care as part of the veterans Uniform Benefits package.
- 179, ensure full funding and resources for polytrauma units at the VA medical center.
- 180, require a veteran attending a VA physician to provide a medical opinion to support a claim for VA disability compensation benefits when requested.
- 181, support state veteran homes by requiring VA to pay a fair share of the cost of caring for veterans.
- 182, support enhancement of medical services through Capital Assessments Realignment for Re-enhanced Services enacted.
- 183, support repeal of VA and DoD co-payments for medical care and prescriptions provided to veterans and military retirees.
- 184, extend eligibility for free health care for combat veterans for conditions potentially related to their combat service from two years to five years.
- 185, oppose means testing service-connected veterans for VA Health care.
- 186, oppose recommendations that military retired veterans be prohibited from receiving health care from both DoD and VA facilities.
- 187, reduce the out-of-pocket costs for CHAMP VA beneficiaries.
- 188, support sufficient resources for VA health care for veterans living in rural and remote areas.
- 187, improve reimbursement policies for non-VA emergency health care services for enrolled veterans.
- 195, extend appreciation to the Golden Technologies Veterans' Assistance Division for the success of the 86th National Convention.

196, extend appreciation to the VA Medical Center in New Orleans for the success of the 86th National Convention. Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Hospitals and Volunteer Services. On behalf of the Committee I move the adoption of these resolutions and that the Committee be dismissed with the thanks from the National Convention.

(The above-mentioned resolutions follow:)

RESOLUTION NO. 029 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO MAKE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) 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 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 Disabled American Veterans, 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, The Partnership of nine veterans service organizations supports VA health care budget reform to achieve predictable timely and sufficient budgets for VA health care; 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports legislation to guarantee Congress provide sufficient resources to cover the expenses of the veterans' health care program.

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RESOLUTION NO. 030 - LEGISLATIVE

ENSURE TIMELY ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE AND MEDICAL SERVICES

WHEREAS, sick and disabled veterans' demands for care at many Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities have overwhelmed VA's current capacity; and

WHEREAS, given VA's limited resources, VA is forced to ration care leaving many of its 7.9 million enrolled veterans to wait long periods for primary and specialty care appointments; and

WHEREAS, VA's "Advance Clinic Access" (ACA) initiative is aimed at reducing waiting times for enrolled sick and disabled veterans in need of, and seeking care; and

WHEREAS, while waiting times continue to be a prevalent and growing problem, ACA shows promise but does not fully address timely access to quality health care for service-connected disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA should identify and immediately correct the underlying funding problems that contribute to excessively long waiting times for primary and specialty care for veterans in VA facilities nationwide; and

WHEREAS, short term solutions such as staff reassignments, redirection of patients to alternative sites of VA care, and restrictions of individual practitioners' available time with each patient while adding additional appointments to their daily schedules, 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, urges the VA to request sufficient resources and staff to reduce waiting times so sick and disabled veterans can achieve timely access to all medically necessary services within the VA health care system.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 031 - 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 Operations' Enduring and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF); and

WHEREAS, a Government 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 unique health care needs; and

WHEREAS, increasing numbers of women are serving in combat theaters and seeking VA health care services following military service therefore, VA must be prepared to anticipate the specialized needs of women veterans who were catastrophically wounded, suffering amputations, blindness, spinal cord injury, post-traumatic stress or traumatic brain injury, or sexually assaulted; and

WHEREAS, although it is anticipated that many of the medical problems for male and female veterans returning from combat operations will be similar, VA must address the health issues and barriers to care that pose special challenges for women; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, seeks to ensure the provision of health care services, inclusive of gender-specific services, by VA to eligible female 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 combat exposure or 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 conduct research and health studies as appropriate, review its women's health programs and seek innovative methods to ensure women veterans receive the treatment and specialized services they so rightly deserve.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 032 - LEGISLATIVE

INCREASE THE REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR FEE BASIS CARE AND FULLY
COVER THE COST OF TREATMENT APPROVED THROUGH THE FEE BASIS
PROGRAM FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED CONDITIONS

WHEREAS, when the 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

WHEREAS, some service-connected veterans who are approved by VA to utilize fee basis care are unable to secure treatment from a community provider due to VA's insufficient level of payment for medical services; and

WHEREAS, service-connected veterans, in some cases, must then 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, urges Congress and the Administration to establish new mechanisms to ensure VA reimbursement rates for fee basis care are adequate and indexed to the appropriate annual health care consumer inflation rate recognized by the Federal government; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans urges VA to promote incentives among private health care practitioners and medical facilities to accept VA fee basis reimbursements as payment in full for the cost of treatments provided through the fee basis program for service-connected disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 033 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT A CONGRESSIONALLY AUTHORIZED ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE
DEMONSTRATION PROJECT THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
(VA)

WHEREAS, based on prevalence rates, it is estimated that over 550,000 veterans suffer with dementia, including more than 280,000 enrolled for VA health care; and

WHEREAS, Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia accounting for at least 50 percent of cases; and

WHEREAS, veterans with Alzheimer's disease could benefit from a designated program to address their unique health care needs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, urges Congress to authorize an Alzheimer's demonstration project at a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facility or facilities; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this demonstration project be uniquely designed 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. 034 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE PROMPT MEDICAL SCREENING AND
TREATMENT FOR ALL VETERANS EXPOSED TO DEPLETED URANIUM

WHEREAS, the military utilized the extreme density of depleted uranium (DU) in projectiles and tank armor during the Persian Gulf War, Bosnia, and Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF); and

WHEREAS, exposure to the heavy metal DU poses radiation hazards and chemical toxicity to humans when internalized through ingestion, inhalation, shrapnel and contaminated wounds; and

WHEREAS, over 1.1 million service members have deployed to the Southwest Asia Theater of operations, and over 1.5 million OIF/OEF service members have deployed, and Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) Depleted Uranium Program established in 1993 has assessed only 3,000 veterans exposed to DU; and

WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) committee mandated by Congress to examine scientific and medical literature on the potential health effects of chemical, biological, and radiological agents, could not determine the likelihood of increased risk of adverse health outcomes among Gulf War veterans due to exposure to the agents examined in its 2000 report due to the lack of exposure data; and

WHEREAS, the IOM committee and the VA Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses recognized the limited number of research projects to examine the impact of the total exposures and experience of deployment and war on veterans' health; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, urges VA to provide prompt medical screening and treatment to any veteran that may have been exposed to depleted uranium; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports additional research to examine the health effects of depleted uranium.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 035 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE THE PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO RECEIVE HEALTH CARE EXCLUSIVELY FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, year after year, the Administration proposes a budget that falls below that necessary to meet veterans' health care needs; and

WHEREAS, it is at the discretion of Congress to provide the level of funding necessary for the veterans' health care system; and

WHEREAS, the President and many members of Congress insist that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system is adequately funded; and

WHEREAS, VA is recognized as the best health care system in the U.S., and for providing high quality health care services; and

WHEREAS, by using the VA health care system, the President, Vice President, and members of Congress would be in a better position to understand the resource needs of VA to enable it to provide timely quality health care to our nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, similar to the members of the military, the President, Vice President, and most Members of Congress are required to spend a significant amount of time away from their homes, families, and friends while Congress is in session; and

WHEREAS, because of the patriotism, devotion, and sacrifices of our President, Vice President, and Members of Congress, ours is the most free nation on earth, where our citizens enjoy unequalled rights, privileges, and prosperity; and

WHEREAS, the President, Vice President, and Members of Congress should therefore be granted the privilege of using the VA health care system for their medical needs; and

WHEREAS, if the President, Vice President, or member of Congress is a veteran, he or she would be classified into the proper priority group for purpose of receipt of VA medical care; and

WHEREAS, if the President, Vice President, or member of Congress is not a veteran, he or she would be classified as a non service-connected veteran in either Priority Group 7 or 8, depending on their income; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports legislation to require the President, Vice President, and Members of Congress to enroll for VA medical care services and receive health care exclusively from the VA health care system.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 042 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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.

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RESOLUTION NO. 049 - 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 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 is 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 48.5 cents per mile; and

WHEREAS, in 2006 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 payments 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 077 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT THE PROVISION OF COMPREHENSIVE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) HEALTH CARE SERVICES TO ENROLLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, it is the policy 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 conviction of the Disabled American Veterans that quality health care for veterans is achieved when health care providers are given the freedom and resources to provide the most effective and scientifically proven care 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, VA is forced to restrict, ration and deny access to health care implicitly promised in connection with veterans' 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' safety in the health care system;
- Guarantee access to a full continuum of care, from preventive through hospice;
- Receive adequate funding through appropriations for care of non service-connected conditions;
- 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 specialized services in areas such as blindness, amputation, spinal cord injury and dysfunction, 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 enrolled veterans;
- Maintain a strong and veteran-focused research program; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports legislation that embodies the concepts and principles enumerated above and establishes certainty to clearly defined VA health care services for enrolled veterans.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 079 - LEGISLATIVE
SUPPORT ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM HEALTH CARE TO SERVICE-
CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS**

WHEREAS, many veterans, including those with service-connected disabilities, 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 services, especially alternative, non-bed, and community-based programs, are not available in all VA settings; and

WHEREAS, VA statistics show that by 2012, there will be approximately 1.3 million veterans aged 85 and older; and

WHEREAS, VA will face ever increasing demand for long-term care as our nation's veteran population ages; and

WHEREAS, VA should develop and implement 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 addressing the needs of service-connected veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention, assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports legislation to expand the comprehensive program of long-term care services for service-connected disabled veterans regardless of their disability rating.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 081 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, opposes any legislation that would require VA to recover third-party payments for the care and treatment of a veteran's service-connected disabilities.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 083 - LEGISLATIVE
SUPPORT TOP PRIORITY ACCESS FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS WITHIN
THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) HEALTH CARE SYSTEM**

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has issued national directives and policies to affirm its commitment to providing top priority access to hospital care and medical services to veterans with service-connected disabilities, regardless of the percentage disability of service-connected rating, in absence of compelling medical reasons to the contrary; and

WHEREAS, many VA facilities are struggling to fulfill this mandate because of budget pressure, insufficient local resources and saturation of available capacity because of patient workloads; and

WHEREAS, National Service Officers and staff from National Headquarters of the Disabled American Veterans continue to receive complaints from service-connected veterans who are being denied priority access to VA health care services, or report their access to care is being delayed due to VHA's establishment of waiting lists and other types of health care rationing, without compelling medical reasons; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports strict enforcement by the Veterans Health Administration, including VHA network and medical center directors, of governing policies providing service-connected veterans priority access to care, unless compelling medical reasons prevent such priority from being extended to them.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 107 - LEGISLATIVE

ENCOURAGE VA TO SUBMIT CANDIDATE FOR THE JESSE BROWN MEMORIAL
YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) created the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program (JBMYS) as a means to recruit young volunteers and to recognize the efforts of America's young volunteers who serve disabled veterans in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities and the local community; and

WHEREAS, the JBMYS annually awards a total of \$80,000 to 12 deserving youth volunteers in the form of a first place \$15,000 scholarship; a second place \$10,000 scholarship; two \$7,500 third place scholarships and eight \$5,000 scholarships; and

WHEREAS, at the beginning of each calendar year, the DAV solicits every VA Voluntary Service Program Manager to nominate one deserving youth volunteer from their facility in order to be considered for one of the scholarships with little response; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in the National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, encourages each Voluntary Service program manager at every VA medical facility to submit the name of a deserving youth volunteer to be considered for one of the scholarships in appreciation of their dedication to serving America's veterans through their voluntary service efforts.

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RESOLUTION NO. 108 - ADMINISTRATIVE

ENCOURAGE VA TO SUBMIT CANDIDATE FOR THE GEORGE H. SEAL MEMORIAL
AWARD PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) created the George H. Seal Memorial Award Program as a means to recruit, retain and recognize volunteers who serve disabled veterans in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities and the local community; and

WHEREAS, the George H. Seal Memorial Award annually recognizes the remarkable efforts of an outstanding member of the DAV and DAV Auxiliary (DAVA) who willingly donate their time and energy to disabled veterans in VA Voluntary Service Programs; and

WHEREAS, at the beginning of each calendar year, the DAV solicits every VA Voluntary Service Program Manager to nominate one deserving member of the DAV and DAVA from their facility in order to be considered for the George H. Seal Memorial Award with little response; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in the National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, encourages each Voluntary Service Program Manager at every VA medical facility to submit the name of a deserving member of the DAV and DAVA to be considered for this prestigious award in appreciation of their dedication and service to America's veterans through their voluntary service efforts.

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RESOLUTION NO. 117 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports legislation to extend eligibility to CHAMPVA until an eligible child's graduation from an approved course of full-time education.

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RESOLUTION NO. 175 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM FOR TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY REHABILITATION AND REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENTS OF DEFENSE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS TO COLLABORATE TO ENSURE PROPER SCREENING, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT FOR ALL VETERANS WITH POSSIBLE TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

WHEREAS, traumatic brain injury (TBI) has been called the signature injury of the Iraq war; and

WHEREAS, blast injuries from improvised explosive devices (IEDs) that shake or compress the brain within the skull often cause devastating and permanent damage to brain tissue; and

WHEREAS, veterans with severe TBI and polytrauma will require extensive rehabilitation and life-long personal and clinical support, including neurological, medical and psychiatric services, and physical, psycho-social, occupational, and vocational therapies, and

WHEREAS, VA must ensure programs are adapted to meet the unique needs of the newest generation of combat service personnel and veterans, while they continue to address the needs of older veterans with severe physical disabilities as well as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other combat-related mental health challenges; and

WHEREAS, the VA's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) issued a revealing report in July 2006, titled: "Health Status of and Services for Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans after Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitation" concluding that improved coordination of care is necessary between the Departments of Defense and the VA, and that families need additional support in the care of TBI patients; and

WHEREAS, VA reports that it is tailoring its programs to meet the unique needs of severely injured OEF/OIF veterans by assigning case managers to each TBI and polytrauma patient and putting a greater emphasis on understanding the problems of families during the initial care and long-term rehabilitation of these patients; and

WHEREAS, we remain concerned about capacity and whether VA has the resources and staff necessary to provide intensive rehabilitation services, treat the long-term emotional and behavioral problems and to fully support families and caregivers of these seriously brain-injured veterans; and

WHEREAS, TBI can also be caused without any apparent physical injuries when a veteran is in the vicinity of an IED detonation; and

WHEREAS, veterans suffering a milder form of TBI may experience a variety of symptoms including; headaches, irritability, sleep disorders, memory problems and depression; and

WHEREAS, we are concerned about emerging literature that strongly suggests that even "mild" TBI patients may have long-term mental health and medical consequences; and

WHEREAS, milder forms of TBI may not be detected immediately and DoD and VA have not fully developed a system-wide approach for identification, management, and surveillance of individuals who sustain mild-to-moderate TBI, in particular those with the mild version; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports legislation that would require VA and DoD to coordinate efforts to address mild and moderate TBI and concussive injuries and establish a comprehensive rehabilitation program and standardized protocol utilizing appropriately formed clinical assessment techniques to recognize and treat neurological and behavioral consequences of all levels of TBI; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans urges that any TBI studies or research undertaken by VA and DoD include older veterans of past military conflicts who may have suffered similar injuries that went undetected, undiagnosed, and untreated.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 176 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION FOR RELIEF FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS OF SEVERELY WOUNDED, INJURED AND ILL COMBAT VETERANS

WHEREAS, severely disabled combat veterans present great challenges to the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), for acute, rehabilitative and long-term care health needs, due to poly-trauma; and

WHEREAS, in prior wars, immediate family members and dependents historically were involved early in the care and rehabilitation of severely injured veterans, especially when that care was being provided by DoD and VA facilities, but they got no relief; and

WHEREAS, family members are typically immediately at the bedside of wounded combat veterans, and remain with them throughout the course of their acute and rehabilitative care periods, often residing in or near the military treatment or VA health care facility during the course of that care; and

WHEREAS, families of severely wounded and disabled veterans must shoulder a great and lifelong burden as home and institutional caregivers and attendants, often giving up or severely restricting employment, education and social interactions that are taken for granted in the normal course of life, and suffering severe financial and personal penalties as a consequence of that attendance, in order to care for a severely disabled loved one; and

WHEREAS, in the absence of family caregiving, the burden of direct care would fall on institutions and other facilities of care of DoD and VA, at significantly higher financial cost and a reduced quality of life for severely wounded war veterans; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Government owes its highest obligation to those who are put in harm's way at the call of the Nation, and become severely disabled as a consequence of that service; and

WHEREAS, in equity and fairness, immediate family members of severely injured combat veterans should be afforded generous relief, assistance, and care for the duration of the lives of veterans injured in military service to our Nation; NOW

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports legislation that would provide a comprehensive set of supportive services, including but not limited to financial support, health and homemaker services, respite, education and training and other necessary relief, to immediate family member caregivers of veterans severely injured, wounded or ill from combat service.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 177 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCED RESOURCES FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS TO ACHIEVE READJUSTMENT OF NEW COMBAT VETERANS AND CONTINUED EFFECTIVE MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR ALL ENROLLED VETERANS NEEDING SUCH SERVICES

WHEREAS, current research findings indicate that combat veterans from Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) are at higher risk for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health problems; and

WHEREAS, VA reports that veterans of these current wars have sought care for a wide range of medical and psychological conditions, including mental health conditions, such as adjustment disorder, anxiety, depression, PTSD, and the effects of substance abuse; and

WHEREAS, as of April 2007, VA reported that of the 229,015 separated OEF/OIF veterans who have sought VA health care since fiscal year 2002, a total of 83,889 unique patients had received a diagnosis of a possible mental health disorder and over 39,000 of the enrolled OEF/OIF veterans had a probable diagnosis of PTSD (not including veterans seen at VA's Vet Centers); and

WHEREAS, VA has improved access to mental health services at its 800-plus community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs), such services are still not readily available at all sites; and

WHEREAS, we remain concerned about the capacity in specialized PTSD programs and the decline in availability of VA substance-use disorder programs of all kinds, over time, including virtual elimination of inpatient detoxification and residential treatment beds; and

WHEREAS, although additional funding has been dedicated to improving capacity in some programs, VA mental health providers continue to express concerns about inadequate resources to support, and consequent rationed access to, these specialized services; and

WHEREAS, VA announced it plans to establish 23 new Vet Centers to meet increasing demand for readjustment counseling services; however, we are concerned that VA staffing should also be increased in existing centers to ensure all veterans—including previous generations of combat veterans—who need help at VA community Vet Centers can gain access to readjustment services; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense and VA share a unique obligation to meet the health care—including mental health care and rehabilitation needs of veterans who are suffering from readjustment difficulties as a result of combat service; and

WHEREAS, suicide is a special concern among recently deployed veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with several reports in the media that veterans who subsequently committed suicide had sought care at VA but had been placed on waiting lists inappropriately; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports program improvement and enhanced resources for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) mental Health Programs to achieve readjustment of new combat veterans and continued effective mental health care for all enrolled veterans needing such services.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 178 - 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 authorizes VA to provide hospital care and medical services to any veteran for a service-connected disability or a veteran who has a service-connected disability rated at 50 percent or greater; 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, section 1712, to provide outpatient dental care to all enrolled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 179 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT FULL FUNDING AND RESOURCES FOR POLYTRAUMA UNITS AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTERS

WHEREAS, catastrophically injured veterans returning home from Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom are transferred to four polytrauma rehabilitation centers within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) located in Tampa, Richmond, Minneapolis, and Palo Alto, for intensive care and long-term restoration and rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, 17 additional VA medical centers have been designated as polytrauma network sites, located in Boston, Syracuse, New York City, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Augusta, Lexington, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Hines, St. Louis, Houston, Dallas, Tucson, Denver, Seattle, and Los Angeles; and

WHEREAS, the care provided in these four specialized centers and 17 polytrauma network sites is extraordinarily expensive and complex, often addressing complications from multiple amputations, traumatic brain injuries, multiple shell fragment wounds, and other catastrophic injuries; and

WHEREAS, these veterans spend long periods at polytrauma centers recovering from their combat injuries; and

WHEREAS, having the support of their family and friends is an integral part of the veteran's treatment and recovery process; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, calls on the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to request sufficient resources for polytrauma centers and polytrauma network

sites to ensure these centers include adequate space for veterans' rehabilitation, social, and recreational needs and dedicated space, including residential facilities, for family members who must often stay for extended periods to assist in veterans' recovery and rehabilitation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 180 - LEGISLATIVE

REQUIRE A VETERAN'S ATTENDING DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) PHYSICIAN TO PROVIDE A MEDICAL OPINION WITH REGARDS TO A CLAIM FOR VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION BENEFITS WHEN REQUESTED

WHEREAS, section 5103A of title 38, United States Code, prescribes that the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) shall assist a veteran by providing a medical examination or obtaining a medical opinion when such an examination or opinion is necessary to make a decision on a claim for disability benefits; and

WHEREAS, some VA physicians are reluctant or refuse to provide veterans with a medical opinion when requested, and

WHEREAS, VA has recently vacated its policy requiring VA health care practitioners to provide veterans a medical opinion with respect to a current medical condition and possible relationship to a veteran's military service; and

WHEREAS, the statutory requirement for duty to assist does not constitute a conflict of interest for a VA physician to provide a medical opinion concerning a veteran's disability and its relationship to military service; and

WHEREAS, a significant number of service-connected disabled veterans who seek treatment at VA medical facilities, rely solely on VA for all their health care needs; and

WHEREAS, through education, training, and experience, a VA physician who provides medical care to veteran patients has special insight of the veteran's experience and the diseases and disabilities common to military service; and

WHEREAS, the unwillingness of certain VA physicians to provide statements or opinions for veteran patients is inconsistent with the goal of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to provide comprehensive care and places a serious burden on veterans who depend on VHA for their care and who may not be able to afford a private medical opinion; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, urges VA to ensure full compliance by VA health care practitioners in providing medical statements or opinions to veterans when requested in conjunction with a claim for VA benefits.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 181 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT STATE VETERANS HOMES BY REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PAY A FAIR SHARE OF THE COST OF CARING FOR VETERANS

WHEREAS, State Veterans Homes were founded for Union soldiers and sailors following the American Civil War, and have ably served veterans for nearly 150 years; and

WHEREAS, under Title 38, United States Code, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is authorized to make aid payments to States that maintain State Veterans Homes, and to make grants to States for their construction and major improvements; and

WHEREAS, currently there are 126 State Veterans Homes as member institutions of the National Association of State Veterans Homes (NASVH), in all States and in Puerto Rico, that provide hospital, skilled nursing, rehabilitation, long-term care, dementia and Alzheimer's care, domiciliary care, respite care, end of life care, and adult day health care, daily to almost 30,000 veterans and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, authorizes VA to make per diem payments to the States for veterans residing in State Veterans Homes, and the State Veterans Home program is recognized as the lowest-cost among all nursing care alternatives used by VA; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, authorizes VA to pay a per diem payment up to 50 percent of the national average cost of care in State Veterans Homes; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the growing long-term health care needs of elder veterans, the State Veterans Home program will increasingly serve a vital purpose and will continue to be a major partner with VA in meeting the health care needs of aging veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Disabled American Veterans supports a VA per diem payment of not more than 50 percent of the national average cost of providing care in a State Veterans Home, as authorized by law; and

BE IT BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, fully supports the 2007 strategic objectives of the National Association of State Veterans Homes, specifically—In accordance with Public Law 109-461, VA pay the full cost, on an equitable basis, for the care of veterans in need of State Home care for a service-connected disability, and for any disability of a veteran with a service-connected disability rated at 70 percent or more; In accordance with Public Law 108-422, that VA issue necessary regulations to carry out Congressional purposes in authorizing a special nursing recruitment and retention program for State Veterans Homes; In accordance with the intent of Congress in passing Public Law 106-117, that existing regulations governing Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) in State Veterans Homes be modified and re-issued in such a manner that states might be better attracted to providing ADHC to eligible veterans in facilities operated by the states.

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 because that program is the most cost-effective nursing care alternative available to VA for sick and disabled veterans with long-term care needs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 182 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT ENHANCEMENT OF MEDICAL SERVICES AND MODERNIZATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) HEALTH CARE INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH THE CAPITAL ASSETS REALIGNMENT FOR ENHANCED SERVICES INITIATIVE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Health Administration is the largest health care system in the United States, in over 1,400 locations including comprehensive medical centers, community-based outpatient clinics (CBOC), nursing homes, readjustment counseling centers, and residential rehabilitation treatment programs; and

WHEREAS, much of VA's capital infrastructure was designed and built under an earlier concept of health care delivery based on centralized inpatient care; and

WHEREAS, VA needed to modernize its system and shift to more cost-effective facilities and programs to meet veterans' current and future health care needs while providing optimal efficiency and access to the system; and

WHEREAS, VA developed the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) initiative to realign VA's capital assets to ensure that veterans' future needs are met for accessible, quality health care; and

WHEREAS, according to VA testimony before Congress, full CARES implementation requires \$1 billion or more invested per year for several years, for construction of new medical centers, to open new CBOCs and carry out numerous major renovations, consolidations, seismic improvements, and expanded outpatient mental health services nationwide, all to be done in accordance with priorities established in the comprehensive CARES decision document; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention, assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that the CARES process results in enhanced medical services for veterans; that no services be discontinued without VA making alternative sites of care available and operational prior to any closure or consolidation of medical facilities; and that VA follow the decisions of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in implementing CARES; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Disabled American Veterans urges Congress to provide appropriated funding sufficient to fulfill the commitment of the Secretary in carrying out CARES decisions to modernize VA facilities for high quality health care; and urges that VA inform Congress, veterans and their national veterans service organizations, including Disabled American Veterans, of all activities and developments associated with CARES.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 183 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REPEAL THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) AND DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (TRICARE) COPAYMENTS FOR MEDICAL CARE AND PRESCRIPTIONS

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 using the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system 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 Secretaries of Veterans Affairs and Defense in the recent past, moved to dramatically increase copayments and fees for medical care and prescription medications, as if operating a commercial enterprise; 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, calls for legislation to repeal all copayments for military retirees and veterans' medical services and prescriptions.

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RESOLUTION NO. 184 - 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, service-members continue to return from operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF); and

WHEREAS, military personnel are exposed to conditions that are often distinct from those of the civilian population; and

WHEREAS, service-members 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, 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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 from military service.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 185 - LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE MEANS TESTING SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) HEALTH CARE

WHEREAS, Public Law 104-262 requires zero percent 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 zero percent service-connected disabled veterans have been relegated to the lowest eligibility categories for care and, in some cases, below non service-connected veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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 zero percent service-connected disabled veterans in Priority Group 3.

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RESOLUTION NO. 186 - LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE RECOMMENDATION THAT MILITARY RETIRED VETERANS BE PROHIBITED FROM RECEIVING HEALTH CARE FROM BOTH DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) 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 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, opposes any action to restrict health care eligibility for military retired veterans through the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 187 - 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 has 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 188 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT SUFFICIENT RESOURCES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) TO IMPROVE HEALTH CARE SERVICES FOR VETERANS LIVING IN RURAL OR REMOTE AREAS

WHEREAS, forty-four percent of today's active duty military service members and tomorrow's veteran population list rural communities as their homes of record; and

WHEREAS, approximately 40 percent of veterans enrolled for VA health care are classified by VA as veterans living in rural or highly rural areas; and

WHEREAS, after serving their country, veterans should not have their health care needs neglected by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) because they choose to live in rural and remote areas far from major VA health care facilities; and

WHEREAS, P.L. 109-461 authorized VA to establish the VHA Office of Rural Health to promulgate policies, best practices and innovations to improve services to veterans who reside in rural areas; and

WHEREAS, both houses of Congress on numerous occasions have attempted with legislation to address unmet health care needs of veterans who make their homes in rural and remote areas; and

WHEREAS, VA receives no Congressional appropriations dedicated to support establishment of rural community-based outpatient clinics but must manage those additional expenses from within available Medical Services appropriations provided by Congress; and

WHEREAS, VA has established and is operating over 717 community-based outpatient clinics, of which 323 are located in areas considered by VA to be rural or highly rural; and

WHEREAS, VA cannot cost-effectively justify establishing additional remote facilities in areas with sparse veteran populations given current circumstances; and

WHEREAS, VA has had continuing difficulty securing sufficient funding through the Congressional discretionary budget and appropriations process to ensure basic and adequate access for the care of sick and disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, Congress repeatedly has been forced to add additional funds to maintain VA health care services; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, fully supports the right of rural veterans to be served by VA, but insists that funding for additional rural care and outreach

be appropriated and not be the cause of reductions in highly specialized VA medical programs needed for the care of sick and service-connected veterans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans insists that if Congress intends to provide additional VA health care access to rural veterans, Congress must increase appropriations for that specific purpose.

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RESOLUTION NO. 189 - LEGISLATIVE

IMPROVE REIMBURSEMENT POLICIES FOR NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EMERGENCY HEALTH CARE SERVICES FOR ENROLLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans (VA) provides enrolled veterans a uniform benefits package that emphasizes preventive and primary care, and provides a comprehensive health care benefit plan including hospital, outpatient and long term care; and

WHEREAS, a health care benefits plan is incomplete without provision for emergency care; and

WHEREAS, a significant number of service-connected and nonservice-connected veterans rely on VA as their exclusive health care provider; and

WHEREAS, VA medical center recorded telephone greetings universally announce: "If you have a life-threatening emergency, please hang up and dial 911"; and

WHEREAS, city, county and voluntary emergency fire and rescue systems must conform to State first-responder and fire rescue laws, and under such laws, must transport patients to designated facilities equipped with certified emergency room capabilities; and

WHEREAS, VA facilities, with few exceptions, do not qualify under State or Federal laws as "emergency receiving facilities" for critically ill or injured patients under transport by first responders, nor do they offer 24-hour coverage for emergency care, and thus do not generally receive such cases; and

WHEREAS, VA frequently denies claims from private health care facilities submitted by service-connected veterans on the basis that VA was "available" for the care of that veteran in that circumstance; and

WHEREAS, title 38, United States Code, in defining the term "emergency treatment" for purposes of VA reimbursement, provides "that a prudent layperson reasonably expects that delay in seeking immediate medical attention would be hazardous to life or health;" and

WHEREAS, VA, in making its decision on a veteran's qualification for reimbursement after a perceived and claimed emergency, should take into account that in the circumstances of an emergency situation a veteran eligible under title 38, United States Code, for emergency care reimbursement may not have had any choice in seeking care at a VA facility due to the circumstances of that situation; and

WHEREAS, title 38, United States Code, restricts reimbursement for emergency care to that of VA acting in last resort, in cases in which veterans possess no other coverage, have a liability to the emergency-service provider, and have utilized VA health care resources within a 24-month period of the emergency event; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, to eliminate the provision that requires enrolled veterans to have received care from VA within the 24-month period prior to date of the emergency care; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans urges the Veterans Health Administration to review and reform its policies with respect to evaluating whether a veteran, in seeking intervention in a perceived life- or health-threatening emergency situation, has the power to divert first responders from private emergency receiving facilities to VA facilities.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 195

EXTEND APPRECIATION TO GOLDEN TECHNOLOGIES VETERANS ASSISTANCE DIVISION FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 86TH 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 100 motorized scooters during our 86th National Convention; and

WHEREAS, Golden Technologies has assisted many DAV members in overcoming mobility limitations and therefore, contributed greatly to the success of the 86th National Convention; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, expresses its sincere gratitude and appreciation to Golden Technologies for the loaning of electric scooters to the delegates to this 86th National Convention.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 196

EXTEND APPRECIATION TO THE NEW ORLEANS VA MEDICAL CENTER, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA, FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 86TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the cooperation and professionalism extended to the delegates and guests of the 86th 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 the New Orleans Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center, staffed and maintained a compassionate and high-quality outpatient clinic and prosthetic service within the Hilton New Orleans Riverside; and

WHEREAS, the medical care and prosthetic services rendered to the delegates to this 86th National Convention were extended in a highly compassionate and professional manner; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, expresses its sincere appreciation to the New Orleans VA Medical Center, New Orleans, Louisiana for the professional and skillful medical care delivered to the delegates to this 86th National Convention and for contributing to the success of this Convention.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Delphine. (Applause)

MR. SALVATORE E. UCCELLO: Comrade Commander. Comrade Commander, Mic 2.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 2.

MR. UCCELLO: Sal Uccello, Chapter 42, West Palm Beach, Florida, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BARTON: 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. Now, I'd like to call on the Employment Committee chairman, Terry Schow, for his report.

MR. TERRY SCHOW: Thank you, Commander. Before I start my report I would like to thank the DAV for recognizing my fellow Utahan, Kaziah Hancock, for that award, a truly great lady.

The National Convention Committee on Employment was called together on August 11th, by the Committee advisors Alfred Reynolds and Brian L. Lawrence. The first order of business was the election of a Committee chairman. Terry Schow was elected as chairman and Doug Wells was elected 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 purposes of saving time I will read only the number and purpose.

Number 043, to support veterans' preference in federal, state and local employment. Number 044, support licensure and certification of active-duty service personnel. 045, provide

adequate staffing, funding and permanency for the veterans employment and/or training, including V.E.T.S., N.V.T.I.s, S.B.A., D.V.O.P., L.V.R., and homeless veterans programs.

Number 084, provide vocational rehabilitation and counseling staff with state-of-the art equipment. Number 088, restore Service Members Occupation Conversation and Training Programs, SMOCTA. Number 089, employments services for disabled military personnel on terminal leave.

Number 123, allow disabled veterans medically retired from the military service to count service time towards civil service retirement. Number 155, allow extension of vocational rehabilitation in excess of the 12-year limit. Number 190, oppose using D.V.O.P., L.V.R. to work with or process public assistance programs/reinforce mandate to assist veterans.

Number 191, support service-disable veteran-owned businesses. Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Employment. On behalf of the Committee I move for adoption of the resolutions.

(The above-mentioned resolutions follow:)

RESOLUTION NO. 043 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports veterans' preference in federal, state, and local employment.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 044 - 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 Service-members' 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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 (DoD) take appropriate steps to ensure that service-members 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. 045 - 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 VETERANS' 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, seeks and supports adequate funding and permanency for all veterans' employment and training programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 084 - LEGISLATIVE

PROVIDE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND COUNSELING SERVICE STAFF WITH SATE-OF-THE-ART EQUIPMENT

WHEREAS, the current Director, Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) 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 them with needed support including current technological support to include computers, faxes, and even telephones, which are necessary to expedite and streamline the processes and will result in earlier enrollments into a program; and

WHEREAS, it has been reported by the recently established "Design Team" set up to review how vocational rehabilitation does business, some VR&E offices do not have this type of equipment and in at least one instance, they do not even have phones; and

WHEREAS, this type of equipment is essential to help disabled veterans attain their employment goals; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, seeks change that would assure Regional Office Directors are held accountable and all VR&E staff at the VA Regional Office level be provided state-of-the-art equipment in order for them to efficiently perform the duties of providing vocational rehabilitation and employment services to disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 088 - LEGISLATIVE

CALL FOR RESTORATION OF THE SERVICEMEMBERS' OCCUPATIONAL CONVERSION AND TRAINING ACT

WHEREAS, in 1992, Congress enacted the Service-members' 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 service-members 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, goes on record urging Congress to reauthorize SMOCTA and provide proper funding for this program.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 089 - 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 (SEAs) 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11–14, 2007, 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 SEAs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 123 - LEGISLATIVE

ALLOW DISABLED VETERANS RETIRED FROM THE MILITARY ON DISABILITY TO
COUNT SERVICE TIME TOWARD CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENT

WHEREAS, Under current law, military personnel who are not injured by an instrumentality of war during time of war who receive a military disability retirement do not receive the same benefits that a reservist who served the same amount of active duty time when they retired from Federal Civilian service; and

WHEREAS, disabled veterans, retired from military service with less than 20 years for their service-connected disabilities, who seek employment with the Federal Government cannot count their few years of military service towards civil service retirement unless they waive the receipt of military disability retired pay; and

WHEREAS, the same restrictions are not imposed, under current Federal Law, on retired reservists who can draw retirement from both civil service and the military service for their years of service retirement from both civil service and the military service for their years of service rendered both the military and civil service, without being required to reduce their civil service time or any requirement to waive military retired pay in order to receive full civil service retirement for their combined service; and

WHEREAS, many Reserve and National Guard personnel do receive credit for many years of active duty service time, draw severance pay for up to a full year of their active duty military pay then elect to join the Military Reserves or National Guard and concurrently work for the civil service for which they are allowed to count their years of active military service towards both civil service and military reserve/guard retirement; and

WHEREAS, ex-servicemen and women who only draw Department of Veteran’s Affairs (DVA) compensation for their service-connected disability can receive both the DVA compensation and civil Service retirement pay without waiver of one for the other; and

WHEREAS, equity should dictate that ex-service personnel who were disabled with less than ten years of service and who were retired because of their service-connected disabilities (not for length of service) should be allowed to draw military retirement and count those years towards their civil service retirement the same way that those active duty personnel who were forced to join, after many years of active service, the military reservists/guards unites and can count the same time for retirement from the reserves/National Guard and civil service.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11–14, 2007, supports a change to the law that now prohibits disabled military retirees; disabled from any cause, except willful misconduct, and who served during a period of declared National Emergency, war or police action, be entitled to count their service time towards civil service retirement.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 155 - LEGISLATIVE

ALLOW AN EXTENSION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION IN EXCESS OF THE
TWELVE-YEAR LIMITATION

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) allows up to 12 years in which to utilize the educational benefits through the vocational rehabilitation program, but for only circumstances surrounding certain situations, are there exceptions for extensions of that designated time period; and

WHEREAS, the veteran applies for such benefit within the 12-year regulation, yet he or she is unable to complete training within that designated time period; and

WHEREAS, the individual should be granted the amount of time to complete such education in excess of the 12-year stipulation, if applied for before the expiration of the 12-year policy, so as to provide the veteran the education necessary to procure a gainful occupation or employment in accordance with the rules and regulations governed by the VA; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11–14, 2007, supports a veteran's right to obtain the necessary educational rehabilitation in order to secure a gainful occupation and/or employment.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 190 - LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE USING DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS AND LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES TO WORK WITH OR PROCESS PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service administers programs to assist veterans with their employment and training needs; and

WHEREAS, many state employment agencies are utilizing Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) to work on public assistance related programs, including food stamps; and

WHEREAS, this diverts the DVOP/LVER program personnel from their prime mission, which is to assist veterans with their employment and training needs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana August 11-14, 2007, opposes utilizing DVOP/ LVERs to work with or process public assistance programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 191 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATIVE MEASURES ASSISTING 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11–14, 2007, supports the statutory requirements of Public Law 106-50 and future legislative measures supporting disabled veteran owned businesses.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Terry. You have head the motion. May I have a second.

MR. DAVID ADAMS: Mic 1.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 1.

MR. ADAMS: David Adams, District 16, Department of California, I so move.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you. In accordance with Rule 9 now is the time for any rejected resolutions to be read. Are there any rejected resolutions you wish to be read? Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. I will now call on National Adjutant Wilson for any announcements.

ADJUTANT WILSON: There will be no business session on Monday. Instead, Monday will be devoted to various seminars and workshops. Please be sure to check your schedule and attend as many of the seminars as possible. They are great learning tools that can be useful when you return home.

Our final business session will be Tuesday morning at 9:30. We will start off with Committee reports, including the final report of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

We will also introduce the Imperial Council of the National Order of Trench Rats, followed by reports from the National Service Foundation and the Charitable Service Trust. Tuesday's session will conclude with nominations and election of officers in the afternoon session.

Beginning tonight at 8:00 o'clock you can enjoy the fantastic musical concert with Gary Sinise and his Lieutenant Dan Band. Gary, who will be forever remembered as "Lieutenant Dan Taylor" in the 1994 film classic Forrest Gump, is a compassionate friend of DAV and a tireless supporter of veterans and our brave men and women in uniform. Because of sound checks, however, Gary and the Band, for Gary and the Band, the doors for the show will not open until 8:00 p.m.

A printing error resulting in the omission of the Planned Giving Seminar from the Convention program, I encourage you to attend this seminar—what did I miss? I encourage you to attend this seminar.

It's an entertaining hour which will include not only important information on estate planning but also rare film clips from the long-lost Hollywood movies about veterans, priceless clips of USO shows from more than a half a century ago, and, as a special bonus, a limited edition of a DAV mug to every attendee. The seminar is tomorrow afternoon at 3:00 p.m. in the Elmwood Room. Take the tower elevator to the third floor.

I am now going to announce the winners of the jackets. There are five winners each day, as we announced at the close of the business session. It requires that I can see: Ronald Hoffman from California; Richard Holden from the National Blind Chapter, Bobbie Ell from Florida, Howard Brandt from Ohio, and William Zell from Florida.

As a reminder, we are giving away those jackets and for those five delegates you must be in the room to win. If your name was called and you are here, please see Tony Baskerville up here on stage as soon as we adjourn to receive your jacket.

And, finally, the Nominating Committee will reconvene tomorrow morning at 7:30 a.m. in the Magnolia Room, third floor, to interview candidates for National Office. That's all.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Mr. Wilson. Ladies and gentlemen, please rise and I will ask Chaplain Bastille to lead us in a closing prayer.

CHAPLAIN BASTILLE: I have a story. (Laughter) A new benefits counselor worker needed a few days off and realized that he had run out of vacation time. He figured the best way to get his boss to send him home was to act a little crazy so he would think he was burning out and give him some time off.

The next day he went to work early and began hanging upside down from the ceiling. Just then one of his co-workers, a transportation officer, asked him what he was doing. "Shush," he said, "I'm acting a little crazy to get a few days off. I'm a light bulb."

A second later the boss walked by and asked him what he was doing. "I'm a light bulb," he explained, "hanging from the ceiling." "You're going crazy," he said. "Take a few days off." With that the counselor jumped down and started walking out.

The transportation officer started following him out and the boss asked him in a firm voice where he was going. "I can't work in the dark," he said. (Laughter) Let us pray. Oh, Lord God, be with us as we finish our business and prepare to return to our rooms and noon meal.

Help us carry with us a renewed commitment to the disabled American veterans we serve. Guide our actions that we may inspire others. Help us become a beacon that others may follow and help us to remember that we can't work in the dark. In the name of the loving God who gives us light and time off, Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

COMMANDER BARTON: The Convention stands in recess until 9:30 Tuesday morning. (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 11:50 o'clock, a.m. on Sunday, August 12, 2007.)

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION

August 14, 2007

The Third Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans 86th National Convention convened in the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana, on Tuesday, morning, August 14, 2007, and was called to order at 9:32 o'clock, a.m., by National Commander Bradley S. Barton.

COMMANDER BARTON: The Convention will come to order. I would like to remind everyone to please turn off their cell phones. Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited followed by a hand salute.)

COMMANDER BARTON: I will now call on the Reverend Bastille to give us a story.
(Laughter)

CHAPLAIN BASTILLE: I do have a story. (Laughter) A young turtle very patiently climbed up a tall tree until it came to a high branch. It carefully made its way to the end of the branch, jumped off and began to vigorously flap its little legs. It fell straight down until, bam, it hit the ground.

After a few moments of recovery it crawled back to the tree and very patiently began the long climb back up to the high branch. It carefully made its way out to the end of the branch, jumped of and began to vigorously flap its little legs. It fell straight down, again, and, bam, hit the ground.

After a few moments of recovery it crawled back to the tree and very patiently began the long climb back up to the high branch. Two robins were sitting in an adjacent tree. One turned to the other and said, "I don't care what you say, I'm going to tell him he's adopted." (Laughter)

Let us pray. Lord, God, be with us as we gather as Disabled American Veterans. We have much to do. Guide us during our session to keep our vision of the future clear in our minds. Keep us on course and give us the determination of the turtle so that we can do the tasks set before us.

Give us, Oh, God, a sense of purpose and the ability to be of single mind and, when necessary, to disagree with love, tolerance, and mutual respect for each other. Be with us, guide us, and encourage us to our mission of service to our nation and to our veterans. Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

COMMANDER BARTON: 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 the delegate must state their name, Chapter number and the state they represent. I would like to call on the Credentials Committee for a report, Chairman Mary Bencivenga.

MS. BENCIVENGA: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MS. BENCIVENGA: National Commander, National Officers, National Adjutant, staff and delegates, the Credentials Committee met this morning in the Rosedown at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel. Roll call showed 1,130 delegates, 60 alternates were present.

This is a partial report for informational purposes only and reflects the registration at the close of registration at 4:00 p.m., Monday, August 13th, 2007. At the present time we have 482 Chapters, 46 Departments, 33 National Officers, and 11 Past National Commanders, for a total of 1,130 delegates and 60 alternates for a total vote of 9,952. This completes my partial report for the Credentials Committee, Commander Barton.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Mary. This is a reminder that registration will close this morning at 10:00 a.m. I would like to call on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for a report, Ken Musselmann, Chairman.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MUSSELMANN: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MUSSELMANN: Comrade Commander and delegates, I will now proceed with the second report of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. Since our first report, no resolutions were submitted to the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws for consideration.

Commander, this completes the second and final report of the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws. Commander, I now move that the reports of the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws be accepted and the Committee be discharged with the thanks of the Convention. Short enough? (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Ken. I will now ask for a second.

DR. RABA: Mic 2.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 2. I can't see you.

DR. RABA: Dr. Mariana M. Raba, Chapter 6, District 16, so moves.

COMMANDER BARTON: A second, I'm sorry.

DR. RABA: You want a second?

COMMANDER BARTON: Yes.

DR. RABA: Dr. Mariana M. Raba, Chapter 6, District 16, so moves to second.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Mariana. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. I am sure by now everyone here has visited the beautifully restored B-25 Mitchell Bomber on display along the Riverwalk.

The motive to bring Panchito to New Orleans was conceived as an opportunity to create an extraordinary centerpiece for our convention that would attract significant public attention as well as regional and national media coverage.

As you can imagine, it took a lot of hard work and perseverance to bring this vintage war bird to New Orleans. Several local and state agencies had to approve the idea, as well as to provide equipment and personnel to make the journey possible.

Our Communications Department and the DAV Flight Team spearheaded this project but with tremendous help from someone who reflects the enthusiasm and can-do spirit of this great southern city.

Our search for help began early this year and eventually lead to Mr. David Schulingkamp, President of M.G. Maher and Company, Inc., one of the largest, full-service international freight forwarders and custom brokers with over 50 years of experience in worldwide shipping, storage and logistics.

David conducted an extensive research and determined the project was feasible. And, such was his devotion he offered that his company would pay all related moving expenses. I again say, pay all expenses. Talk about generosity. (Applause)

David quickly fashioned an agreement with two local companies. Ports American Louisiana would provide the derrick barge to carry Panchito. And American Commercial Lines would supply the push boat to move her along the Mississippi.

He also helped to persuade the Port of New Orleans to allow DAV to place the aircraft on the Canal Street Wharf, something that caused quite a stir because it has never been done before. The city's response to Panchito has been overwhelming, to say the least.

So, to praise the gentleman, our Cajun Champion, who, with a generous heart and a very open checkbook, has helped make this historic visit possible, we honor Mr. David Schulingkamp. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, Mr. David Schulingkamp joined Commander Barton at the podium and Commander Barton was handed a plaque for presentation.)

COMMANDER BARTON: David, the inscription reads:

"The Disabled American Veterans gratefully recognizes your extraordinary commitment to our organization. Through your heartfelt concern and loyal determination you have demonstrated tremendous patriotism and generosity.

"You embody the finest virtues of New Orleans' hospitality and have enabled our historic organization unprecedented outreach and success during our 86th National Convention.

"With faith and persistence you have contributed significantly to our timeless mission of bringing hope to those who have sacrificed for the freedom we treasure as a nation.

"Your selflessness, ingenuity and can-do spirit reflect admirably upon your community and provide inspiration to all who have depended upon your counsel and friendship.

"Winston Churchill once said, 'We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.' On behalf of all who bear the scars of war, thank you for your benevolent leadership and for making the needs of disabled veterans a priority. *Laissez les bon temps rouler.*"

(Whereupon, Mr. David Schulingkamp was presented with the plaque.)

MR. DAVID SCHULINGKAMP: I want to thank all of you all for coming to New Orleans. I can tell you, this is really moving to be here with this group. And let me say that this was the most challenging but most fun logistics project I've ever worked on in my career. But it's really not about my efforts or the efforts of the others who were instrumental in moving this aircraft.

This is about the membership and it's about those of you who have given so much more than many of us who are here today. And we want to say that this organization and its membership has been an inspiration to those of us who are on the sideline and have watched your efforts and your activities.

So, you're always welcome in New Orleans and I hope that you will come back, both individually and as an organization. Thanks again for the opportunity to be a part of this. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: David, on behalf of the DAV members everywhere, it has been my pleasure to present you with this special award for your extraordinary efforts in helping bring the Panchito to our members and the people of the Crescent City.

Would you please join me in welcoming Imperial Golden Rodent Al Sorrentino, (Boos) Imperial Red-Eyed Gnawer Paul Bailey, (Boos) and the Imperial Council of the National Order of Trench Rats. (Boos)

(Whereupon, the National Order of Trench Rats entered the room and advanced to the podium.)

MR. ALBERT M. SORRENTINO: Imperial R.E.G. (Boos)—hello—Paul Bailey, would you please introduce our officers.

MR. PAUL BAILEY: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MR. BAILEY: Imperial Golden Rodent, Albert M. Sorrentino.

MR. SORRENTINO: Here.

MR. BAILEY: Imperial Silver Rodent, Floyd W. "Pete" Buell.

MR. FLOYD W. "PETE" BUELL: Here.

MR. BAILEY: Imperial Blue Rodent, Terrence J. Flick.

MR. TERRENCE J. FLICK: Here.

MR. BAILEY: Imperial Bubonic Plague, Vern Christian. (Boos)

MR. VERNON W. CHRISTIAN: Here.

MR. BAILEY: Imperial Black Plague, Gerald Ogle; Imperial Red-eyed Gnawer—that's me, at least it was. Imperial Bench Rat, Vincent P. Reed, Junior; Imperial Hole-y Rat, Franklin Brown; Imperial Nightingale, James Bixby; Imperial Historic Rat, Chuck Heiney; Imperial Rendezvous Rat, Chad Vale; Imperial Executive Rat, Robert Halpin, Gerald Cool, Mark Aaron, Raymond Drake, Steven Holsworth, Michael O'Neal, Timothy D. Hedgecock; (Boos) Imperial Rodents—I'm sorry. I'm haven't called them yet. Oh, I'm sorry, Number 6, Bob Bennett. (Boos) That's only the third time this week we've missed him. (Laughter) Sorry, Bob. Imperial Rodents, 82, Joel C. Devenish; IR-81, Michael J. Stokes; IR-80, Gerald Horton; IR-79, Bernard L. Walkowiak; 78, Frank Cummings; 76, Larry Polzin; 70 is me; IR-65, Oswald F. Patterson; and last, but not least, he thinks he's the senior rodent now because he's down at the bottom of the list but Vincent P. Reed, Junior, IR-64.

UNIDENTIFIED: I hate when one of the old-timers don't show.

MR. BAILEY: You love it and you know it.

MR. SORRENTINO: National Commander, Brad Barton.

COMMANDER BARTON: Yes, sir.

MR. SORRENTINO: Front and center, please.

COMMANDER BARTON: All right. (Meowing from the audience)

MSR. SORRENTINO: Brad, we would like to present you these checks from the Imperial Band, Paul.

MR. BAILEY: From the National Order of Trench Rats to the Veterans' Perpetual—oh, pardon me, the Disabled Veterans' for LIFE Memorial Fund, \$2,000. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you.

MR. BAILEY: DAV Perpetual Rehab Fund, \$2,500.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you. (Applause)

MR. BAILEY: I have two more to give you. I don't have them with me but we have two resolutions and I'd like to donate them on behalf of Robert J. Auchu—I will read these resolutions here as they are past officers, passed away—and Wilber N. Trahan. I think Al has something to present to you.

MR. SORRENTINO: Brad, National Commander, for your loyalty to all the veterans of our nation that served, for your devotion, your dedication and what you do and what you believe in and how you treat us rats I would like to present you a special coin from the NOTR. God bless you.

(Whereupon, Mr. Sorrentino presented Commander Barton with a National Order of Trench Rats coin.)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you very much, Al. (Applause) Thank you.

MR. SORRENTINO: We have something else here on behalf of the Imperial Band. Bradley, S. Barton, Commander, Disabled Veterans, 2006-2007, for your outstanding support of the National Order of Trench Rats. Presented August 13th, 2007, New Orleans, Louisiana.

(Whereupon, Commander Barton was presented with a plaque.)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you very much. (Applause) Now, I thought there was one more check. (Laughter)

MR. SORRENTINO: Well, they're going to collect that from me this afternoon.

COMMANDER BARTON: That's for my retirement fund. (Laughter) Thank you. (Applause) Thank you.

MR. SORRENTINO: Let me read you this resolution. National Adjutant, Art Wilson.

ADJUTANT WILSON: What?

COMMANDER BARTON: Front and center.

MR. SORRENTINO: Come on down. (Laughter) Oh, I love this. I'm not going to hug you in front of everybody. (Laughter) Art, I don't know what to say. You've done so much for all of us.

Your staff, your devotion, your loyalty, the things you do, we're so proud of you, that's why we're all here today. God bless you. Hope we have many more. And I want to present you this coin to show you our loyalty as Trench Rats for what National does for us. Thank you so much. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Wilson was presented with a National Order of Trench Rats coin.)

ADJUTANT WILSON: Thank you.

MR. BAILEY: I'd like to read this resolution. This will, both of our resolutions are the same or they read the same, we just have two brothers that have passed away.

"WHEREAS, God has seen it in his infinite wisdom to call to the Great Beyond Robert J. Auchu; 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 83rd Rendezvous in New Orleans, Louisiana, that we recognize his outstanding service by contributing the sum of one hundred dollars as a memorial to him to be placed in the trust account of the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund of the Disabled American Veterans Service Foundation, the income of which shall be used from time to time toward the maintenance of the nationwide rehabilitation activities of the Disabled American Veterans and their dependents;

"AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That his name be inscribed on the memorial honor rolls so all may see and appreciate his sacrifice and devotion to the cause of the Disabled American Veterans as exemplified by Robert J. Auchu, Imperial Turquoise Rodent, 2006-7."

I also have the same resolution for Wilbur L. Trahan, Imperial Iron Claw of 2006-7. (Applause)

MR. SORRENTINO: At this time it's my deep pleasure to introduce the incoming Imperial Golden Rodent, Pete Buell. (Boos)

MR. BUELL: Good morning. (Boos) I didn't hear you. (Boos) All right, I would like to have all of the volunteers stand up. Come on, stand up. Don't be bashful. Okay, now, all you rats take a look around and see all these volunteers. That's what we're all about, volunteering, at the hospitals, cemeteries, wherever we are needed. So, I will leave it at that and have a good finish session. (Applause)

MR. SORRENTINO: Once again, as the Imperial Golden Rodent, thank you all for what you do for us. Thank you for being here. And God bless America. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the National Order of Trench Rats withdrew from the podium.)

COMMANDER BARTON: Well, I don't know about those rats, but they certainly have better music, don't they?

(Response of "Yes.")

COMMANDER BARTON: Ladies and gentlemen, in far-off fields in ten different countries around the world are the graves of 125,000 brave American men and women who lost their lives for the cause of freedom. America's 24 overseas military cemeteries were created to honor these fallen heroes and those who are missing in action.

But these patriotic shrines are also intended to serve as permanent memorials to remind the world of the terrible sacrifice America has made for peace. The American Battle Monuments Commission, the government agency that builds and maintains these cemeteries, wants more Americans to know about and visit these magnificent places.

Robert Uth, who produced this remarkable film for the American Battle Monuments Commission, also produced the 2002 Emmy Award-winning film "Korean War Stories," and "March of the Bonus Army," which aired on PBS last year. Bob is with us today in his usual spot back there in the control booth helping direct our Convention and making me look very good. Welcome, Bob. (Applause)

A full-length production of "Hallowed Grounds" is scheduled to debut on PBS Memorial Day 2008. Ladies and gentlemen, please enjoy this brief but very compelling visual tour of America's "Hallowed Grounds."

(Whereupon, the film "Hallowed Grounds" was presented.)

COMMANDER BARTON: We hope that you have enjoyed this introduction to America's extraordinary overseas military cemeteries. It gives us great pride to know that those who paid the ultimate price for liberty will be enshrined with dignity for all time. I would like to call upon Chairman Albert "Al" Linden, for a report of the Legislation and Veterans' Rights Committee.

MR. LINDEN: Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Legislation and Veterans' Rights was called to order on August 11th, 2007, by Committee advisors Joe Violante and Brian E. Austin. The first order of business was the election of a Convention Committee chairman and secretary. Al Linden was elected as chairman and Donald Peek was elected as secretary.

The Committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted and I will now report to you on 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 Number 4, to amend Title 38, U.S.C., to provide ten-year protection for service-connected disabled evaluations.

Resolution 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. Resolution 7, opposition to subjecting compensation to means testing. 8, oppose reduction, taxation or elimination of VA benefits. Number 9, expand POW presumptions.

Ten, support an open presumptive period for undiagnosed illnesses of Gulf War veterans. Number 11, support legislation to allow all veterans to recover amounts withheld as tax on disability severance pay. Twelve, supporting legislation to repeal the prohibition against service-connection for smoking-related illness.

Thirteen, supporting a change in regulatory requirements for a temporary total rating under Section 4.30 of Title 38, C.F.R. Fourteen, support repeal of funding fees for VA home loans. Seventeen, to provide an open period to apply for service-connected, for service disability veterans' insurance. That's the C.R.H.

Number 18, mortgage protection life insurance for 100 percent service-connected veterans. Number 19, extend space available air travel aboard military aircraft to 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans. Number 52, support legislation to remove the prohibition against concurrent receipt.

Fifty-three, disability compensation increase. Fifty-four, supporting legislation to provide presumptive service connection to atomic veterans for all recognized radiogenic diseases. Fifty-five, in support of legislation to provide that Special Separation Benefits, SSB, will not be withheld from VA disability compensation payments.

Fifty-six, oppose any change that would redefine service-connected disabilities or restrict the conditions or circumstances under which it may be established. Sixty-one, oppose recommendations for any commission to balance the budget on the backs of veterans.

Sixty-two, increase grants for automobiles and other conveyances available to certain disabled veterans and provide for automatic annual adjustments based on an increase in the cost of living. Sixty-three, authorize automobile adaptive equipment eligibility to any veteran who has a service-connected disability that inhibits the ability to safely operate a motor vehicle.

Sixty-four, supporting legislation to offset between D.I.C. and S.V.P. Sixty-five, oppose the imposition of time limits for filing compensation claims. Sixty-six, oppose the reduction of the appeal period for Department of Veterans Affairs decisions.

Sixty-seven, provide an increase in specialty adaptive housing grant and provide for annual COLAs. Sixty-eight, increase the face value of the service disabled veterans insurance, R.H. Number 70, supporting legislation to provide a waiver of premiums for supplemental service disability veterans insurance, R.H.

One hundred, opposing the permanent rounding down of COLAs in veterans' benefits. One hundred one, support an increase in the VA burial allowance for service-connected veterans and to

provide for annual, automatic annual adjustments. One-thirteen, extend the military commissary and exchange privileges and space available air travel to 30 percent or higher service-connected disabled veterans separated from service prior to October 1949.

One-thirty-four, amend provisions regarding eligibility for D.I.C for a surviving spouse. One-thirty-eight, eliminate the delimiting date for eligible spouses and surviving spouses for benefits provided under Chapter 35, Title 38, U.S.C. One-forty-nine, redefine service in Vietnam to include service in the waters offshore.

One-fifty, exempt disability compensation in the determination of eligibility for government programs. One-fifty-two, provide a temporary total rating for a period that an amputee has a new prosthetic device constructed. One-sixty-two, to compensate Persian Gulf veterans suffering from illness circumstantially linked to their service in the Persian Gulf War.

One-sixty-three, formulate different criteria to evaluate mental disorders. One-sixty-four, support the presumption of exposure to stressors for veterans who served in a war zone and who suffer from PTSD. One-sixty-five, restore protections against unwarranted awards of veterans benefits to third parties in divorce actions.

One-sixty-six, repeal any legislation to permit attorneys to charge a fee for benefits consulting or veterans services before the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. One-sixty-seven, oppose regional dispersion of the Board of Veterans Appeals. One-sixty-eight, support legislation to require the United States Court of Appeal for Veterans Claims to decide each of the appellant's assignments of error.

One-sixty-nine, reduce premiums for service-disabled veterans insurance to be more consistent with life expectancies. One-seventy, provide education benefits for dependents of service-connected veterans rated 80 percent or more disabled. Comrade Commander, this completes the report on the Committee on Legislation and Veterans' Rights. On behalf of the Committee I move for the adoption of these resolutions.

(The above-mentioned resolutions follow:)

RESOLUTION NO. 004 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11 – 14, 2007, 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. 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 (VA) 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 with the earned payments of Social Security Disability Insurance Benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11–14, 2007, 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, various entities have 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11–14, 2007, opposes any change in law to provide for lump-sum payments of VA disability compensation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 007 - 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 or diseases 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11–14, 2007, opposes any scheme to means test disability and death compensation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 008 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11–14, 2007, vigorously opposes reduction, taxation, or elimination of veterans' benefits.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 009 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11–14, 2007, 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. 010 - 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 presumptive period for undiagnosed illnesses was extended until September 30, 2011; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11–14, 2007, urges that legislation be enacted to extend the presumptive period for service connection for ill-defined and undiagnosed illnesses indefinitely.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 011 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 012 - 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 service-members, 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports legislation to repeal the prohibition of service connection for smoking-related illnesses.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 013 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT A CHANGE IN REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS UNDER SECTION 4.30 OF TITLE 38, CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS TO PROVIDE FOR A TEMPORARY TOTAL RATING FOR INCAPACITATION OF MORE THAN 21 DAYS

WHEREAS, with advances in modern medicine and increasing emphasis on more efficient use of health care resources, health care providers are being encouraged to utilize suitable alternatives to inpatient care; and

WHEREAS, as a consequence, veterans are often treated through home health services or convalesce at home rather than in the hospital; and

WHEREAS, convalescent ratings are currently only authorized where inpatient or outpatient treatment resulted in surgery or immobilization of a major joint by cast; and

WHEREAS, there are instances where the veteran's treatment did not involve surgery or casting of a major joint, but the veteran has undergone healing, convalescence, or a therapeutic course in the home, with a duration of more than 21 days; and

WHEREAS, exacerbation of a service-connected disability sometimes makes work activities contraindicated for periods of more than 21 days; and

WHEREAS, in such instances, the therapeutic course, convalescence, or restriction from work would occur in the home in lieu of hospitalization for more than 21 days; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11–14, 2007, 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. 014 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT REPEAL OF FUNDING FEES FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
(VA) 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 first home; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11–14, 2007, urges Congress to refrain from further increasing the VA Home Loan funding fees and to repeal these fees as soon as possible.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 017 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11–14, 2007, 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. 018 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 019 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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 52 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REMOVE THE PROHIBITION AGAINST CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF MILITARY RETIRED PAY AND VETERANS' DISABILITY COMPENSATION FOR ALL LONGEVITY RETIRED VETERANS

WHEREAS, current law provides that service connected veterans rated less than 50% who retire 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 disabilities due to military service; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans at the National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports legislation to repeal the offset between military longevity retired pay and VA disability compensation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 053 - LEGISLATIVE

INCREASE DISABILITY COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, it is the historical policy of the Disabled American Veterans that this Nation's first duty to veterans is to provide for the rehabilitation of its wartime disabled; and

WHEREAS, the percentage ratings for service-connected disabilities represent, as far as can be practicably determined, the average impairment in earning capacity resulting from such disabilities in civil occupations; and

WHEREAS, compensation increases should be based primarily 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 earning of their able-bodied contemporaries; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11–14, 2007, 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. 054 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION AUTHORIZING THE PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR ALL RADIOPHYSIC 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' (VA) own admission, approximately 50 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 which do not accurately reflect actual radiation dose exposure; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11–14, 2007, supports legislation to provide presumptive service connection to atomic veterans for all recognized radiogenic diseases.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 055 - 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 have left service prior to becoming eligible for longevity retirement pay; and

WHEREAS, these individuals are entitled to separation pay; and

WHEREAS, many of these individuals also become 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11–14, 2007, supports legislation to clarify that SSB payments are not disability payments and therefore should not be recouped from VA disability compensation payments.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 056 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, opposes changes in current law so as to redefine or restrict service connection.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 061 - LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS BY ANY COMMISSION TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE BENEFITS FOR DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, American citizens owe their freedoms and way of life to disabled veterans who made extraordinary personal sacrifices and who suffer lifelong disabilities as a consequence; and

WHEREAS, those who serve in our Armed Forces stand ready to endure any hardships and expose themselves to any hazards on behalf of their country and our citizens; and

WHEREAS, our Government did not hesitate in asking them to give life or limb if necessary; and

WHEREAS, our elected officials surely should not renege on our reciprocal obligation when our disabled veterans ask for so comparatively little in return; and

WHEREAS, we, as a Nation, have no more important indebtedness nor greater moral obligation than the indebtedness and obligation we have to disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, some elected officials nonetheless prefer to denigrate the suffering of disabled veterans, conveniently ignore this debt, and shirk this national responsibility; and

WHEREAS, after a failed unconscionable plan to radically change the standards for service connection that would have greatly restricted compensation for disabled veterans, the House Armed Services Committee included provisions for the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission in the annual defense authorization bill for 2004; and

WHEREAS, the law dictates that the Commission pursue a negative agenda, requiring it to question, for example, the appropriateness of the standards for service connection of veterans' disabilities and the appropriateness of the disability rating schedule of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Commission is therefore charged with probing the very heart and underlying foundation of the compensation program to determine if it can find some fault with the wisdom or moral justification for compensating veterans disabled in the service of their country; and

WHEREAS, such a shameful effort on the part of legislators to find ways to avoid compensating disabled veterans, especially in time of war, is unprecedented; and

WHEREAS, our Government continues to establish other commissions to review veterans benefits and entitlements in an effort to balance the budget; and

WHEREAS, honorable and great nations of conscience do not abandon their wounded warriors; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, remind our elected officials of our undebatable responsibility to fairly and fully compensate veterans for all the effects of disabilities incurred or aggravated in the line of duty as provided in the equitable standards of current law and regulations; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans vigorously opposes any recommendations made for the purpose of reducing, adding limitations on, or eliminating benefits for service-connected disabled veterans or their families.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 062 - 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 service-members 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 39 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 063 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports the enactment of legislation that would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) 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. 064 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REMOVE THE PROHIBITION AGAINST CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN PAYMENTS AND DEATH INDEMNITY COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) payments are payments of an insurance annuity and the retired military member pays premiums for this coverage; and

WHEREAS, Death Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is paid to the surviving spouse of a service member, retiree or veteran who dies of a service-connected condition; and

WHEREAS, these two programs are unrelated to each other; and

WHEREAS, under current law SBP payments are reduced, by the amount of DIC received; and

WHEREAS, this offset is extremely unfair to the approximately 61,000 spouses whose service member faithfully paid premiums in anticipation of a fair annuity based on premium payment; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, support legislation to repeal the offset between Survivor Benefit Plan annuity payments and DIC Compensation Payments.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 065 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, opposes any change in law to limit the time for filing compensation claims.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 066 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, opposes any change in law to reduce the period for appealing VA claims decisions.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 067 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 068 - 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 (VA) 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 070 - 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, "the 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 100 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, opposes permanent rounding down of cost-of-living adjustments for veterans' benefits.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 101

SUPPORT AN INCREASE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 113 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 134 - LEGISLATIVE

REDUCE THE TEN-YEAR RULE FOR DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, title 38, United States Code, Section 1318 (b) (1) provides Dependent & Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits for survivors of certain veterans noted totally disabled for ten or some years; and

WHEREAS, the financial status of the surviving spouse is compromised due to the care required by the totally disabled veteran and provided by the surviving spouse; and

WHEREAS, the surviving spouse, acting as care-giver for the veteran, most in many cases limit or give up his or her career, or put his or her career on hold; and

WHEREAS, it is inherently unfair that the surviving spouse should have this additional burden placed on him or her for 10 years or more before he or she can qualify for DIC when this veteran passes; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, support legislation to reduce this ten-year rule for DIC qualification to a more reasonable period of time.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 138 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 149 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports legislation to expressly provide that the phrase "served in the Republic of Vietnam" includes service in the waters offshore.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 150 - LEGISLATIVE

SEEK 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, seeks legislation to exclude veterans' disability compensation from countable income for purposes of entitlement to benefits or services under other government programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 152 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 162 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 163 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT AMENDMENT OF TITLE 38, CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, SECTION 4.130, SCHEDULE OF RATINGS, TO FORMULATE DIFFERENT CRITERIA TO EVALUATE THE VARIOUS MENTAL DISORDERS UNDER THE APPROPRIATE PSYCHIATRIC DISORDER

WHEREAS, under title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 4.130, the criteria for evaluating mental disorder is very ambiguous; and

WHEREAS, schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, delirium, dementia, and amnestic and other cognitive disorders, anxiety disorders, dissociative disorders, somatoform disorders, mood disorders, and chronic adjustment disorders, are all evaluated using the same general rating formula for mental disorders; and

WHEREAS, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM IV) specifically lists different symptoms for post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, and other psychiatric disorders; and

WHEREAS, one veteran service-connected for schizophrenia and another veteran service connected for another psychiatric disorder should not be evaluated using the same general formula; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports amendment of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, section 4.130 to formulate different criteria to evaluate the various mental disorders under the appropriate psychiatric disorder.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 164 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT PRESUMPTION OF EXPOSURE TO STRESSORS FOR VETERANS WHO SERVED IN A WAR ZONE AND WHO SUFFER FROM POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

WHEREAS, exposure to an extreme traumatic stressor, such as those particularly common to military combat, may cause a specific anxiety disorder with characteristic symptoms and re-experiencing of the traumatic event, classified under diagnostic nomenclature as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); and

WHEREAS, onset of symptoms of PTSD may be delayed for months or years after exposure to the stressor with initial diagnosis of the illness post-service, in which case the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) rule governing service connection requires that service causation be demonstrated through evidence of exposure to the responsible stressor during service; and

WHEREAS, the event in which a veteran was exposed to a traumatic stressor may not have been documented at the time, may not have been witnessed by others, or may not be substantiated because witnesses are unavailable in times remote from the event; and

WHEREAS, adducing proof of exposure may therefore very well be impossible for many veterans exposed to stressors under circumstances in which such stressors had become virtually a routine occurrence of everyday life in a war zone; and

WHEREAS, through presumptions of fact, Congress and VA have waived usual requirements of proof under such circumstances because equitable treatment of veterans suffering from disabilities caused by military service outweighs such requirements; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, urges adoption of a presumption of exposure to a traumatic stressor during service for purposes of service connection in the case of a veteran who served in a war zone and suffers from PTSD.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 165 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 166 - LEGISLATIVE

SEEK REPEAL OF LEGISLATION PERMITTING ATTORNEYS TO CHARGE A FEE FOR BENEFITS COUNSELING AND CLAIMS SERVICES BEFORE THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)

WHEREAS, our Nation established veterans' programs to repay or reward veterans for their extraordinary service and sacrifices on behalf of their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, in the spirit in which special benefits are provided to especially deserving beneficiaries, our citizens intended these benefits to be dispensed through an open, helpful, and informal system in which the Government is duty bound to receive every claimant as entitled and provide every reasonable assistance in developing and shepherding the claim through the entire administrative process while affording consideration of all legal avenues toward granting every benefit that can be supported in law; and

WHEREAS, the programs are also designed in a manner that ensures veterans and their families will receive the full measure of aid from disability compensation and other monetary payments without taxation and with protections that ensure they are not diverted into the pockets of others who have no entitlement to them; and

WHEREAS, Congress has set the rates of these modest benefits to be minimally adequate for their intended purposes, such as assisting disabled veterans and their families in purchasing the necessities of life or obtaining services necessary to ameliorate the effects of disability, and the amounts provided do not contemplate or allow for any reduction or diminishment in buying power such as will occur when a portion is diverted to attorneys; and

WHEREAS, acquiescence in any general situation in which obtaining veterans' benefits required hiring an attorney and surrendering a portion of disability compensation or other benefits obtained to the attorney fundamentally contradicts and undermines the spirit of the benefit programs created solely to aid and meet the special needs of disabled veterans and their dependents and survivors; and

WHEREAS, it is inappropriate for Congress to disavow the government's obligation to ensure veterans receive the benefits due them by passing them off to the legal profession where their plight might well depend on or be determined by their potential for producing attorney fees; and

WHEREAS, adding to the administrative processes all the ancillary burdens involved in fee agreements, withholding, and disbursements will greatly aggravate the existing overburdening of the system and require the diversion of scarce resources away from activities where they are more urgently needed and could yield more meaningful returns; and

WHEREAS, no disabled veteran should have to pay an attorney to obtain the benefits that a grateful nation provides and the veteran is rightfully due, NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, seeks repeal of legislation authorizing attorneys to charge veterans a fee for benefits counseling and claims services before the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

* * *

**RESOLUTION NO. 167 - 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 decision makers 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, categorically opposes any decentralization of the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 168 - LEGISLATIVE

**SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR VETERANS CLAIMS TO DECIDE EACH OF APPELLANT'S ASSIGNMENTS
OF ERROR, DIRECTLY ORDER THE AWARD OF BENEFITS WHERE APPROPRIATE
TO REMEDY ERRORS FOUND, AND ACCEPT APPELLANT'S REJECTION OF
CONFESIONS OF ERROR BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)**

WHEREAS, Congress passed the Veterans' Judicial Review Act of 1988 (VJRA) and created the United States Court of Veterans' Appeals (currently the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims) (the Court); and

WHEREAS, the VJRA granted the Court the authority to decide all relevant questions of law and to hold unlawful and set aside or reverse any finding of material fact adverse to the claimant, which is clearly erroneous; and

WHEREAS, due to long delays in claims processing at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), it can take veterans years to get their appeals before the Court; and

WHEREAS, in many appeals, the Court will ignore the appellants' legal arguments and remand an appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals based on the General Counsel's confession of error that the Board failed to provide adequate reasons or bases for its decision to deny the benefit; and

WHEREAS, a remand for reasons or bases allows the VA to reopen the evidentiary record and obtain other evidence to support the continuation of the denial; and

WHEREAS, a veteran must appeal to the Court a second time and, in some cases, a third or fourth time to obtain a decision on the merits of his or her appeal; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports legislation that would require the Court to decide each assignment of error made by an appellant in an appeal to the Court and to reverse any such errors found; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Court should have the authority to modify or remand any Board decision found to contain any error or errors, that the authority to modify should include the power to order an award of benefits in appropriate cases, and that an appellant should be expressly permitted to waive confessions of error made by the appellee.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 169 - 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 service-members because the increased hazards of military service make them an unacceptable risk for the commercial insurance market; and

WHEREAS, coverage for service-members 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 170 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Al. May I have a second?

MR. THEODORE BARBUTO: Mic 2.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 2.

MR. BARBUTO: Theodore Barbuto, the State of New York, Chapter 211, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Ted. In accordance with Rule 9, now is the time for any rejected resolutions to be read.

MR. WILLIAM P. BROWN: Yes, sir. Comrade Commander.

COMMANDER BARTON: Is there any rejected resolutions you wish read?

MR. BROWN: Yes, sir. Comrade Commander, Mic 1.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 1.

MR. BROWN: Yes, sir, Comrade Commander, Mic 1. William Brown, DAV Chapter 9, Houston, Texas, James T. Hall Chapter. I would like to call off Resolution Number 135 to be read to the delegates of this Convention and request a few minutes of your time to make you aware of the important reason that this was brought up by me on behalf of the minority of the service-connected disabled compensable veterans that have been awarded the disability pension under Title 38 as a greater benefit and then ask for a few minutes of your time with the delegates to speak to this.

MR. LINDEN: Joe, would you please read the resolution?

MR. JOSEPH VIOLENTE: Resolution 135, VA Pension Eligibility Due Date. Resolution to move the due date of the VA Pension Eligibility Verification Form Number 210516, to the Veterans Administration from March 1st to April 15th of the calendar year to coincide with the income tax filing date of the IRS.

“Whereas, the due date to file the VA Pension Eligibility Verification Form Number 210516 with the Department of Veterans Affairs is March 1st; and Whereas, the due date to file the Internal Revenue Service Form 1040 is April 15th of the calendar year; and

“Whereas, both VA Pension Eligibility Verification Form Number 210516 and IRS Form 1040 rely on IRS Forms 1099 and W-2 to report income from all sources; and Whereas, employers and banks are allowed to mail out 1099 forms and W-2 forms not later than January 31st; and

“Whereas, if the 1099 and the W-2 forms are mailed out, IRS allows 15 days in which to deliver these forms to the recipient before complaints of non-compliance can be filed with the Internal Revenue Service; and

“Whereas, the delay in time to receive these 1099s and W-2 forms leaves little time to file a pension, a VA Pension Eligibility Verification Form 210516 with the Department of Veterans Affairs before the March 1st deadline.

“Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved, that the due date to file the VA Pension Eligibility Verification Form Number 210516 with the Department of Veterans Affairs be moved from March 1st to April 15 of the calendar year; and

“Furthermore, Be it Resolved, that applicable Title 38 Sections to be changed or amended as reflected, to reflect April 15th as the due date to file the EVR Form.”

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Joe. We have a motion to accept the chairman's report and a second. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. The motion carries. I would like to call upon Chairman Jim Surseley for the report on General Resolutions and Membership Committee.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SURSELEY: Thank you, Commander, and good morning, everyone.

(Response of “Good morning.”)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SURSELEY: The National Convention Committee on General Resolutions was called to order on August the 11th, 2007, by the Committee advisors, Garry Augustine and Adrian Atizado. The first order of business was election of a Convention Committee chairman and secretary. James E. Surseley was elected as chairman and Sara Costa 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. And for the purposes of saving time I will read only the number and the purpose of the resolution.

Resolution 022 is to oppose any authorization of use of members of the armed forces for human experimentation without their knowledge and informed consent. Zero-two-three, encourage all disabled veterans to become registered voters and to vote. Zero-two-five, support former POW slave labor claims against Japanese firms.

Zero-four-eight, to update the Forget-me-not posters to depict the modern military. Zero-seven-two, support legislation to ensure military retirees receive all the benefits they were promised. Zero-seven-three, support a strong national defense. Zero-seven-four, seeking the

immediate release of any Americans who may still be held captive from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Zero-seven-five, condemn public desecration of the flag of the United States. One-seventy-one, support measures to leverage cooperation by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to account for America's prisoners of war and missing in action. One-seventy-two, support the American Veterans' Disabled for LIFE Commemorative Coin Act.

One-seven-three, support construction of a memorial to commemorate the sacrifices of America's disabled veterans. One-seventy-four, support the construction of a courthouse of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. One-ninety-two, appreciation to the Hilton New Orleans Riverside for the success of the 86th National Convention.

One-ninety-three, appreciation to all who are responsible for the success of the 86th National Convention. According to tradition I will now read Resolution Number 194, Appreciation to National Commander Barton, in its entirety.

“Expressing appreciation to National Commander Bradley S. Barton.

“Whereas, Disabled American Veterans National Commander Bradley S. Barton, a native son of Indiana, exemplified the highest level of patriotism and courage while serving our nation in the United States Marine Corps; and

“Whereas, Commander Barton fulfilled wartime service in the Republic of Vietnam; and Whereas Commander Barton courageously overcame severe injuries sustained in combat to earn a Bachelor of Science Degree and a Doctor of Juris Prudence Degree to establish a successful law practice; and

“Whereas, Commander Barton has shown immeasurable fortitude and unwavering commitment to disabled veterans by displaying steadfast integrity and unyielding devotion in leading the DAV's fight to protect and preserve veterans' benefits and services from all attacks; and

“Whereas, Commander Barton has admirably fulfilled his term as National Commander with remarkable vision, compassion, and masterful articulation of DAV's mission to build better lives for our nation's service-connected disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors; and

“Whereas, Commander Barton's determined spirit, compassion and integrity elicits affection, sincere respect and admiration from our members;

“Now Therefore, Be it Resolved, That the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11 through August the 14th, 2007, expresses its members' profound appreciation to Bradley S. Barton for his exceptional contributions to disabled veterans, their families, and the DAV;

“And Be it Further Resolved, that we also salute and extend our special appreciation to Commander Barton's wife, Donna Barton, for her support and sacrifices during his year as DAV's National Commander.”

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on General Resolutions. On behalf of the Committee I move for the adoption of these resolutions.

(The above-mentioned resolutions follow:)

**RESOLUTION NO. 022 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, opposes any rule or provision that would authorize use of service-members for human experimentation without their knowledge and informed consent.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 023 – ADMINISTRATIVE

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 United States 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, encourages 100 percent of our members to become registered to vote and thereby strengthening 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. 025 - 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 48 - ADMINISTRATIVE

UPDATE THE FORGET-ME-NOT POSTERS

WHEREAS, with ever increasing number of American military forces being deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq and other foreign lands to protect our freedom; and

WHEREAS, the image of today's military personnel in the hearts and minds of the citizens of this great land, is of a more modern military attire; and

WHEREAS, the Forget-Me-Not posters are depicting the images of the famed WW-II military personnel, which are mostly unknown to the general population of America today; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Forget-Me-Not posters produced by National Organization for the purpose of assisting in patriotic participation in the fund raising efforts of DAV Chapters across the land, be updated to depict the modern day military personnel in which the general populace is more familiar.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 072 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ENSURE THAT MILITARY RETIREES RECEIVE ALL BENEFITS THEY WERE PROMISED 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports legislation to require our Government to provide military retirees with all benefits promised them.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 073 - 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, United States 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, goes on record urging Congress to provide adequate funds for the defense of our Nation both at home and abroad.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 074 - 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 our missing in action from that war; 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, and four from Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 075 - ADMINISTRATIVE

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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 171 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT MEASURES TO LEVERAGE COOPERATION BY THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM TO ACCOUNT FOR AMERICA'S PRISONERS OF WAR AND MISSING IN ACTION

WHEREAS, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) government has consistently pledged to provide the U.S. with POW/MIA-related documents and records that could help in accounting for America's unreturned veterans still missing from the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, President George W. Bush, former Secretary of State Colin Powell, and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice have repeatedly defined the criteria for the SRV leadership to unilaterally provide such cooperation, but the SRV continues to withhold documents assessed by U.S. experts to be readily available; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, calls on the President and the Secretaries of State and Defense to employ all diplomatic measures available to (1) insist that the SRV leadership deliver such archival records and documents to the U.S. prior to the visit to Hanoi by President Bush in November of 2006, (2) ensure that the need for unilateral responsiveness on archival records and repatriation of remains is consistently and accurately conveyed to counterpart Vietnamese officials at every level and opportunity as expected by the American people and government, and (3) communicate clearly to SRV that significant unilateral actions by SRV continue to be priority objectives in efforts to obtain the fullest possible accounting for U.S. personnel still missing from the Vietnam War.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 172 - LEGISLATIVE

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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, supports, and solicits the support of all members of Congress for enactment of, the "American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act."

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 173 - LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT CONSTRUCTION OF A MEMORIAL TO COMMEMORATE THE SACRIFICES OF AMERICA'S DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, it has been three decades since the end of the Vietnam War, where large numbers of our youth served in a combat theater and with thousands of 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 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 174 - 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 (VA) 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 seventeen 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 New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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. 192

APPRECIATION TO HILTON NEW ORLEANS RIVERSIDE FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 86TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the excellent service and ambience of the Hilton New Orleans Riverside contributed greatly to the success of the 86th DAV National Convention, convened in New Orleans, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the courteous team members of the hotel staff ensured the comfort and satisfaction of the DAV officers, delegates and guests; and

WHEREAS, the classic setting, friendly environment, and numerous amenities helped make the 86th National Convention a truly memorable experience; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, expresses its deepest appreciation for the Hilton New Orleans Riverside and to its entire staff for their friendly, personalized attention which helped make the convention a resounding success.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 193

APPRECIATION TO ALL RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 86TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the success of the 86th DAV National Convention convened in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, 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 Lloyd Helms; and

WHEREAS, we wish to commend all the news media for their encouragement and assistance at all of our Convention activities; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-14, 2007, expresses its sincere appreciation to all groups and/or agencies whose dedication to our principles has made our Convention a successful one; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we wish to extend to the citizens of New Orleans, Louisiana, our deepest gratitude for their personal interest in our great organization; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we wish to extend our appreciation to all of the distinguished guests who participated in our convention and support the ideals and principles of our great organization; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we extend our gratitude to the Convention Chairman, Lloyd Helms, and his entire Committee for providing personalized assistance to our friends and delegates during our Convention stay.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 194 -ADMINISTRATIVE

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION TO NATIONAL COMMANDER BRADLEY S. BARTON

WHEREAS, Disabled American Veterans National Commander Bradley S. Barton, a native son of Indiana, exemplified the highest level of patriotism and courage while serving our Nation in the United States Marine Corps; and

WHEREAS, Commander Barton fulfilled wartime service in the Republic of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, Commander Barton courageously overcame severe injuries sustained in combat to earn a Bachelor of Science degree and a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree to establish a successful law practice; and

WHEREAS, Commander Barton has shown immeasurable fortitude and unwavering commitment to disabled veterans by displaying steadfast integrity and unyielding devotion in leading the DAV's fight to protect and preserve veterans benefits and services from all attacks; and

WHEREAS, Commander Barton has admirably fulfilled his term as National Commander with remarkable vision, compassion, and masterful articulation of DAV's mission to build better lives for our nation's service-connected disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors; and

WHEREAS, Commander Barton's determined spirit, compassion and integrity elicits affection, sincere respect, and admiration from our members; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 11-August 14, 2007, expresses its members' profound appreciation to Bradley S. Barton for his exceptional contributions to disabled veterans, their families, and the DAV; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we also salute and extend our special appreciation to Commander Barton's wife, Donna Barton for her support and sacrifices during his year as DAV's National Commander.

MR. ARMANDO C. ALBARRAN: Mic 1. Mic 1.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Jim.

MR. ALBARRAN: Armando Albaran, delegate from Chapter 5, Texas, so moves.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Armando. You have heard the motion and the 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. (Applause)

The DAV National Service Officer is a rare individual, but within the group of outstanding individuals there are a few 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 January 5th, 1970. His career as an NSO spanned 30 honorable 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 America's disabled veterans and their families for decades. Ladies and gentlemen, it is an honor to present Mr. Gary Burns. (Applause)

PRESIDENT GARY BURNS: Thank you, Commander Barton, for your kind words and generous welcome. And good morning National Adjutant Wilson, National Officers, delegates and guests. As president of the DAV National Service Foundation let me begin my annual report by introducing our Board of Directors, please: Vice President, Adjutant Art Wilson; Secretary-Treasurer Dennis Joyner; and Directors National Commander Barton, Ken Musselmann, Sal Tornatore, Alan Bowers and Paul Jackson who serves ex officio as our Chair of DAV's Board of Directors.

With no let-up in the fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, the year 2006 was tough on the men and women of our armed forces, many of them on their second, third, even fourth tours of combat duty. The enemy became more aggressive in making destructive explosive devices. This left a greater number of our troops with terrible brain injuries, burns, amputations, and other severe disabilities.

Government can no longer claim surprise at the number of casualties coming home from the wars. Things are going so bad that the chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee described the VA as a system at its breaking point. In this crisis you and I can take pride that the Disabled American Veterans is heading the vanguard for change.

And as I report to you on the progress of the DAV National Service Foundation during 2006 allow me, please, to stress three crucial points. First, we stand at a crossroads in history. The veterans who shed their blood and sacrificed their health for America have never experienced greater need for the DAV and its National Service Foundation.

Second, no one in this room is going to outlive that need. That's true whether you're a World War II veteran in your 80s or a newly-wounded or a recently-wounded soldier just home from Iraq or Afghanistan.

Third, in striving to meet this need the DAV and its Foundation do not operate in a vacuum without the partnership of the veterans they represent. To succeed we must have the active partnership of our members. Making things happen on the ground in real time is up to you and me.

We must do this for ourselves, you and me, the veterans who paid the price of freedom with sacrifices that will last the rest of our lives. Up to this point in time we've had our friends and supporters but truly no one else has been able to carry our cause for us. We must count on ourselves and each other to move that cause forward.

Well, we're American's. We're self-reliant. In addition, military training taught all of us to take care of ourselves and our own. And that's what the DAV National Service Foundation is all about. Here are some of the practical examples. All of you received a copy of the Foundation's Annual Report in the packet you received when you registered for this Convention.

In the back of that report you will see a list of people and organizations that we honor for making gifts to the Foundation during the calendar year 2006. Extraordinary generosity earned 31 benefactors the highest level of prestige during 2006, a place or an upgraded position on our Grand Memorial Honor Roll of Distinguished Donors.

Their gifts to the Foundation have been recognized with bronze plates and stars on the recognition plaques that line the walls of our National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C. It's quite a distinction.

Many of these folks are individuals giving by themselves or through their family foundations. Others are corporations or organizations. But right now I would like to hold up the example of the DAV Chapters and Departments who reached new goals this year.

James T. Hall Chapter Number 9 in Texas with more than \$25,000. (Applause) Thank you. The DAV Department of Missouri, with over \$13,000. (Applause) The DAV Department of New Hampshire, exceeding \$10,000. (Applause)

And surpassing \$5,000 each are: Bergen County Chapter Number 15 in New Jersey, Macomb County Chapter Number 44 in Michigan, and E.A. Twomey Chapter Number 40 in Massachusetts. (Applause)

Let me also, please, thank the following chapters who gave \$1,000 or more during 2006: Palm Springs Chapter Number 66 in California; and Pasadena Memorial Chapter 194 in Texas. (Applause) This is more than generosity, this is foresight.

What these Chapters and Departments are doing today will translate into DAV service in the year 2060 and beyond. And, believe me, some of the young veterans that are sitting in this room today will need that service in their later years.

These younger veterans have made a commitment to all disabled veterans in the present moment through their active involvement in our organization. And all of us will make our commitment to their future through the DAV National Service Foundation.

As I hold these Chapters and Departments up as examples, let me also thank the individuals, couples, family foundations, companies and other organizations who earned special recognition in 2006. In all, 141 took a place on the Grand Memorial Honor Roll or attained a National Service Foundation Commendation during 2006.

I urge you to look up their names in the Annual Convention or your Convention packet—Annual Report in your Convention Packet. Excuse me. That report lists all those who made a contribution to \$100 to a fund within the Foundation during 2006. Check it out, please. See who is supporting our mission and join me in thanking them for their dedication to the cause.

Finally, if you donated to the DAV National Service Foundation during 2006, the following report is about you. It means you saw these needs and responded to them during a year of trial and turmoil. I thank you for that. I thank everyone who has supported the Foundation over the long years of its history.

Now, let me highlight a particularly strong group of supporters, particularly, also, dear to my heart, DAV National Service Director Randy Reese and his staff and his team of National Service Officers all across this country.

NSOs are key players in the Foundation's initiatives. Their steadfast commitment to excellence and service helped us reach a new high in contributions to the Foundation last year. So 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 Randy Reese, please, to come forward and help with the trophy presentations, please. Randy.

(Whereupon, National Service Director Randy Reese joined Mr. Burns at the podium.)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Division 1, finally, Togus Maine getting back up there where they belong. Joseph Wafford, please, accepting, the supervisor for the Togus office. Joseph. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division 1 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetting Performance Awards was presented to Joseph Wafford of Togus, Maine.)

MR. JOSEPH WAFFORD: Gary, I'd like to thank Maine, once again, for the welcoming. I've moved there this year. And they have been so supportive and that has contributed to our good success there in Maine. And to continue that success, from our Chapter, Chapter 1, there is a check for \$300. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you, sir. Congratulations. Thank you. Division 2 is—Did you see that hand? Don't trust me with that check. (Laughter) Did you see how quickly he grabbed that? Hartford, Connecticut, Division 2, Allen Gumpenburger accepting, the supervisor of that office. Allen, congratulations, again. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division 2 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetting Performance Awards was presented to Allen Gumpenberger of Hartford, Connecticut.)

MR. ALLEN GUMPENBERGER: I thought all night what to say. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Division 3 at Saint Louis, Missouri, supervisor of that office accepting, Lenny Harris, please. Len, congratulations. (Applause) (Whereupon, the Division 3 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetting Performance Awards was presented to Len Harris of Saint Louis, Missouri.)

MR. LEN HARRIS: I think this is our seventh year in a row or sixth year in a row we've won this award. I'd like to thank the Department, specifically a couple of Chapters. Chapter 2 from Kansas City has been a generous Chapter and supporting us over the last few years. I'd like to thank all of those guys. And also Chapter 17 out of Jefferson City has been a great support and coming up strong. Thank you very much for this award. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Congratulations, Len. Division 4, Boston, Massachusetts, Matthew Carpenter, supervisor of the Boston office accepting. Congratulations, Matt. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division 4 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetting Performance Awards was presented to Matthew Carpenter of Boston, Massachusetts.)

MR. MATTHEW CARPENTER: First of all I'd like to thank the members of the State of Massachusetts, the Department of Massachusetts, and the NSOs in the office. Thank you, again. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Division 5, and also no stranger up here, Saint Petersburg, Florida, Andy Marshall, supervisor of the Saint Pete Office accepting. Andy. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division 5 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetting Performance Awards was presented to Andy Marshall of Saint Petersburg, Florida.)

MR. ANDY MARSHALL: Thank you. Let's see if I can say this right, Commander Barton, thanks to the best Department in the DAV, Florida, home of the Florida Gators and home of the hardest working and most talented NSOs in the country. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Again, please join me in thanking these offices and their entire corps of NSOs for their outstanding support. Thank you, guys. (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 efforts carry or to carry the Foundation's message to the members of our Chapters and Departments are absolutely essential. The awareness our NSOs create fosters the Foundation as it takes root and grows.

Now, let me talk about the financial situation of the Foundation during 2006. Revenues from our ordinary sources of income totaled \$6.3 million, a 40 percent increase over the previous year. I'm going to need a drink on these next numbers. You listen to this, now.

In addition to this stunning success, however, we benefited from a bequest from the estate of an extremely generous person. This bequest was originally made to the DAV Charitable Service Trust; however, it was clear that the donor's specific goals in assisting and rehabilitating disabled veterans could be better met by the Foundation. With this in mind, the Trust granted the funds to the Foundation which are now available whenever needed to support and enhance DAV service programs.

At year's end—at year's end the Foundation had just over \$69.1 million in Net Assets—that's what I said, \$69.1 million—(Applause) including, including \$21.9 million in the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund, \$11.8 million in the General Fund, \$32.3 million in temporarily restricted net assets, \$1.2 million in the Colorado Trust Fund, and \$205,000 in the National Order of Trench Rats Special Legislative Fund. That's almost as much money as the state of Maine has got for God's sakes.

It's my pleasure to present National Commander Barton with a check for \$7,965, that amount earned on the National Order of Trench Rats' restricted fund last year. (Applause) Commander.

(Whereupon, President Burns presented Commander Barton with the check.)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Gary.

PRESIDENT BURNS: You're welcome. I'm going to turn the page and I'm sure it says something about you making some comments if you wish. But at the request of the Trench Rats this gift is designated to support the DAV's National Legislative Program. Commander.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you very much, Gary. Thank you for the work you and your Committee do for us in building better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families. You've done a great job this year and I want to commend you and your directors. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you, sir. Appreciate that. 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. Appropriations included: office furniture, replacement copiers, other equipment and reference manuals for our National Service Officers as well as financial support of our expert medical opinions in support of veterans' claims.

Another success involved the Colorado Trust which is maintained as a separate fund within the Foundation. Distributions from the Trust are limited to programs that serve disabled veterans and their families. The total support and revenue to the Trust in 2006 was \$566,000. And more than \$1 million was disbursed in grants to needy Departments and Chapters. (Applause)

From the Trust's formation in 1996 to year-end in 2006 nearly \$14 million has been expanded—expended, excuse me, as grants to support the National Transportation Network, Hospital Service Coordinators, Department Service Programs, and various other local and state service initiatives. (Applause)

For that I thank you as individual members, Chapters and Departments. You continue to enhance the delivery of quality service through the Disabled American Veterans. I also thank the DAV's National Organization. Let me remind everyone that the National Organization has matched every dollar, every dollar, you've given to the Colorado Trust.

As I offer my gratitude for everything you've already done, let me stress that you, your Chapter and your Department, are essential players in the future of our Disabled American Veterans and their families. So, Commander Barton, as is our tradition, I will now gratefully accept at this point donations from the Convention floor.

Donations received today and throughout the National Convention will be placed in the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund, the Colorado Trust, or the Trench Rats Fund, as specified. Allow me to begin, please, by recognizing contributions from NEC District 14 and an individual contribution from Bruce Hyman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals in honor of Gray Jones.

And where is—is Paul here, Greg and Paul here? Anyway, they gave me a check. It's right here where it belongs and we thank Bruce for that. We've also picked up a check from Chapter 1 in Augusta, Maine. And that's it. Thank you very much. And now I'll accept donations so line them up, please. Come on over. Come right over here. Thank you, sir. Go.

MR. BILL WIGGINS, JUNIOR: I'm Bill Wiggins, member of Chapter 19 in Danville, Virginia. We would like to make a, the Chapter would like to make the contribution of \$1,500 to honor one of our World War II veterans who just recently had his leg amputated and prior to coming here we understand they are getting ready to amputate his, another leg, (indistinguishable) Blake, a dear member of our Chapter. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Bill.

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. DANIEL CONTRERAS: I'm Dan Contreras, State Commander for California. On behalf of the Department of California, I want to present a check for \$15,000 for the continued fine work of the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning. How are you doing?

MR. GARY A. CROSSLAND: Gary Crossland, Dick Cosgriff Chapter 2 in California, first and foremost I have a check for the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation in memory of Dick Cosgriff for \$2,000. And I've got—thank you. (Applause)

And I've got four of my own checks, each for \$250. I'd like to donate them, one in honor of Denny Joyner. Thank you, Denny, for giving me a family 20 years ago. I really appreciate it. One check in honor of Nancy O'Brien for all the hard work she does behind the lines.

These are all meant for the DAV National Service Foundation. One in honor of Daniel Contreras, our State Commander, and one in honor of our National Candidate for office, Larry Polzin. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

DR. RABA: Dr. Mariana Raba, Commander, DAV Chapter 6, Sacramento, California, in memory of Glen Halsey I'd like to present \$1,000 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Marianna.

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. MACARIO C. DIMAYUGA: Good morning. My name is Macario Dimayuga, Dick Cosgriff Chapter 2, San Diego, California. I'd like to make this donation, \$3,000 for the National Service Foundation, and \$5,000 for the Colorado Trust. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. BARBUTO: Theodore Barbuto, on behalf of the great and generous Empire State of New York, would like to give \$1,000 to the National Service Foundation, \$1,000 to the Disabled Veterans' for LIFE Memorial, and \$25,000 to the Colorado Trust. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. LINDEN: Al Linden, Department Adjutant, great State of Florida. I have four checks here and on behalf of the Department of Florida and its 80,000-plus members I have a check first for \$100 to the National Perpetual Fund in honor of John Haynes, our Immediate Past State Commander.

I have another check for \$1,000 to the National Perpetual Service Fund for \$1,000. I have a check for the, to the American Veterans' Disabled for LIFE Memorial in the amount of \$4,000. And I have a check to the Colorado Trust in the amount of \$25,000. (Applause) And there are no moths on those checks.

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you, Al. Thank you very much. Good morning, sir.

MR. JOE A. RICHARDSON: I'm Joe Richardson, Commander, Black Mountain Chapter Number 12, Henderson, Nevada. I have two checks, one for the National Service Foundation for \$500 and for the National Memorial Foundation for \$1,000. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MS. JANE B. OVERY: Good morning. My name is Jane Overy and I'm the Department of Nevada. I'm the Commander of the State that you will all be meeting in next year, 2008. And I have a \$100 from the Department in memory of a Past Department Commander, Faye Johnson. I have \$100 in memory of DAVA Past National Commander Janet Bennett. I have \$100 for the Department of Nevada, and \$150 in memory of Kenneth Lee. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Yes, sir. Come right up. Good morning.

MR. HAROLD E. HUMPHREY: Good morning.

PRESIDENT BURNS: And welcome.

MR. HUMPHREY: Thank you, sir. Eddie Humphrey, Blind Veterans' National Chapter. We're donating \$100 to the Service Fund in memory of our deceased members. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you, sir. Good morning.

MR. DAVID W. SPURGIN: David Spurgin from the Department of Arkansas and we have a check for \$1,000 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you, David. Good morning.

MR. SCOTT CHARLES HAVELKA: My name is Scott Havelka, Commander, Greater Pittsburgh Chapter Number 8, \$200 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you. Good morning.

MR. CHARLES T. PETTIGREW: I'm Charlie Pettigrew, the Commander of the Department of South Carolina and also the Commander of John W. Cruise, Chapter 13, in South Carolina. I have a \$2,000 check for the Department of South Carolina and \$1,000 for Chapter 13 of South Carolina. And I would like to present these to honor our NSOs who do so much for our veterans. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Charlie, thank you very much.

MS. MARIAN J. TRUSCELLO: I'm Marian Truscello, the Past Department Commander of South Carolina and I'm giving my personal check of \$500 in honor of all the DAV and DAV members from the state of South Carolina. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you.

MR. MICHAEL J. TRUSCELLO: Mike Truscello, Chapter 51 from South Carolina, a small Chapter with a big heart, comes up here annually with its \$500 check for the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. CARROLL E. PROSSER: Good morning. Good morning. Hello. I'm Carroll Prosser, Commander, Chapter 30 in the t-shirt and beachwear store capital of the world, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. And we donated \$500 to the National Service Foundation in memory of our deceased members. Thank you very much. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you, sir.

MR. MOSES A. MCINTOSH, JUNIOR.: Good morning. My name is Moses A. McIntosh, Junior, Commander from the Department of Georgia. And on behalf of the Department of Georgia I would like to donate \$500 to the Colorado Trust and \$500 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause) Thank you.

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning. How are you doing this morning?

MR. CHAD RICHMOND, JUNIOR: Good morning. Chad Richmond, Junior, PDC from Alabama, on behalf of Birmingham Chapter 4 we'd like to give \$1,000 to the Colorado Trust in memory of PDC Warren Hinson and Committeeman John Nieves. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you. Good morning.

MR. LAWRENCE F. KELLY: Good morning. I'm Lawrence Kelly from the State of Pennsylvania, State Commander. I'd like to donate this check for \$1,000 to the National Service Organization. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you very much. Good morning.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER VERNON V. CARDOSI: How are you doing, Gary? Good morning. My name is Past National Commander Vernon Cardosi from Newburyport, Chapter Number 40, Massachusetts. First of all, I want like to introduce my Chapter Commander, Ralph Barrett who is 89 years old-young today. (Applause)

I did want to tell you a few things about Ralph. He landed on Normandy with the First Division in World War II. And he served well in the United States Army. And when the Army was discharged he came back home and served the DAV all his life and he's still serving.

He's our Commander again. Ralph, congratulations. (Applause) As usual, Newburyport Chapter would like to donate \$1,000 to the National Service Foundation. And we always love to donate to the Colorado Trust \$1,000. Thank you. (Applause) Take a picture of him.

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you. Good morning. How are you doing?

MR. RICK MAYNARD: My name is Rick Maynard, Commander of the Department of Vermont, Commander of Chapter 3. I'd like to donate \$1,000 the National Service Foundation. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning, big guy. How are you doing?

MR. ROLAND A. PAQUETTE: I'm surviving. Good morning. My name is Roland Paquette. I'm the Adjutant of Chapter 20, from the Great State of Texas. I've got two donations, one from our Chapter in memory of our comrades who our Supreme Commander has called to final formation of \$100, to the Disabled for LIFE Memorial. And I'm personally donating another \$100 to the same organization. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you. Good morning.

MR. EDWARD G. MAZZA: I'm Ed Mazza, the Department Commander of Oregon. We're proud to donate \$2,000 to the National Foundation and also \$2,000 for the Colorado Trust. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you.

MR. DENNIS W. THOMPSON: Dennis Thompson, Department Commander of Illinois. It's my pleasure and privilege to present a check for \$1,000 to the National Service Foundation. And I'd like to thank the NSOs in Chicago for the great job they do. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MS. SARAH V.M. COSTA: Good morning. I'm Sarah Costa, the Commander for the great State of Virginia. (Applause) We would like to present \$1,000 to the National Service Foundation and \$500 to the Disabled Veterans' Monument. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you.

MR. JACOB N. STAFFORD: Jacob Stafford, West Virginia, \$2,000 for the National Service Foundation. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you. Good morning.

MR. OSCAR WILLIAM SMITH: Good morning, sir. I'm Oscar Smith from Texas, Pasadena, Texas, out of Houston, Texas, with Chapter 194, District 20, which is to my left and your right. I'd like to read a letter to you just for a minute that we received a while back, about two months ago, from the President of the Disabled American Veterans' National Service Foundation, standing to my right here, Gary.

I'd like to read this to you just briefly. It means a lot to me, these type of letters. First, I'd like to present this check to Art Wilson, our National Adjutant, in the amount of \$500. But this is, gives you a little explanation of what the American Veterans is all about and the National Service Foundation. I'd like to read it real briefly to you because these type of letters have a lot of meaning to me.

"The number of soldiers to whom the Army granted total disability retirement benefits actually declined since the beginning of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. How can anyone make sense of that without at least suspecting that someone is trying to save money at the expense of wartime disabled veterans?"

That makes a lot of sense, doesn't it? Because this is the type of thing we have going on in our Congress and in our nation today. "And they will all need the help of Disabled American Veterans National Service Offices through most of the 21st Century." Just think of that. That's a long, long time. That's there, all that. Now, listen to this part.

"For now let me explain that your contributions support the two goals that form the pillars of the Foundation's work. First, some of your gift will be used right away in the DAV National Service Offices like the one in Houston." This is great because this is where I'm from, in that area, and we like to hear this type of news.

"And some of your contribution will support the Foundation's second goal of building a solid financial future for the services offered by the DAV, most importantly our DAV National Service Program." And this will give you maybe a better explanation of where this money is going and what it's being used for.

Finally, and last, finally and last (Applause) I hope that you appreciate and take our—wait a minute now—"please accept our utmost appreciation for all the DAV National Service Foundation has done and is doing for our veterans." Thank you very much. And that's the end of my—(Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. ROGER F. DORMAN: Roger Dorman, Senior Vice Commander of the Department of Wisconsin standing in for Charles Vanderglas our Commander. I'd like to present a check for \$1,500 to the National Service Foundation. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. RODNEY S. TUCKER: Rodney Tucker, Commander, Department of North Carolina, I have two checks, one in the amount of \$2,000 for the National Service Foundation, and I have a second check for Bill Coward who is with the Ninth District who couldn't be here, and a check in the amount of \$858 for the Ninth District to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. BOBBY WILLIAMS: Bobby Williams, Wally Tyson's campaign manager, and I have a check here from North Carolina Campaign Election Fund for Wally Tyson, \$5,000 for the Colorado Trust. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you for that. Appreciate it. Good morning.

MR. PAUL WALLACE: Good morning. I'm Paul Wallace, Department Commander of the District of Columbia. I have two checks here. The first one is for the Colorado Trust for \$500. The second one is for the Survivor's Foundation for \$1,000. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. JOAQUIN RODRIGUEZ: Good morning. I'm Joaquin Rodriguez from Puerto Rico Department and I've got here a check for \$500 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause) Thank you.

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you.

MR. JAMES T. MARSZALEK: Good morning, Gary. Jim Marszalek, Department of Pennsylvania, Chapter 76, received a \$200 donation from a member in honor of the Pittsburgh and Philadelphia National Service Office. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. PHILIP A. FIUMARA, JUNIOR: Good morning. Phil Fiumara, Chapter 76 Commander, Pittsburgh, District 6, I have a, it's a representation of the million dollars that the Harley-Davidson Foundation gave us. I wanted to give this to the Commander. He was in office at the time when we received this.

COMMANDER BARTON: Oh, thank you.

MR. FIUMARA: And then here are some more if you need some more pins.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you.

MR. FIUMARA: And then here is a personal check, I want to donate \$500 for the National Foundation. And then I sold a lot of ties here. Here is \$100 from some of the sales of the ties and then I'll send some more later on, once I figure out everything. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MS. VIRGINIA DEMPSEY: Good morning. I'm Ginny Dempsey, Department of New Jersey Commander. I have two checks here, one for the National Winter Sports Clinic for \$10,000 and the Colorado Trust for another \$10,000. Thank you very much. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you, ma'am.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you.

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning. How are you doing?

MR. SALVTORE LoSAURO: Good. I'm Sal LoSauro from the great State of New Jersey, Chapter 15. I'm here to donate \$500 for the DAV National Foundation. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you, Sal. Good morning.

MR. JOHN J. GARDNER: Good morning. John Gardner, Chapter 32, Commander, donating \$500 to the Colorado Trust. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you. Good morning. How are you doing this morning?

MR. ALFRED C. REYNOLDS: Good morning, Gary. I'm Al Reynolds, Chapter 17, and Unit 17 from the Department of Illinois. I have a check for the National Service Foundation for \$5,000. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thanks, Al. Good morning.

MR. JAMES E. KOCH: Good morning. Jim Koch, Commander, Chapter 1, Peoria, Illinois. I'd like to present this check for \$500 to the National Service Foundation in the memory of Bobby Rose. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. CHARLES R. DICKERSON: Chuck Dickerson, Department of Colorado Commander, I have a check here for the Colorado Trust for the amount of \$5,000. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you very much, sir. Good morning.

MR. RICHARD W. MORGAN: Richard Morgan, Commander, Number 7, Lakewood, Colorado, I have a check here for \$5,000 for the Colorado Trust. (Applause) Thank you.

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you. Good morning.

MR. RICHARD P. LANGEVIN: Dick Langevin, Commander of the Department of Massachusetts. And from Massachusetts we'd like to pledge \$1,000 donation to the National Service Foundation and \$1,000 donation to the Colorado Trust. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you. Good morning.

MR. PAUL E. CORNELIUS: I'm Paul Cornelius, Commander of the Disabled American Veterans for the State of Kansas. On behalf of all the disabled veterans in the DAV from the State of Kansas it's my honor to present on their behalf \$500 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. VICTOR G. RAMAGE: Good morning. My name is Victor Ramage, Chapter 5 Commander from the great State of Delaware, on behalf of the State of Delaware, the Department of Delaware, rather, I'd like to present a check for \$200 to the Colorado Trust Fund for a true patriot, a man that we really dearly miss in Delaware, a real, one of the greatest of the Greatest Generation, Eugene Wishelinski. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. CLOYD C. GREEN, JUNIOR: My name is Cloyd Green, Commander of Chapter Number 2, Kansas City, Missouri. I have a check, a donation to the National Service Foundation in the amount of \$15,000, also with special recognition for our NSOs in the Department of Missouri. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning. Welcome.

MR. R. C. ROCHON: My name is R.C. Rochon. On behalf of DAV Chapter 21 I'm donating a check for \$200 to the National Service Office. (Applause)

ADJUTANT WILSON: Thank you, sir.

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. MICHAEL D. SMITH: I'm Mike Smith, Department of Idaho Senior Vice Commander. And we have a check for the National Service Foundation for \$200 and I don't have a speech. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning, sir.

MR. DAVID F. ROSS: Dave Ross, Chapter 7, Department of Maryland, \$2,000 for the Service Foundation and \$1,000 for the Colorado Trust. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you, sir. Good morning.

MR. ROBERT L. FINDLEY: I'm Bob Findley, Senior Vice Commander for the State of Missouri, also the Commander of Chapter 17 of Central Missouri, in honoring our National Service Officers, Len Harris and his staff of fine professionals—he said he's give me ten bucks to say that (Laughter)—we have two checks from the Department of Missouri for \$1,000 each, one to the DAV National Service Foundation and one to the Colorado Trust. (Applause)

ADJUTANT WILSON: Thank you, sir.

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you very much. Good morning.

MR. HARLAN F. PLUMMER: I'm Harlan Plummer, Eleventh District NEC, and I have a check here from the Department of Ohio for the National Service Foundation. I have a personal check here.

I would like to donate \$500 each to Chuck Lambert in Cincinnati. He really helped me on his van, coming around and helping the veterans that I take to him. And the other one is the supervisor, \$500, to Lester James in Cleveland. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. LORENZO F. CANO, JUNIOR: Good morning, sir. I'm Lorenzo Cano, Commander, Chapter 13, California. And I have a check here from my Chapter for \$300 for the NEC. Thank you, sir. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you very much, sir. Appreciate it. Yes, sir. Good morning.

MR. CHARLES LOVINGS, JUNIOR: Good morning. Charles Lovings, Kansas Chapter 4, the largest Chapter in the State of Kansas, and we have \$2,500 for the Colorado Trust. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. JAMES E. PRICE: I'm Jimmy Price from the State of Kansas, Chapter 11. I have a check for \$300 for the Service Foundation. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you, sir. Good morning.

MR. JOHN J. SKYLER: Good morning. My name is John Skyler. I'm from Greater Buffalo 1, New York, the Adjutant. And I'd like to donate \$500 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you. Good morning.

MR. LOREN L. MURREN: Loren Murren from the Department of South Dakota. We have a personal donation from Gene Murphy in memorial for Roger Andoll from the famous Fourth Infantry Division, (Applause) then on behalf of Chapter 1, Department of South Dakota, \$500 to the National Foundation in honors of our NSOs, Paul Wekenmann and Eric Van Emmerick. (Applause)

And we have a check for \$500 from the Department for the National Service Foundation in honor of the same NSOs, Mr. Wekenmann and Mr. Van Emmerick. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you. Good morning.

MR. J. DAVID BOOZER: Good morning. I'm Dave Boozer, Tenth District NEC from the State of Michigan. I have a \$1,000 check to present to the Colorado Trust for Michigan Past Department Commander Russ Spaulding in memory of Blackie Robert. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you very much. Good morning.

MR. CLIFFORD W. HENRY: Good morning. I'm Hank Henry, Commander of Chapter 30, Shreveport, Louisiana. Chapter 30 considers it a privilege to make a \$3,000 donation to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you very much. Appreciate it. Good morning.

MR. HERBERT J. WILSON: My name is Herbert Wilson, Commander, Paul L. Townsend Chapter 1, Baltimore, Maryland. On behalf of the Paul L. Townsend Memorial Chapter we're donating \$250 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you. Good morning.

MR. CLARENCE BROWN: My name is Clarence Brown, HSC and Chapter for the State of South Carolina. I give \$100. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you. Good morning.

MR. DAVID E. BOLTON: Dave Bolton, Senior Vice Commander, Des Moines, Iowa, Chapter 20, I have two checks here, one for the National Service Foundation in memory of Walter Spizenagle for \$1,000 and another check to the Colorado Trust for \$1,000 in memory of Marilyn Hess. Thank you very much. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you very much. Appreciate that. Good morning.

MR. AL LABELLE: Good morning. I'm Al Labelle, Treasurer, Chapter 57, Wisconsin. On Thursday morning our past commander died in an automobile accident. He was buried on Sunday. So in his memory I would like to make a pledge of \$500 in his name to the National Service Trust. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you, sir. Good morning.

MR. RONALD W. REILLY: Good morning. My name is Ron Reilly. I'm the Adjutant for the State of New Hampshire. And I have two checks, one for \$500 from the, for the Colorado Trust, and \$500 for the National Service Foundation. And as a member of Chapter 4 in the State of New Hampshire I have a check for \$100 for the National Service Foundation and \$100 for the Colorado State Trust. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you, Ron. Appreciate it.

MR. WAYNE W. DESJARDINS: Wayne Desjardins, Commander of the Department of the Maine. I've got a check here for \$500 for the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. EDWARD D. MUNROE: Ed Munroe, Chapter 6, Canton, Ohio, and an NSO in the Cleveland Regional Office. We are donating the proceeds from a motorcycle poker run that we conducted in the amount of \$1,500. It just shows that a bunch of veterans and some rowdy bikers can get something done. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. TIMOTHY S. O'CONNOR: Tim O'Connor, Department of Minnesota, State Adjutant, in memory of Llewellyn Snowbeck I would like to donate \$2,500 for the Disabled Vet for LIFE Memorial Fund. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you. Appreciate it. Good morning.

MR. WILLIAM BROWN Good morning, delegates. This is William Brown, DAV James T. Hall Chapter 9, Houston, Texas. I have a check to present to the National Service Foundation for \$2,000 from the Chapter. And this road kill armadillo also has a personal check to present to the DAV Colorado Charitable Service Trust for \$30, after which I shall file for personal, Chapter 9 bankruptcy—just a joke. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you.

MR. GERALD E. HUMPHRIES: I'm here representing the Department of Mississippi as the Department Judge Advocate and would like to present this \$1,000 donation in honor of retired NSO Gerald E. Humphries. Now, also as the Adjutant for Chapter 11, Mississippi, I would like to donate another \$1,000 in the name of Gerald E. Humphries, retired NSO. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Good morning.

MR. JAMES G. HOPKINS: Jim Hopkins, Chapter 10, Arlington-Fairfax, Virginia, I forgot the checkbook, but I have \$100 here and \$900 to follow as soon as I get to the checkbook. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: Thank you, sir. Good morning.

MR. GLYNN E. PARKER: Good morning. My name is Glynn Parker. I am the Commander of the Department of Maryland. I would like to give a check from the Department of Maryland in the memory of Leonard R. Arrentura, my Adjutant, who died in route to this conference. He has the checks and I will send the checks as soon as I get back. Thank you. (Applause)

ADJUTANT WILSON: Thank you.

MR. DAVID L. TANNENBAUM: Dave Tannenbaum would like to make a donation to the National Service Foundation in honor of Rob Reynolds, National Senior Vice Commander. (Applause)

PRESIDENT BURNS: That's it, folks. Thank you very, very much. Appreciate it. (Applause)

***Disabled American
Veterans National
Service Foundation***

*Financial Statements as of and for the Years
Ended December 31, 2006 and 2005, and
Independent Auditors' Report*

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION**

**STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2006 AND 2005**

	2006	2005
ASSETS		
CASH (including \$295,598 and \$149,754 relating to The Colorado Trust in 2006 and 2005, respectively)	\$ 695,165	\$ 515,359
INTEREST AND DIVIDENDS RECEIVABLE	120,789	110,303
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE (including \$40,000 related to the Colorado Trust in 2006)	47,664	5,002
INVENTORY—(net of \$43,000 and \$78,087 reserve for obsolescence in 2006 and 2005, respectively)	306,739	326,736
PREPAID EXPENSES	52,369	69,199
INVESTMENTS—Marketable securities (including \$1,054,371 and \$1,513,387 relating to The Colorado Trust in 2006 and 2005, respectively)	68,315,745	32,618,920
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT	<u>18,913</u>	<u>18,913</u>
TOTAL	<u><u>\$69,557,384</u></u>	<u><u>\$33,645,519</u></u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
LIABILITIES:		
Due to DAV	\$ 146,129	\$ 520,836
Due to DAV legislative program	7,965	5,577
Other liabilities	<u>254,198</u>	<u>129,746</u>
Total liabilities	<u><u>408,292</u></u>	<u><u>656,159</u></u>
NET ASSETS:		
Unrestricted net assets:		
General	11,772,877	8,769,973
The Colorado Trust	1,236,918	1,605,746
Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund	21,872,022	20,577,691
Accumulated net unrealized appreciation of investments	<u>1,713,939</u>	<u>1,833,156</u>
Total unrestricted net assets	<u><u>36,595,756</u></u>	<u><u>32,786,566</u></u>
Temporarily restricted net assets	32,348,042	
Permanently restricted net assets—National Order of Trench Rats DAV Legislative Fund	<u>205,294</u>	<u>202,794</u>
Total net assets	<u><u>69,149,092</u></u>	<u><u>32,989,360</u></u>
TOTAL	<u><u>\$69,557,384</u></u>	<u><u>\$33,645,519</u></u>

See notes to financial statements.

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION**

**STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006 AND 2005**

	2006	2005
General, The Colorado Trust, Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund (Unrestricted)	\$ 32,692,353	\$ 32,692,353
Net assets released from restrictions	606,389	606,389
Interest and dividend income—net	1,188,263	251,009
Gain on sale of investment securities	2,049,166	—
Sales of fraternal items	391,403	—
Total revenues	4,219,772	251,009
Total public support and revenues	6,120,502	32,639,963
EXPENSES:		
Programs:		
Grants and expenses in accordance with The Colorado Trust	1,054,188	1,054,198
Transfers to DAV National Headquarters and other organizations	398,345	388,345
Costs of fraternal items sold	72,111	72,111
Other program expenses	141,039	46,899
Total program expenses	2,223,743	—
Management and general		
Fundraising	178,436	178,436
Total expenses	2,481,015	2,481,015
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS BEFORE CHANGE FOR NET UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	3,639,487	32,639,963
CHANGE IN NET UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	169,703	(288,921)
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS AFTER CHANGE FOR NET UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	3,809,190	32,368,042
NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	32,781,566	207,754
NET ASSETS—End of year	<u>\$36,592,756</u>	<u>\$22,368,042</u>

See notes to financial statements

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION**

**STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006 AND 2005**

	2006			2005				
	Program	Management and General	Fundraising	Total	Program	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
EXPENSES:								
Allocations to charitable programs	\$ 1,283,158	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,283,158	\$ 1,434,846	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,434,846
Cost of fraternal items sold	72,111	72,111	72,111	203,269	91,736	91,736	91,736	293,269
Grant proposal processing	78,971	78,972	78,971	136,388	91,737	6,872	98,609	98,609
Administrative charges	11,507	57,416	11,507	11,507	10,888	10,888	10,888	10,888
Travel	108,943	7,494	9,703	126,140	22,429	7,627	11,266	41,322
Postage and shipping	25,454	7,896	7,896	33,643	323	12,307	9,847	22,477
Printing, stationery, and supplies	323	31,237	31,237	1,403	1,403	16,588	16,588	1,403
Advertising								
Professional fees	19,087	2,886	2,886	20,886	3,114	3,114	3,114	3,114
Insurance	2,886	3,851	3,851	3,866	15	15	3,020	3,020
Registration fees	12,071	12,071	12,071	12,071	8,812	8,812	8,812	8,812
Awards	20,950	20,950	20,950	20,950	5,459	5,459	5,459	5,459
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL	\$ 2,223,743	\$ 178,436	\$ 78,836	\$ 2,481,015	\$ 1,844,006	\$ 156,547	\$ 31,005	\$ 2,031,558

See notes to financial statements.

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION**

**STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006 AND 2005**

	2006	2005
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Change in unrestricted and temporarily restricted net assets	\$ 36,157,232	\$ 2,021,226
Adjustments to reconcile change in unrestricted and temporarily restricted net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Change in unrealized appreciation of investments	119,218	428,669
Gain on sale of investment securities	(2,048,106)	(961,198)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Interest and dividends receivable	(10,486)	3,182
Accounts receivable	(42,662)	(5,002)
Inventory	19,997	45,264
Prepaid expenses	16,830	3,686
Due to DAV	(374,707)	12,967
Due to DAV legislative program	2,388	135
Other	124,452	48,121
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>33,964,156</u>	<u>1,597,050</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Purchases of investments	(67,228,958)	(32,199,261)
Proceeds from sale of investments	33,461,021	30,690,344
Purchases of property and equipment	(18,913)	(1,508,917)
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>(33,786,850)</u>	<u>(1,508,917)</u>
CASH FLOW FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES—Contributions of permanently restricted assets		
	<u>2,500</u>	<u>2,000</u>
NET CHANGE IN CASH	179,806	90,133
CASH—Beginning of year	<u>515,359</u>	<u>425,226</u>
CASH—End of year	<u>\$ 695,165</u>	<u>\$ 515,359</u>

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS **AS OF AND FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006 AND 2005**

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.

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 by the Foundation for use by the DAV. Donated assets are recorded at their fair market value at the time of the donation. \$1,236,918 and \$1,605,746 of total unrestricted net assets were designated by the Board for The Colorado Trust at December 31, 2006 and 2005, 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 2006 and 2005, respectively. The Colorado Trust received \$82,775 and \$77,520 in contributions which were matched by DAV. In 2006, the Foundation received \$32,426,803 from the DAV Charitable Service Trust that are recorded as temporarily restricted. See note 3.

Permanently Restricted Net Assets—Contributions by the National Order of Trench Rats for the DAV Legislative Program are permanently restricted. Investment income of \$7,965 and \$5,577, in 2006 and 2005, 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, 2006 and 2005, are summarized below:

	Cost	Market	Unrealized Appreciation (Depreciation)
2006			
Cash equivalents	\$ 2,768,566	\$ 2,768,566	\$ -
Corporate bonds, bond funds and U.S. treasury notes	26,414,659	26,283,596	(131,063)
Common stocks	24,054,332	26,254,451	2,200,119
Common stock funds	<u>13,364,249</u>	<u>13,009,132</u>	<u>(355,117)</u>
Total	\$66,601,806	\$68,315,745	\$1,713,939
2005			
Cash equivalents	\$ 2,830,730	\$ 2,830,730	\$ -
Corporate bonds and U.S. treasury notes	11,250,668	11,083,627	(167,041)
Common stocks	13,787,635	15,350,256	1,562,621
Common stock funds	<u>2,916,731</u>	<u>3,354,307</u>	<u>437,576</u>
Total	\$30,785,764	\$32,618,920	\$1,833,156

Investment income is composed of interest and dividend income of \$1,485,318 and \$805,117, net of fees paid to trustees of \$54,046 and \$49,720, in 2006 and 2005, respectively.

Inventories—Inventories are carried at the lower of cost or market, generally determined on the first-in, first-out basis (FIFO). Inventory consists of fraternal items to be sold (see note 3).

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.

Property and Equipment—Property and equipment is stated at cost. It is composed of software that is in the process of being developed for internal use and has not yet been placed in service.

3. RELATED-PARTY TRANSACTIONS

DAV personnel assist the Foundation on a limited basis in administering its business operations and fund raising program. For these services, the Foundation reimbursed the DAV \$215,359 and \$190,345 in 2006 and 2005, respectively. At December 31, 2006 and 2005, the Foundation owed approximately \$146,129 and \$148,800 for such services. The DAV provides the Foundation with the use of facilities and equipment at no charge.

In June 2005, the Foundation assumed responsibility for the sales of DAV fraternal items. At that time, DAV sold its fraternal item inventory to the Foundation, valued at approximately \$372,000. At December 31, 2005, the Foundation owed the DAV \$372,000 for the purchase of the fraternal item inventory as well as the \$148,800 for services discussed above.

In 2006 and 2005, respectively, the DAV Charitable Service Trust made a \$400,000 and \$800,000 contribution to The Colorado Trust for the DAV National Transportation Network Van Grant Program.

As discussed in Note 2, the DAV contributed \$82,775 and \$77,520 to The Colorado Trust in 2006 and 2005, respectively.

In 2006, the DAV Charitable Service Trust's Board of Directors allocated \$32,426,803 to the Foundation. The funds represented proceeds from a bequest that will be available whenever needed for service to disabled veterans and their families. The Foundation must adhere to specific reporting and expenditure requirements. The funds are reported as temporarily restricted net assets in the Statements of Financial Position and Statements of Activities.

In performing the duties of their positions, the DAV's National Commander and National Adjutant serve on the Foundation's Board of Directors. The Chairman of DAV's Board of Directors serves as an ex officio member of the Foundation's Board.

4. GRANTS AND EXPENSES OF THE COLORADO TRUST

At December 31, 2006 and 2005, the following are grants and expenses of the Colorado Trust:

	2006	2005
Grants to DAV chapters and departments in accordance with The Colorado Trust:		
Hospital Service Coordinator Program	\$ 248,500	\$ 329,500
National Transportation Network Van Program	696,313	842,706
Other Grants to Service Programs	30,000	39,000
Miscellaneous expenses	414	389
Grant proposal processing	78,971	91,736
Total	<u>\$1,054,198</u>	<u>\$1,303,331</u>

In 2006 and 2005, the Colorado Trust's grants and expenses totaled \$1,054,198 and \$1,303,331, respectively. In 2006, temporarily restricted net assets of \$606,399 and designated, unrestricted net assets of \$447,799 were used. In 2005, temporarily restricted net assets of \$982,496 and designated,

unrestricted net assets of \$320,835 were used. The temporarily restricted net assets used, of \$606,399 and \$982,496, are shown as "Net assets released from restrictions" in the accompanying Statement of Activities for 2006 and 2005, respectively.

Net assets are released from restrictions by incurring expenses to satisfy the restricted purposes or by occurrence of other events specified by donors.

* * * * *

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Gary, for that excellent report. May I have a motion to accept the report from President Burns of the National Service Foundation?

MR. DELBERT FOSTER: Delbert Foster, Chapter 1, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 3.

MR. FOSTER: Mic 3, Delbert Foster, Chapter 1, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, makes the motion to accept the report.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you. May I have a second? Mic 2.

MR. MICHAEL JOE O'NEAL: Michael O'Neal, Lakewood Chapter 19, California, seconds.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. And may I make a comment? Gary, I think you should cut down on all that writing in those letters. (Laughter) Our next guest doesn't really need an introduction.

Dick Marbes served as our National Commander in 1993 and 1994. An Air Force veteran, he lost his right leg in the military service. For more than three decades this 1978 Wisconsin Disabled Veteran of the Year has been active in the DAV. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm DAV welcome to Dick Marbes, Chairman of the DAV Charitable Trust. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN RICHARD E. MARBES: On behalf of the DAV Charitable Trust Board, I thank you for that kind introduction, Commander Barton, and I extend my gratitude to you, to National Adjutant Wilson, and to our National Officers, delegates and guests.

As chairperson, let me introduce the Trust's governing board. They are: Vice Chairman, National Adjutant Art Wilson; Secretary-Treasurer Dave Tannenbaum of Florida; and our Directors, National Commander Brad Barton, Gene Murphy from South Dakota, Dennis Nixon from Texas; and Jerry Steelman of Minnesota.

With the support of these board members I am pleased to present our annual report for the year ended December 31, 2006. Before I tell you about the Trust's record of success over the last year, I want to pay special thanks to the endless contributions of one individual, namely, Lew Snowbeck.

Lew was one of our nation's premier examples of devotion to disabled veterans and their families. The depth of his commitment was evident in his efforts within his Chapter and the Department of Minnesota, where he served in a variety of elected offices and appointed positions, as well as his compassionate service to the DAV Charitable Service Trust.

His deeply compassionate service on the Board of the DAV Charitable Service Trust had a great deal to do with the success we have achieved over the years. The Trust benefited from his insight, expertise, and his active promotion during his 18 years of service on the board.

Sadly, Lew passed away earlier this month. It is with deep regret that I and my fellow board members mourn his loss and extend our sincere gratitude for Lew's many years of superb contributions to the mission of the Trust as its Secretary/Treasurer and Director.

Two thousand and six was a year that called the DAV Charitable Service Trust to action. The greatest challenge was the extraordinary number of troops coming home wounded, sick and otherwise disabled from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

By the end of 2006, 3,000 Americans had been killed in Iraq, a number that now stands around 3,600. And while the count of officially "wounded in action" in Iraq and Afghanistan is less than 30,000, that figure masks the true human cost of today's wars.

Well over 200,000 of these wars—well over 200,000 veterans of these wars have filed claims, more than one-fourth of the men and women who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. And that number, large as it is, may double over the next two years.

All of this can seem shocking, but should any of us be surprised? Some of our troops are now in their third and fourth tours of combat. And with each tour their risk of disability multiplies. The troops are wearing down physically and psychologically.

We have no idea yet how many suffer traumatic brain injuries due to terrorist bombs and IEDs. We don't know how many will suffer post-traumatic stress disorder. But we do know how many amputations there are so far, how many terrible burns and how many nerve injuries.

We don't yet know if there will be post-war illnesses like the ones that plagued so many veterans of the Persian Gulf War. But we know we're seeing a huge infusion of disabled veterans, many so severely wounded it's hard to imagine the rest of their lives.

We have our work cut out for us in the Disabled American Veterans. And the DAV Charitable Service Trust is here to assist in that work. As the Trust moves forward it will continue to partner with the VA and others wherever possible to provide the best solutions for sick and injured veterans.

That's the role we've played, with your help, since the DAV Charitable Service Trust was founded in 1986. It's true, we cannot replace every dollar certain politicians have taken from veterans' programs, but with your support we're moving ahead to help our nation meet its obligations to its disabled defenders.

And with outlays of \$34.7 million in 2006, the Trust established a marvel of efficiency with the funds the American people entrusted to it. We spent less than one-half of 1 percent of expenditures on fundraising during 2006, and less than one-quarter of 1 percent on administration.

More than 99 percent was spent on service to veterans and their families, an incredible achievement for any nonprofit organization. (Applause) This shows that building cash reserves is not our intent. Like the DAV, the Trust's goal is to build better lives for disabled veterans and their families.

A couple of examples really stand out as we look over the Trust's recent efforts. In one, the Trust worked with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to develop revolutionary new orthotic technology for leg injuries and other disabilities. These include amputations and spinal cord impairment.

In another groundbreaking effort, we worked with DoD and the VA to more fully involve families and caregivers in the treatment of new combat casualties. Both projects are of immense importance to veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and so is our continued alliance with the Achilles Track Club, which brings running to amputees and other wounded troops at the Walter Reed Medical Center.

In partnership with the Trust, the American Pain Foundation developed a whole new Internet outreach strategy aimed at veterans who suffer chronic pain. With the Wheelin' Sportsmen Program of the National Wild Turkey Federation the Trust breaks down barriers to handicapped people by bringing the joy of hunting, fishing, and shooting to some of America's most severely-disabled veterans.

Through Emmaus Services for the Aging, the Trust helps older veterans live independently, as they remain physically and mentally active. With a generous grant to the Intrepid Fallen Warriors Fund, the Trust supports a state-of-the-art physical rehabilitation and advanced training skills center at the Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio.

And, as you know, the Center for the Intrepid is particularly important to veterans who have suffered catastrophic disabilities in Iraq and Afghanistan. Through Operation Home Front in San Diego, the Trust assists low-income families of wounded service members in times of emergency.

We reach out to amputees through the "First Swing" program of the National Amputee Golf Association. And thanks to renewed Trust support, veterans with psychological disabilities are taking advantage of a unique therapeutic opportunity offered by Creative Alternatives of New York.

On the VA's campus in Fort Meade, South Dakota, the DAV Charitable Service Trust sponsors retreats for women veterans and women members of veterans' families. We're helping disabled veterans gain a foothold in the job market through the Bobby Dodd Institute in Georgia. And we support advanced training for DAV National Service Officers.

The needs of homeless veterans have always ranked high among the priorities of the DAV Charitable Service Trust. Two excellent examples of our concern are Joseph House for Homeless Veterans in Cincinnati, and Saint Patrick Center in Saint Louis.

At Joseph House all clients are veterans. While the most advanced methods in the treatment field are used, the program also takes advantage of such military characteristics as discipline and camaraderie. At the Saint Patrick Center, Trust funds assist veterans within the overall population of the agency's clients.

The Trust assists many other programs for the homeless veterans across this nation. In this, we look for the involvement of the successful veterans in the lives of those who are struggling to lift themselves up from the streets. This veteran-to-veteran approach demonstrates success because homeless veterans often place faith in a fellow veteran when they will trust no one else.

In a moment of true crisis following Hurricane Katrina, Trust grants reached into the lives of veterans who were affected by the crisis in any number of ways. And through the Veterans Hospice Homestead in Massachusetts we provide specialized convalescent care to homeless and needy veterans who are terminally ill and can no longer care for themselves.

The Trust provided a new cardiac telemetry system for the Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Department at the Washington, D.C., VA Medical Center. And we make life easier for veterans

at a State Veterans Home in Missouri by supplying medical equipment and specialized treatment and mobility devices.

A grant to a Colorado state veterans home ensures that dental care is provided to veterans who have no insurance and were not eligible for care through the VA. DAV Charitable Service Trust grants are making a huge impact through the DAV's Transportation Network.

As I list all of these achievements, I hope I didn't set anyone's heart at ease. This is not a time for any of us to allow the DAV's reputation to rest on past achievements. In fact, I hope I conveyed a sense of crisis in my opening remarks. I hope this whole Convention sets your heart on fire.

If this is a moment of genuine necessity for our youngest disabled veterans, it's a time of urgency for our most elderly. With benefits, services and health care of all disabled veterans in the crosshairs of Washington budget cutters, none of us can afford a moment's slack.

And let me stress that point as I thank our hardworking 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 change the lives of our sick and wounded troops, as well as all of our disabled veterans, by pledging to the DAV Charitable Service Trust. Please carry that message all year long, but especially during the upcoming Combined Federal Campaign, the CFC, United Way, and other workplace campaigns.

Let me add that there is so much Chapters, Departments, and individual members can do as well. Just spread the word about how to respond to our needy and disabled veterans through the United Way and CFC.

I would like to acknowledge Nancy O'Brien, the administrator of the Trust, and her staff at the National Headquarters for the marvelous job they do in supporting the Board of Directors. Let me thank you, once again. I am deeply grateful for your support of the Trust and its work. And I thank you in the name of every veteran whose life we touched this past year.

In conclusion, I would like to recognize a member of the Board, Jerry Steelman, who was a personal friend of Lew Snowbeck and a fellow Minnesotan in the DAV. Jerry has some thoughts to share with you. (Applause)

MR. JERRY P. STEELMAN: Thank you, Chairman Marbes. Lew Snowbeck was a very good friend of the DAV and to myself, personally. When I first joined the DAV, I was a member of Minneapolis Chapter Number 1. And Lew and others in that Chapter were mentors of many of us young veterans returning and entering the DAV at that time.

Lew was my friend. He was your friend. And I'd like to make a personal donation in his behalf. I was also given the check from Past Adjutant, Minnesota State Adjutant, Dean Ashmond to present in Lew's honor. And then I would also like to introduce Jim Schultz, National Service Officer of the State of Minnesota, for a presentation. (Applause)

MR. JAMES F. SCHULTZ, JUNIOR: Thank you. Jim Schultz, Department of Minnesota, Chapter Number 1. Chapter Number 1 would like to make a donation to the Charitable Trust Fund in memory of Lew Snowbeck in the amount of \$10,000. (Applause)

***Disabled American
Veterans (DAV)
Charitable Service Trust***

*Financial Statements as of and for the
Years Ended December 31, 2006 and 2005,
and Independent Auditors' Report*

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV)
CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST**

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**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV)
CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST**

**STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2006 AND 2005**

	2006	2005
ASSETS		
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	\$ 1,044,193	\$ 1,465,523
ACCRUED INTEREST AND DIVIDENDS RECEIVABLE	52,582	42,779
CAMPAIGNS' PLEDGES RECEIVABLE, Net of allowance for assessment fees and uncollectible pledges of \$464,486 in 2006 and \$486,717 in 2005	358,632	384,805
PREPAID EXPENSES AND OTHER	25,367	22,284
INVESTMENTS	<u>9,653,039</u>	<u>8,146,281</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$11,133,813</u>	<u>\$10,061,672</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE—DAV	\$ 171,550	\$ 48,016
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE—OTHER	1,017	400,146
ANNUITY PAYMENT LIABILITY	<u>3,679,148</u>	<u>3,416,019</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	3,851,715	3,864,181
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	<u>7,282,098</u>	<u>6,197,491</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$11,133,813</u>	<u>\$10,061,672</u>

See notes to financial statements.

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV)
CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST**

**STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006 AND 2005**

	2006			2005		
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:						
Contributions, net of assessment fees and provision for uncollectible pledges of \$33,242 in 2006 and \$45,788 in 2005	\$ 2,654,400	\$ 3,085,142	\$ 5,739,542	\$ 1,78,626	923,377	923,377
Contributions of charitable gift annuities	32,436,803	123,638	32,560,441	384,670	271,783	271,783
Bequests						
Investment income—net						
Net assets released from restrictions						
	<u>35,653,949</u>	<u>35,60,000</u>	<u>35,603,949</u>			
Total support and revenue						
EXPENSES:						
Program services	34,754,236	1,621,048	36,375,284			
Management and general	75,490	80,189	155,679			
Fundraising	168,316	32,835	201,151			
Total expenses	<u>34,998,051</u>	<u>1,734,072</u>	<u>36,732,123</u>			
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS BEFORE CHANGE IN UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS						
CHANGE IN UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS						
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS						
NET ASSETS—Beginning of year						
NET ASSETS—End of year						
	<u>\$ 7,222,098</u>	<u>\$ 6,197,491</u>	<u>\$ 6,197,491</u>			

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV)
CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006 AND 2005

	2006			2005				
	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
EXPENSES:								
Allocations to charitable programs	\$ 34,705,839	\$ 25,852	\$ 142,295	\$ 34,760,939	\$ 1,579,138	\$ 26,551	\$ 17,699	\$ 1,579,138
Grant proposal processing					23,952	153,330	19,078	26,551
Administrative charges					1,725	1,706	19,078	17,699
Travel					1,106	28,000	27,659	19,078
Advertising					8,265	26,021	4,532	6,661
Printing, postage, and supplies					8,639	8,639	17,318	7,073
Professional fees					1,621	1,625	3,246	1,625
Insurance								3,250
Telephone								239
Registration fees								153
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 34,751,286	\$ 75,199	\$ 168,316	\$ 34,998,051	\$ 1,621,018	\$ 80,189	\$ 32,835	\$ 1,734,072

See notes to financial statements.

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV)
CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST**

**STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006 AND 2005**

	2006	2005
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Change in net assets	\$ 1,084,607	\$ 1,603,707
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Change in unrealized appreciation of investments	(428,159)	66,161
Gain on sale of investments	(119,702)	(69,870)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Interest and dividends receivable	(9,803)	(8,366)
Campaigns' pledges receivable	26,173	(114,989)
Prepaid expenses and other	(3,083)	(4,394)
Accounts payable	<u>(275,595)</u>	<u>399,015</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>274,438</u>	<u>1,871,264</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Purchase of investments	(6,145,623)	(5,632,561)
Proceeds from the sale of investments	<u>5,186,726</u>	<u>4,460,798</u>
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>(958,897)</u>	<u>(1,171,763)</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:		
Proceeds from contributions restricted for investment subject to annuity agreement	844,055	289,062
Payments to annuitants	<u>(580,926)</u>	<u>(321,371)</u>
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities	<u>263,129</u>	<u>(232,309)</u>
NET CHANGE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	(421,330)	467,192
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS—Beginning of year	1,465,523	998,331
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS—End of year	<u>\$ 1,044,193</u>	<u>\$ 1,465,523</u>

See notes to financial statements.

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV)
CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST**

**NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AS OF AND FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006 AND 2005**

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 2006 and 2005, 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 among 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 \$165,357 and \$112,900 in 2006 and 2005, respectively, for excess income recognized by MVPSOA in 2005 and 2004.

Contributions and Bequests—Contributions and bequests 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 and bequests with donor imposed restrictions that are met in the same period as unrestricted contributions and bequests.

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. In 2005, all restrictions were met to properly release the income. In 2005, the Trust received a \$400,000 grant from an anonymous donor. At December 31, 2005, it was concluded that it was more likely than not that the restrictions placed on the grant would not be satisfied. Therefore, the grant is included in Accounts Payable—Other in the December 31, 2005, statement of financial position. In 2006, the grant was returned to the donor.

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 including 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, 2006 and 2005, are summarized below:

			Unrealized Appreciation (Depreciation)
2006	Cost	Market	
Cash equivalents	\$ 58,239	\$ 58,239	\$
Money market investments	488,441	488,441	
Commercial paper	850,000	850,000	
U.S. treasury notes and corporate bonds	3,457,197	3,387,729	(69,468)
Common stock and equity funds	<u>4,227,581</u>	<u>4,868,630</u>	<u>641,049</u>
Total	\$9,081,458	\$9,653,039	\$ 571,581

			Unrealized Appreciation (Depreciation)
2005	Cost	Market	
Cash equivalents	\$ 116,295	\$ 116,295	\$
Money market investments	363,848	363,848	
Commercial paper	325,000	325,000	
U.S. treasury notes and corporate bonds	3,177,748	3,107,642	(70,106)
Common stock and equity funds	<u>4,019,968</u>	<u>4,233,496</u>	<u>213,528</u>
Total	\$8,002,859	\$8,146,281	\$ 143,422

Investment income is composed of interest and dividend income of \$296,443 and \$232,073, realized gains on the sale of securities of \$119,702 and \$69,870, net of fees paid to trustees of \$31,475 and \$30,160, in 2006 and 2005, respectively.

3. RELATED-PARTY TRANSACTIONS

DAV personnel assist the Trust on a limited basis in administering its business operations, fund raising and grants programs. For these services, the Trust reimbursed DAV \$185,382 and \$44,163 in 2006 and 2005, respectively. The DAV provides the Trust with the use of facilities and equipment at no charge.

In 2006, the Trust was the beneficiary of a bequest in the amount of \$32,426,803. In order to ensure that these funds will be available whenever needed for services to disabled veterans and their families, the Board of Directors allocated the funds to the DAV National Service Foundation.

In 2006 and 2005, respectively, the DAV Charitable Service Trust made a \$400,000 and \$800,000 grant to the DAV National Service Foundation, Colorado Trust fund for the DAV National Transportation Network Van Grant Program. In 2006, the Trust allocated \$300,000 to the DAV in support of DAV's Mobile Service Office and Transition Service Assistance Programs.

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 2006 and 2005, 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%. The Trust's management designates certain investments as "reserved" for the charitable gift annuity agreements. At December 31, 2006, the fair market value of investments in the reserved charitable gift annuity investment account was \$5,210,360.

* * * * *

SUPPLEMENTAL SCHEDULE

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**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV)
CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST**

**SCHEDULE OF ALLOCATIONS TO CHARITABLE PROGRAMS
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006 AND 2005**

	2006	2005
ALLOCATIONS TO CHARITABLE PROGRAMS:		
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care,		
Domiciliary Care and Transitional Housing Programs for Homeless Veterans	\$ 65,780	\$ 43,480
Hoosier Veterans Assistance Foundation—Drop-in Center for Homeless/Needy Veterans	30,000	35,000
Jobs for Homeless People (JHP)—Employment Assistance, Counseling and Support		
Services for Homeless Veterans	15,000	30,000
Randall Adult Family Care Homes—Transitional Housing and Case Management for		
Mentally and Chemically Dependent Veterans	7,500	10,000
Transitional Living Services—Transitional Housing Assistance for Homeless/Needy Veterans	20,000	17,200
Veteran Hospice Homestead—Specialized Convalescent Care for Homeless/Needy,		
Terminally Ill Veterans	30,000	40,000
VetSpace—Transitional and Permanent Housing for Homeless Veterans	35,000	35,000
Central City Concern—Optical and Dental Care Programs for Homeless/Needy Veterans	10,000	
Central Oregon Veterans Outreach - Employment, Housing and Crisis Intervention for		
Homeless Veterans	35,000	
Heart of America Stand Down Foundation - StandDown for Homeless/Needy Veterans	2,000	
Joseph House - Housing, Counseling and Rehabilitation Treatment Program for		
Homeless Veterans	40,000	
Lutheran Social Services—Emergency Housing and Transportation Services for		
Homeless/Low Income Veterans	10,000	
St. Patrick Center - Housing and Resource Assistance for Homeless/Needy Veterans	7,500	
Swords to Plowshares - Emergency Interim Housing for Homeless Veterans	10,000	
Applied Behavioral Rehabilitation and Research—Mental Health and Substance Abuse		
Treatment, Life Skills Counseling and Vocational Training for Homeless Veterans	15,000	
Community Hope—Transitional and Permanent Housing, Mental Health and Substance		
Abuse Treatment for Homeless Veterans	50,000	
Crossroads Shelter—Employment Assistance, Counseling and Support Services		
for Homeless Veterans	5,000	
Iowa Coalition for Housing and the Homeless—StandDown for Homeless/Needy Veterans	5,000	
Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati—Representation and Advocacy for indigent		
veterans and their families	30,000	
Minnesota Veterans Homes Board—Triage Center for homeless veterans	25,000	
Northeast Ohio Coalition for Homeless—Employment and Housing Assistance for		
Homeless and At Risk Veterans	12,500	
Suffolk County United Veterans—Transitional and Permanent Housing and Structured		
Support Services for Homeless Veterans	15,000	
Creative Alternatives of New York—Therapeutic Workshops		
for Veterans Suffering From Mental Illness, Spinal Cord Injuries and Substance Abuse	8,500	15,000
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Fort Meade, SD—Addresses		
psychological, physical, and social issues of women, both veterans and		
family members of male veterans, suffering Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	4,400	4,000
National Amputee Golf Association—Therapeutic/Rehabilitative Programs for		
Disabled Veterans	10,000	10,000
Project Mobility—Therapeutic/rehabilitative programs for severely wounded		
soldiers at The Walter Reed Army Medical Center and veterans' medical		
facilities to promote better health, independence and freedom of mobility	5,000	20,000
Radio Reading Service of the Rockies—Adaptive Listening Equipment		
and Special Programming for Blind/Visually Impaired Veterans	9,700	8,500

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV)
CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST**

**SCHEDULE OF ALLOCATIONS TO CHARITABLE PROGRAMS
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2006 AND 2005**

	2006	2005
Achilles Track Club—Rehabilitation Program for Amputees and Seriously Disabled Veterans of Iraq War	\$ 25,000	\$
Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund - Supports state-of-the-art Physical Rehabilitation and Advanced Training Center at Brooke Army Medical Center	750,000	
Massachusetts Institute of Technology - Supports development of a Leg Orthosis to dramatically increase Locomotory Capabilities of Disabled Veterans	283,221	
National Wild Turkey Federation - Outdoor Therapeutic Programs for Disabled Veterans	18,000	
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Evanston, IL—Therapeutic/Rehabilitative Program for Disabled Veterans	6,000	
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Family Transition Program—Assists wounded soldiers and their families/caregivers as they transition from DoD Military Treatment facilities into the VA healthcare system	34,000	
Outward Bound—Rehabilitative Programs for Veterans	34,320	
Suffering From Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	400,000	800,000
Disabled American Veterans National Transportation Network Van Grant Program		
Missouri State Veterans Home, Cape Girardeau—Medical and Healthcare Equipment to Aid in the Care of Veteran Residents	11,000	
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Washington, DC - Medical Equipment to Aid in Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation	30,935	
American Pain Foundation—Informational Programs Designed to Assist Veterans with Pain Management	17,000	
Colorado State Veterans Home, Walsenburg - Dental Care Program for Veteran Residents	15,000	
Emmaus Services for the Aging - Programs Designed to Serve Elderly Veterans	7,500	
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Bay Pines, FL—Dental and Lab Equipment to Improve Quality and Timeliness of Dental Services for veterans	7,600	
Missouri State Veterans Home, Mt. Vernon—Medical and Healthcare Equipment to Aid in the Care of Veteran Residents	11,540	
Missouri Veterans Home, St. James—Medical Equipment and Supplies to Address the Specialized Treatment needs and Mobility of Veteran Residents	32,000	
Bobby Dodd Institute—Employment and career services for Disabled and Economically Disadvantaged Disabled Veterans	10,000	15,000
Employment Connection - Work Readiness and Job Placement Programs for Veterans who are Unemployed, Underemployed or Disabled	25,000	
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs Foundation- Programs designed to Assist Troops Returning from Iraq/Afghanistan and their Families	25,000	
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund—Informational Programs	100,000	
Designed to Educate the Public about the Sacrifices of Veterans	40,000	
New York Foundation for the Arts—Educational Documentary Highlighting the Sacrifices of Veterans of World War II	5,000	
Operation Homefront, San Diego - Supports Families of Wounded Service Members with day-to-day Emergency Needs	30,000	
Hospital Hospitality House of Richmond—Lodging and Support for Veterans and their Families in times of Medical Crises	10,000	30,000
Disabled American Veterans National Service Foundation - service programs to assist disabled veterans & their families	32,426,803	
Disabled American Veterans - Mobile Service Office & Transition Service Assistance Programs	300,000	
Miscellaneous	17,998	
TOTAL	\$ 34,709,839	\$ 1,579,138

(Concluded)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Dick, for that report. Thank you, Jerry, for those kind words about Lew. And thank you, Jim, for that generous donation. May I have a motion to accept that wonderful report.

MR. ASIAT A. ALI: Mic 3.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 3.

MR. ALI: Asiat Ali, Colonel Donald G. Cooke, Chapter 5, Vermont, I'd like to make a motion to accept Ex-Commander Marbes' report.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you. May I have a second?

MR. WILLIAMS: Mic 2.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 2.

MR. WILLIAMS: Or Mic 1, rather. Henry Williams from Chapter 54, for the great State of Wisconsin, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. Will you please welcome Lee Ewing of the great State of Kentucky, the newly-elected President of the Commanders and Adjutants Association for 2007-2008. (Applause)

MR. LEE EWING: National Commander Barton, National Adjutant Wilson, National Officers, delegates and guests, good morning.

COMMANDER BARTON: Good morning.

MR. EWING: I'm proud to have been elected as the president of the State Commanders and Adjutants Association for 2007-2008. We pledge to continue our support of the National Organization through our sponsorship of the State Commanders and Adjutants Orientation, the Mid-Winter Conference, and the Winter Sports Clinic. We look forward to a very productive year in the DAV.

I would like to read into the record our officers and committees for the coming year: Vice President, Rita Alberegg of Virginia; Executive Committee Joseph Connelly of Michigan, Gerald Cowan of Texas, Helen Holston of Alabama, Dennis Krulder of New York, Robert Moffett of North Carolina, Bill Novak from New York; Our Immediate Past President, Dave Brader from Kansas; our Secretary-Treasurer, Dave Tannenbaum from Florida; our Judge Advocate, Sloan Hoopes from Virginia; Chaplain, Kyler Escalera from Nevada; Sergeant-at-Arms Theodore Barbuto and John Skyler from New York, both of them; Resolutions Committee, Eldon Armstrong from Texas, Mike Whelihan from Indiana, Domonique Maestas from Oklahoma, Fay Lyon from Washington; under our Audit and Finance Committee, Jim Fox from the Blind Chapter, Brenda Reed from Iowa, Bill Anton from Nevada, Brian Wilner from Georgia, Irvin Eddy from Oklahoma; and Constitution and Bylaws, Jimmy Stewart from South Carolina, Sarah Royse from Washington, Francis Reding from Idaho, Carl Bailey from Alabama, Kevin Wenthe from Louisiana; and under Special Projects Wilbert Forbes from Maryland, Jose Garcia from Nevada, Perry Johnson from Virginia, Floyd Watson from Wyoming and Jeff Martin from Virginia. Would National Commander Barton and National Adjutant Wilson please join me to receive this presentation.

(Whereupon, Commander Barton and Adjutant Wilson joined Mr. Ewing at the podium.)

MR. EWING: On behalf of the State Commanders and Adjutants Association I would like to present you with two donations to the National Service Foundation, a check for \$100 in honor of our Past President Dave Brader, and a second check for \$1,500 from the CNA for the National Service Foundation. Thank you. (Applause)

ADJUTANT WILSON: Thank you very much.

MR. EWING: Thank you.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Lee, for all the hard work you and the Commanders and Adjutants Association do every year for our great Convention. Now, I will call on National Adjutant Wilson for any announcements.

ADJUTANT WILSON: Thank you, Commander. This afternoon's business session will begin promptly at 1:30. We will start off with the important business of nomination and elections of officers. Please be on time. This evening's activities include the introduction of National Officers at 6:00 o'clock followed by a full-course buffet dinner.

Now, as a reminder, we are giving away to five delegates to this Convention a DAV jacket. And if your name is called and you're in the hall, please see Tony Baskerville right here on stage as soon as we adjourn to receive your DAV jacket: Michael K. Riley from Washington, Michael Whelihan from Indiana, Howard Smith from Michigan, Robert Lawton from Michigan, and David Epps from Massachusetts. (Applause) You need a jacket up there in Massachusetts. (Laughter)

The final announcement, Commander, the Nominating Committee will meet 15 minutes following closing of this session in the Magnolia Room. Please be there promptly on time. If you have any additional candidates who wish to appear before the Committee, they should do so at that time.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Art. I will now call on Chaplain Bastille to lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN BASTILLE: I have a story. (Laughter) The son of a poor widow struck it rich in the stock market. Wanting to show his love for his mother he went to a pet shop and asked the owner for the rarest and most expensive pet in the shop. The owner said he had a rare parrot worth \$50,000 which could recite the Ten Commandments and other scripture verses.

No gift was too costly for his beloved mother, the son decided, so he bought the bird and shipped it to her. The next day he called his mom. "Did you get the bird?" he asked. "I sure did, son," she replied. "Thank you. It was delicious." (Laughter)

Let us pray. Be with us, Oh, God, as we depart this place to enjoy our noon meal. Keep us on track until we return and keep us out of any stores that sell birds. In the name of the God who loves us all, Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

COMMANDER BARTON: The Convention stands in recess until 1:30 this afternoon. (Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 11:47 o'clock, a.m. on Tuesday, August 14, 2007.)

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
FINAL BUSINESS SESSION
August 14, 2007

The Final Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans 86th National Convention convened in the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana, on Tuesday, afternoon, August 14, 2007, and was called to order at 1:32 o'clock, p.m., by National Commander Bradley S. Barton.

COMMANDER BARTON: The Convention will come to order. In opening this afternoon's business session it is fitting and proper that we render due respect to the flag. I want to also remind everyone, please turn off your cell phone. Hand salute. Two. I will now ask Reverend Bastille for another story. (Laughter)

CHAPLAIN BASTILLE: Thank you, Commander. A State Commander, Senior Vice Commander, and Junior Vice Commander were preparing for a very important meeting and decided to walk to a deli for lunch. As they were walking to the deli they found an antique oil lamp lying on the side of the walkway.

They rubbed the lamp and a genie appeared. The genie told them he would grant them three wishes, one wish for each person. The Commander told his first wish. "I want to be in Florida driving a speedboat and water skiing without a care in the world." Poof, he was gone.

The astonished Senior Vice Commander went second. "I want to go to Hawaii. I want to relax on the beach with the love of my life." Poof, he was gone. "You're next." the genie says to the Junior Vice Commander. The less creative Junior Vice says to the genie, "We have a lot of work to do and those two are not going to stick me with all the work. I want them both in the office by the time I return from lunch." (Laughter)

Let us pray. Oh, Lord, God, be with us as we gather again to fellowship and learn together and elect new leaders. Our business is important to promote and protect the wellbeing of our membership. Guide our actions that we may inspire others to do the tasks to accomplish our mission to care for disabled American veterans.

If we should drop the ball and get distracted, then bring us back on course and we will put our shoulders to the wheel and recommit ourselves to get the job done. Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

COMMANDER BARTON: Ladies and gentlemen, we are living in a time of war. As we go about our daily lives, blessed with freedom and opportunity, we must remember the brave military men and women who are defending that very freedom in a foreign and hostile land. Please watch this moving video tribute called, "Until Then."

(Whereupon, the film "Until Then" was presented.)

COMMANDER BARTON: "Until Then" please join me in a moment of silent prayer. Thank you.

(Whereupon, a moment of silent prayer was observed.)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: May they rest in peace.

COMMANDER BARTON: Next month the DAV's own Associate Director of Communications, Dan Claire, will be deployed to Iraq. Dan is a former active-duty marine and is now a Technical Sergeant for the Ohio National Guard. In Iraq he will serve as the Superintendent of Public Affairs for the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing at Balad Air Base.

Balad is about 45 miles northeast of Baghdad and the largest contingent of Air Force combat assets in the Iraq Theater. It also has the largest emergency hospital in Iraq. We wish all the best and a safe and speedy return. Dan, you're in our thoughts and our prayers. May they be with you. (Applause)

As a reminder, in order for a delegate to be heard at this Convention you must be recognized by the Chair. Only those delegates at a microphone will be recognized. Upon being so recognized the delegate must state their name, Chapter number and the state they represent. But before we begin I want to introduce Billy Taylor with the POW/MIA group for a special presentation, and the chairman of the Interim POW/MIA Committee, Billy.

MR. WILLIAM B. TAYLOR: Commander, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, it gives me great pleasure to present this American POW/MIA flag. And let's never forget that these men and women may be still missing and hope that one day they will all return home. At this time — (Applause) at this time can we have the Senior Vice step forward, please.

(Whereupon, Senior Vice Commander Reynolds joined Mr. Taylor at the podium.)

MR. TAYLOR: Rob, we would like to present this flag to you and ask that you fly this flag proudly in your home and that everyone see it may always remember it's not a pirate flag but it's a national POW flag and we thank you very much. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Taylor presented the POW/MIA flag to Senior Vice Commander Reynolds.)

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Billy. I would like to let you know that registration of delegates is now closed. I will now call for the final report of the Credentials Committee, Mary Bencivenga.

MS. BENCIVENGA: Comrade Commander, delegates, this is the final report of the Credentials Committee and reflects the total registration as of 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, August 14th. There are 1,130 delegates and 60 alternates registered which includes 46 Departments and 482 Chapters. There are 18 National Executive Committeemen and 11 Past National Commanders registered for a total of 33 National Officers. The total vote is 9,952.

At this time I would really like to extend my thanks to the Committee members and the advisors. Comrade Commander, that completes the final report of the Credentials Committee and I move for its adoption.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Mary. You've heard the motion. May I have a second?

MR. HENRY WILLIAMS: Mic 2.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 2.

MR. WILLIAMS: Henry Williams from this great state of Wisconsin, Chapter 54, make the motion—second that motion.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. Now I will call on the Chairman of the Nominating Committee for his report.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER DENNIS JOYNER: Thank you, Commander Barton. Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Nominations of National Officers was called to order for its first business session on August 11, 2007, 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 as chairman and Al Reynolds was elected as secretary. The Committee met three times, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and we held our final meeting this morning. The Committee interviewed 12 candidates for National Office. The following is a recommendation of the Nominating Committee to the Convention.

For the office of National Commander: Robert T. "Rob" Reynolds from Virginia; for the office of National Senior Vice Commander, Raymond E. Dempsey, Illinois; for the office of National First Junior Vice Commander, Robert "Bobby" Barrera, Texas; for the office of National Second Junior Vice Commander, Wallace E. "Wally" Tyson, North Carolina; for the office of National Third Junior Vice Commander, Donald L. Samuels, Tennessee; for the office of National Fourth Junior Vice Commander, Larry A. Polzin, California; for the office of National

Judge Advocate, Michael E. Dobmeier of North Dakota; and for the office of National Chaplain, Dr. Charles W. Edwards, Junior, from Texas.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on the Nomination of National Officers. On behalf of the Committee I move for the adoption of this report.

DR. RABA: Mic 2, Dr. Mariana M. Raba, Chapter 6, State of California, so moves—seconds the motion, excuse me.

COMMANDER BARTON: I'm sorry, Mic 2, could you repeat what you just said?

DR. RABA: Mic 2, Dr. Mariana M. Raba, Chapter 6, California, so seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. The motion carried. You have heard the report of the Committee on the Nomination of National Officers and they have nominated Rob Reynolds for National Commander. Here to second that nomination is Dave Tannenbaum of Florida.

MR. TANNENBAUM: Good afternoon.

(Response of "Good afternoon.")

MR. TANNENBAUM: National Commander Barton, National Adjutant Wilson, National Officers, delegates and guests, I am very proud and honored to be here to second the nomination of Robert T. Reynolds for the position of National Commander of the Disabled American Veterans.

The DAV is a very unique organization with a significant role in ensuring our nation's disabled veterans are able to re-enter society and live productive lives. Our National Commander must be a unique individual who has walked the walk and talked the talk in order to lead this, the premier veterans' service organization, toward the achievement of our mission. Rob Reynolds is such a person.

As a young man fresh out of high school, Rob did not know at the time that his future would be forever tied to the cause of our disabled veterans. Young Rob enlisted in the United States Army in 1984. Fate intervened, and while assigned to the 11th Special Forces group he was severely injured in a parachute operation, accident, excuse me.

Two years of hospitalization and multiple surgeries forever implanted in his mind the trials and tribulations of our disabled veterans. His rehabilitation took him to the ski slopes where he labored to become whole again. And in this endeavor Rob became a valuable asset for the Disabled Veterans' Winter Sports Clinic where he has been a volunteer ski instructor for over nine years.

Veterans participating at the clinic seek out Rob to be their instructor, coach, and mentor because of his skill, compassion and empathy. Rob Reynolds is truly a product of the Miracle on the Mountaintop.

Concurrent with his rehab efforts, Rob was active in Arlington-Fairfax Chapter 10 and the Department of Virginia. His leadership and organizational abilities brought him to the top positions in those organizations where he served as Chapter and Department Commander.

While mending his body, Rob did not neglect his mind. He earned a BS degree in Computer Science and a Masters Certificate in Project Management. We believe Rob Reynolds represents the future of our organization and that as the first post-Vietnam era veteran to enter our elected leadership Rob will extend the continuum of excellence and service to our disabled veterans.

It is with pride that I second the nomination of Robert T. Reynolds to become the 86th National Commander of the DAV, the finest, the most dedicated, and the most effective veterans' organization in our nation, bar none. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Dave. 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? If there are no further nominations I close nominations and declare Rob Reynolds elected as our National Commander and instruct the National Adjutant to cast one unanimous ballot for his election. (Standing Ovation)

ADJUTANT WILSON: I, Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant of the Disabled American Veterans, hereby cast one unanimous ballot for Rob Reynolds for the office of National Commander. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER BARTON: The Nominating Committee has nominated Ray Dempsey for the office of National Senior Vice Commander. I will now call for any further nominations for the office of National Senior Vice Commander. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Ray Dempsey elected as National Senior Vice Commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Bobby Barrera 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? If there are no further nominations, I will close the nominations and declare Bobby Barrera elected as National First Junior Vice Commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Wally Tyson 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? If there are no further nominations, I will close the nominations and declare Wally Tyson elected National Second Junior Vice Commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Donald Samuels as the 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? If there are no further nominations I close the nominations and declare Don Samuels elected National Third Junior Vice Commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Larry Polzin for the office of National Fourth Junior Vice Commander. I will now call for any further nominations—

MS. DONNA M. McKAY Yes.

COMMANDER BARTON: —for National Fourth Junior Vice Commander.

MS. McKAY: Yes.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 2.

MS. McKAY: Mic 2, Donna McKay, Chapter 18, District 19, Chapter 18, Commander, District 19. I nominate Mary Bencivenga—I can't say her name—from New Jersey.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mary Bencivenga.

MS. BENCIVENGA: I withdraw.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you. (Applause) Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I will close the nominations and declare Larry Polzin of California elected as our National Fourth Junior Vice Commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Mike 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? If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Mike Dobmeier elected as the National Judge Advocate. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Dr. Charles Edwards 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 Dr. Charles Edwards 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 Raymond Dempsey for National Senior Vice Commander; Bobby Barrera for National First Junior Vice Commander; Wallace Tyson for National Second Junior Vice Commander; Donald Samuels for National Third Junior Vice Commander; Larry Polzin for National Fourth Junior Vice Commander; Michael Dobmeier for National Judge Advocate; and Dr. Charles Edwards for National Chaplain.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, National Adjutant Wilson. (Applause) I would like to ask the newly-elected officers and their wives to be escorted to the stage, please.

(Whereupon, the newly-elected officers and their wives were escorted to the stage.)

COMMANDER BARTON: I would like to call on National Commander-elect Rob Reynolds for remarks. (Applause)

COMMANDER-ELECT ROBERT T. "ROB" REYNOLDS: National Commander Brad Barton, National Adjutant Art Wilson, Department and Chapter commanders, honored guests, friends and my fellow members of the Disabled American Veterans, I am deeply humbled and honored that you have chosen me to represent you as your National Commander in the year ahead.

Thank you for the confidence you have placed in me. And I will do my absolute best to be worthy of this truly great honor. Thank you. (Standing Ovation) Thank you.

If you don't mind, I'd like to take a minute to thank a few people who helped make this day possible for me: Dave Tannenbaum, Jeff Martin, Sloan Hoopes, Ken Booker, my Chapter, Number 10, the Department of Virginia and its Chapters and our Sixth District.

I really could not have done this without you. Thank you all for your help and support along the way. Please allow me to introduce my wife, Jennifer, and son, whose love, support and

understanding have made it possible for me to serve my fellow disabled veterans and the DAV. (Applause)

Also, my mom, step dad, and all my friends who made the trip, and even those that weren't able to, especially the two that rode their Harleys 23 hours straight down here because I couldn't. The two of them and the Boozefighters are always there whenever I ask or need anything. Thank you all for your continued support, not only for me but our family. (Applause)

I particularly want to acknowledge the great work by National Commander Barton. Brad's dedication to our mission will be a tough act to follow. I know that he will remain active in the DAV and we will have the benefit of his experience and wise counsel. Thank you, Brad. (Applause)

As I have come to learn over the years, the DAV is an amazing group of Americans. Our diverse membership really is a reflection of our nation as a whole. And in spite of the things that make every one of us different and unique, we all share a very strong common bond. We are all dedicated to the DAV's mission of service and hope. And when our membership is focused on our collective goals, nobody does it better than the DAV. (Applause)

After I was injured when my parachute collapsed on that night jump 20 years ago I realized that I would have to start my life over again. And one thing that really helped me put it all back together was becoming involved in the DAV.

But I never would have guessed that it would eventually lead to this day. And I had no idea that I would meet and work with so many wonderful and inspiring people in the DAV. Each of you and them truly are dedicated to our mission.

One of the things I would like the DAV to focus on in the coming year is an active program to reach out to the new generation of disabled veterans. Bring them into the fold. Show them what it means to be a part of a real veterans' service organization.

When I was first introduce to the DAV, I quickly learned the importance of membership in the organization, not only in terms of what it could offer for my own personal rehabilitation and development but for what I could give back in return to the DAV.

Leaders like the men and women I met in the DAV gave me the benefit of their real-world experience in living with a disability. And they showed me that I could help make a difference in the lives of my fellow disabled veterans.

I can't tell you how much it has meant for me to be part of such an outstanding organization of people like you. I can only hope to give back some of what you have given me. Thank you. (Applause)

As I look ahead to the future of the DAV, I see many opportunities to be a positive influence in our fellow disabled veterans. One of them is to mentor current members and prepare them for leadership in the organization.

Another is to encourage others to join us in fulfilling our mission, especially the new generation of disabled veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, because building better lives means building a future of promise towards making a difference for America's disabled veterans and their families and for the DAV.

It is a future with a VA benefits delivery system that delivers the benefits that disabled veterans have earned and a VA medical system that provides ready access to a full range of top-quality care for sick and disabled veterans. And that includes mental health treatment and traumatic brain injury care that recognizes not only the veterans' needs but the needs of their families as well.

And to help reach those goals, we have ramped up our ongoing public policy advocacy program. A key element in this plan is a sustained effort throughout the two years of the 110th Congress seeking federal legislation to make sure that disabled veterans get the full rehabilitation and recovery they need to rebuild their lives.

Of course, we are focusing on sustaining support for veterans' programs and services well into the future. We want to make our long-time legislative priority of guaranteed, full funding for veterans' health care a reality. (Applause)

And I am pleased to tell you that just a couple of weeks ago the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee finally held a congressional hearing on options for the way veterans' health care is funded.

And since the DAV has been the tip of the spear in this effort all along, it came as no surprise that we were chosen to provide the lead testimony on behalf of all the other veterans' organizations in our budget reform partnership.

We also continue to offer lawmakers the benefit of our expertise and experience in crafting solid legislation to ensure accountability for identifying and meeting the mental health needs of

veterans making the transition to VA care. Requiring that each service member's self-assessment be analyzed by a military or a VA mental health professional in a timely manner is essential.

We also are seeking legislation requiring the VA to move forward on research into mild and moderate traumatic brain injury, including a comprehensive screening and treatment program. Because if there is one thing we've learned from both the current and past wars, it is that not all disabilities are visible.

And we are working to enact new comprehensive programs for the caregivers and families of severely disabled veterans to assist them in dealing with the physical and psychological wounds of war.

And while your legislative staff is hard at work, each of you has an important role in our ongoing efforts. And I know you are ready and willing to make a difference and answer the call to action to urge your lawmakers to support the kind of legislation and policy initiatives that we believe are right and necessary.

Like I said, nobody does it better than the DAV when it comes to building a future of promise for today's and tomorrow's disabled veterans and their families. (Applause)

Members like Brad Barton and my fellow line officers and the great leaders of our past have given us a tremendous legacy. It is up to us to build upon their legacy and ensure that the DAV will continue to be the unquestioned leader in service and advocacy for our nation's disabled veterans.

And right there making sure everything we do is squarely aimed at that goal is Art Wilson and the very exceptional staff in Cold Springs and Washington. Thank you, Art. And I look forward to our continued success. (Applause)

Over the past number of years, the DAV's National Service Program has been bolstered and fine-tuned to meet the needs of this nation's service-connected disabled veterans like never before.

Our ongoing outreach efforts have expanded as our Mobile Service Offices bring DAV's top-notch service to veterans all across the country and provide on-the-spot assistance to disabled veterans who have been affected by natural disasters. A recent example of this relief effort is in Greensburg, Kansas, which was devastated by a tornado earlier this year.

Our Transition Service Program is providing our unmatched benefits counseling and claims assistance to the men and women leaving active duty at military separation centers nationwide. And I know they're doing everything they can to help make the transition to veteran status as smooth as possible.

And our Homeless Veterans Initiative continues its ongoing mission of helping homeless veterans break the cycle of poverty and isolation and move from the streets to self-sufficiency. I know that many of our Chapters and Departments are actively involved in projects in your communities. So keep up the good work. (Applause)

Yes, the DAV remains steadfastly committed to serving our nation's service-connected disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors. And we are constantly seeking better ways to deliver DAV service whenever and wherever it is needed.

And we are committed to maintaining our position as the premier veteran's service organization with a strong, forceful voice when it comes to making sure that this nation honors its commitment to veterans. That means recruiting and mentoring a new generation of members who will carry on the DAV's mission of service and hope.

This year the DAV's membership has climbed to 1.3 million, including more than a million fully-paid life member. Thanks to all you hard-working recruiters who have helped make this a real banner year. Thanks to top recruiters like Fred Powers, Coy Hennis, Prosper Sodano, Patrick Noonan, and Dan Hill and Greg Seurer and all the rest of you. Give them and yourselves a great big round of applause. You deserve it. (Applause)

Remember, the DAV's strength is its membership. And each new member brings new energy and talent to our mission. And that helps us expand and develop programs and activities that benefit not only our members but all disabled veterans.

A strong membership base is vital to our continued success. New members add vitality to our Chapters and Departments and strengthen the service to veterans in their communities. And they are a source for the leaders of tomorrow.

Every DAV member benefits from having a strong advocate for our cause at the federal, state and community levels. Our work in protecting the rights and benefits of disabled veterans and their families also means building support and awareness of veterans' issues in communities and throughout the nation.

Because the stakes are so high we need as many of our members as possible to fight for our issues. A healthy DAV is vital to our success in Washington, today and tomorrow. The DAV's 1.3 million members all across the country give us unmatched grassroots strength.

Ours is a voice of strength and resolve that cuts across state and political lines. We are regarded in Washington as the authoritative voice for disabled veteran. And our input and counsel are constantly sought by decision-makers.

We have a full-time and a highly qualified professional staff that advocates on behalf of our members and all disabled veterans on the full spectrum of veterans' issues before Congress and the Administration. Our grassroots strength, coupled with our unmatched reputation for service and integrity, make the DAV the undisputed leader in veterans' affairs. Why? Because nobody does it better than the DAV. (Applause)

We have a tremendous organization and an extraordinary opportunity to build an even stronger one by reaching out to our contemporaries and to this new generation of disabled veterans, much in the same way that Judge Marx and the founders of this great organization did 87 years ago.

So I call upon each of you to make the commitment to make a difference in the lives of the people we serve to build a future of promise for today's veterans and tomorrow's.

We have an extraordinary mission of service and hope for our fellow disabled veterans. And I pledge to you that I will do my level best to represent the DAV in a manner befitting the legacy that has been passed on to me so that we can continue to fulfill our mission. It is an honor and privilege to serve as your National Commander. \ Thank you again for the confidence you have placed in me. I look forward to serving you in this year ahead. May God bless each of you and the DAV. May God bless our men and women who remain in harm's way. And may God bless America. Thank you all very much. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER BARTON: Wait, don't go away. Rob, it's my pleasure to present you with your first DAV cap. I think they have several more to go with this so I'd like you to put this on.

(Whereupon, Commander Barton presented Commander-elect Reynolds with the National Commander's cap.)

COMMANDER BARTON: And if I can give you one piece of sage advice, that is always have your gavel at hand. (Applause) So with that I present you with your gavel.

(Whereupon, Commander Barton held up a large gavel and presented Commander-elect with a smaller gavel.)

COMMANDER BARTON: I would like to call on the newly-elected National Senior Vice Commander, Ray Dempsey, for his remarks. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-ELECT RAYMOND DEMPSEY: Good afternoon, all.
(Response of "Good afternoon.")

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-ELECT DEMPSEY: I want to thank the membership, my extended family, for the trust and confidence you showed in electing me as your Senior Vice Commander. I am truly humbled. I would like to congratulate the Past National Commander, soon-to-be, soon-to-be, for years of friendship, many years of friendship.

But, the great job he did while he was on the Hill in Washington this year, his presentation was outstanding. But I don't think we will ever have anybody who would be able to answer the questions that were presented to him by Congress that day. You were truly outstanding and I will never forget that day. (Applause)

I certainly want to thank our National Adjutant, Art Wilson, for his vision and always keeping us in line. He is an outstanding person and can never be replaced. So if I'm lucky enough to be National Commander next year, please, don't ever think of retiring, at least until the year after. (Laughter) But we're hoping for another 20 years. Is that about right?

ADJUTANT WILSON: That's about right.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-ELECT DEMPSEY: Okay, good. Of course, our organization has to be running with more than just one wheel and we certainly have two outstanding people, our National Executive Directors Rick Patterson and, of course, Dave Gorman. And we know what a wonderful job they do. Look how the DAV is growing every year financially, our service, and all aspects. So, we congratulate you for that.

National Commander-elect Rob Reynolds, we have grown to have a bond of friendship but I know you will continue the long-standing standards of the National Commanders because, believe me, I know you and I know your power. And you have a way of just making people listen and convincing them that the DAV is the best and premier service organization. So, thank you. I am looking forward to a great year from you. (Applause)

I have to mention the great 12th District that I belong to. This is the district of Dick Marbes, a man that our District looks to and I'm so proud to be a member of the District of Dick Marbes. That's the District of Wisconsin and Illinois.

I'm proud of the legacy that Illinois has started and is completing and working to be one of the great states in the country. This is done by the hard work of our, just out past present commanders and I'd like to honor these people because these people instruct me.

They keep me in line. And every day I talk to one of them. And I appreciate everything they do. That's Ted Buck, Norm Resner, Mark Aaron, and our present Commander Dennis Thompson. I really thank you for all you do. (Applause)

But I'd be remiss if I didn't say that the mortar that has kept our Department together, to keep all of our Commanders together and work hard, is a gentleman named Al Reynolds. And to him I owe a debt of gratitude because he has kept all these Commanders and our Department on track all these years. So, Al, thank you very much from my heart. (Applause)

I have to thank one more person and I'm going to say it this way. Okay, listen, Norm Resner, Norm Resner, Norm Resner, Norm Resner. The reason why I said it that was I've talked about Norm fourth, third, second, first.

And each time I talk about my friend, my campaign manager, a gentleman that I've known since nine years old, played Little League Baseball, he's my campaign manager and, you know what? I tell him that every year and I never mention his name. I've never said "Norm Resner." So, Norm, that's why your name was mentioned four times. Is that enough, Norm? (Applause)

One more thank you before the biggest thank you. I would like to honor, also, Nevada, my second state, who supports, loves me, helps me, and especially Black Mountain Number 12 in Nevada, my home Chapter, who is just so astoundingly supportive. I thank you.

And, as I said, the biggest thank you that I have is for my wife, Pat. We've been married 36 years, friends for—well, married 32, friends for 36—just feels like 36. (Laughter) Don't worry. I'll pay for that. (Laughter) But I do want to say I love and respect her. She is my love. So, thank you everyone.

Oh, I want to do one more thing. I forget every year. Will the 12th District, Illinois and Nevada please stand and be recognized—12th District and Nevada stand. (Applause) That's another thing I forget. Thank you.

And in ending, I'm proud to represent you all. Thank you for the opportunity to let me help build a better DAV, to build a better DAV for our families, our veterans and for the future veterans that are coming home from Iraq and Iran. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: I would like to call on First Junior Vice-elect, Bobby Barrera for his remarks. (Applause)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-ELECT ROBERTO "BOBBY" BARRERA: Thank you so much. Adjutant Wilson, Commander Barton, Incoming Commander Reynolds, members of the assembly, I, first of all, want to thank you for the vote of confidence.

For the past few years I've come before you and you always stood beside me. And I have always said this, someone was there for us many years ago; it is our turn to be there for them. And you, the members of the DAV, do an outstanding job. How about a round of applause for yourselves. (Applause)

As you're aware, I'm from Texas, known as the Lone Star State. But I say unto you that the members of the Department of Texas are also stars. They are composed of many shining stars that have been there for me. Would the members of the Department of Texas please stand. (Applause) Thank you. Thank you.

I also want to thank Art and Brad for something they did a few months ago. When the dedication of the Center for the Intrepid had its grand opening they invited me to take part in that and I appreciate that. I am an alumni of the Burn Ward at Fort Sam Houston.

The response that our troops, our injured troops received that day, the coming back welcome that they received, was enough to energize me, to recharge my batteries to go on with the mission of providing, building better lives for disabled veterans and their families. If anyone who was there at that ceremony did not get re-energized, you need to check your pulse. (Applause) Thank you.

And I also want to thank the lady that has been with me all the time, always by my side, always being there for me, always supporting me, and that's my wife. Please rise. (Applause) I love you. I'm not going to sleep on the couch like Ray. (Laughter)

And, finally and above all, I want to thank God for orchestrating my life, for giving meaning to my life, for giving direction to my life. I say to you, God, "I am here, Lord. Thank you so much for everything." (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: Good job, Bobby. I would like to call on National Second Junior Vice-elect Wally Tyson for his remarks. (Applause)

SECOND JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-ELECT WALLACE "WALLY" TYSON: Since I have been here I have been teased about the size and length of my sign so I will make my remarks short. (Laughter) I want to thank each and every one of you for your support. Specifically, I would like to point out the Ninth District, North Carolina, Georgia, and South Carolina. Thanks to each and every one of you. (Applause)

Some specific thanks I need to hand out to Rodney Tucker, our Department Commander; Past Department Commander Bobby Williams; and Robert Moffitt; my fellow Department Officers and my staff back in the office, Yvonne and Cindy; one of the best friends I've ever had in my life, NSO Supervisors Ron Hope. He keeps North Carolina together, folks. If you're not working with your NSO staff, Departments, you're doing it the wrong way. Turn around and to the opposite way.

Past National Auxiliary Commanders Jane Troutman and Rene Jones, I want to thank you as well. Congratulations, Commander Brad, Art, Dave, Rick, and our great National staff. We've had a very aggressive and progressive year.

May we have many, many more of years like this which result in great service to our veterans and their families. Thank you, the membership, for giving me this great opportunity. I will do my best at all times and I will never let you down. Thank you, again. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: I would like to call on the newly-elected Third Junior Vice Commander, Don Samuels. Don. (Applause)

THIRD JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-ELECT DONALD SAMUELS: Thank you, Commander, and National Commander Reynolds, National Officers, National Adjutant Art Wilson, delegates and guests to this 86th National Convention. I want to thank you for the confidence you've put in me today. I commit my full loyalty to our National Commander, National staff and you, the delegates and members of the Disabled American Veterans.

The DAV is the premier veterans' organization and each of you do what you do each day and you do it from the heart because it's the right thing to do. And that's what makes all of the DAV programs so outstanding.

I'd like to take just one minute and recognize my Department Commander, Art Taylor—stand up, Art; the Tennessee delegation; (Applause) my National Eighth District, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana; my National Eighth District NEC, Eddie Figueron; and John Cashinger our Supervising National Service Officer.

I want to thank you for your service to your nation. I want to thank you for your sacrifice. And I want to thank you for caring for our disabled American veterans. And I want to commit to you that I will do everything that I can to help our National Commander help our National staff advance the programs of the Disabled American Veterans. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: I would call to call on Fourth Junior Vice National Commander-elect Larry Polzin for his remarks. Larry. (Applause)

FOURTH JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-ELECT LARRY Polzin: Thank you, Commander. Delegates, Art Wilson, his staff, first I would just like to take the opportunity to recognize a few people that I owe so much to—our State Adjutant, Past National Commander Kenneth Musselmann; our State Commander, Daniel Contreras; our Sixteenth District SEC, James Bogan; and all the members of the Sixteenth District. Thank you for your support and please stand to be recognized. (Applause) Thank you. Thank you.

As everyone before me has stated how great this organization is, our goals—membership, membership, membership. We've got to continue with membership. And we've got to continue to keep our young members involved in this organization to help keep it strong and running like it is today.

And before I turn this over I'd like to introduce the backbone of my organization, my lovely wife, Judy. Judy. (Applause) Thank you and thanks again to all the members here today for putting your support in me and electing me as your Fourth Junior Vice. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: I would now like to call on the newly-elected National Judge Advocate, Mike Dobmeier. (Applause)

JUDGE ADVOCATE MICHAEL E. DOBMEIER: Thank you, Commander. Before I forget, Sandy, stand up. (Applause) Thank you. I think you all know who Sandy is. What you may not know is she was elected Senior Vice Commander of the Auxiliary this morning. (Applause)

Fourteenth District, would you stand up, the states of North and South Dakota, Minnesota and Montana. Thank you again for your continued support. (Applause) And to all of you I thank

you for your trust. I thank you for this honor. And Sandy thanks you for keeping me out of her hair. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: I would like to call on the National Chaplain-elect, Charles Edwards. (Applause)

CHAPLAIN-ELECT CHARLES W. EDWARDS, JUNIOR: In Dallas it was Strike 1. In Chicago it was Strike 2. But today in New Orleans I hit a homerun. (Applause) First of all, I would like to say thank you to my home state, the great State of Texas, the state in which I've served as the Department Chaplain now beginning 12 years. (Applause)

However, I began this journey as a DAV member many years ago in 1992 in the State of South Carolina. And I would like to thank the members from South Carolina, also. (Applause)

Let it be said of all of us here, in the words of Tennyson, "I am a part of all that I have met. Though much is taken, much abides. That which we are, we are one equal temper of heroic hearts, strong in will to strive to seek, to find, and not to yield. And therefore, let us today renew our determination, our courage, our strength. Let us renew our faith and our hope to strive, to seek, to find, and never to yield." And let us always be first to serve the disabled American veterans and their families. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER BARTON: We will continue with the unfinished business of the Convention. The chair entertains a motion to discharge the Credentials Committee.

MR. KEVIN R. GRANTIER: Mic 3.

COMMANDER BARTON: Mic 3.

MR. GRANTIER: Kevin Grantier, Chapter 3, Montana, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER BARTON: No, I need a motion. I need a motion.

MR. GRANTIER: I make that motion.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you. A second?

MR. MICHAEL A. WHELIHAN: Mic 1. Mike Whelihan, Chapter 52, Indiana, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Mike. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. I will now ask the Adjutant to read the list of newly-elected members of the National Executive Committee.

ADJUTANT WILSON: NEC for the First District, Joseph Costa; NEC for the Third District, Wayne Desjardins; NEC from the Fifth District, Darlene Bielecki; NEC from the Seventh District, Roger Sullivan; NEC from the Ninth District, Marian Truscello; NEC from the Eleventh District, Frank Williams; NEC from the Thirteenth District, William Bottom; NEC from the Fifteenth District, Raphael Cuahwassuck; NEC from the Seventeenth District, Frank Maughan; NEC, Nineteenth District, Richard Lucht; and NEC from the Twenty-first District, David Spurgin.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Art. Believe it or not, that concludes today's agenda. Art, do you have any announcements?

ADJUTANT WILSON: Oh, just a few. (Laughter) As a reminder—and this is very important, please—the National Executive Committeemen, all the National Executive Committeemen and their Alternates, including those newly-elected, will meet immediately following adjournment of this Convention in Napoleon Ballroom on the third floor. Remember, the key word there was "immediately." A swearing-in ceremony will be held at that time. And, as I indicated, NEC Alternates should also attend the swearing-in ceremony.

The Board of Directors—and this is also important—will meet immediately following the NEC Meeting in the Versailles Ballroom, again on the third floor. Key word, "immediately." The presentation of National Officers will begin this evening at 6:00 here in the Grand Ballroom, followed by a full buffet dinner.

Whether it's the smooth sounds of Duke Ellington or the funk of Motown or the flavor of Louisiana Cajun soul, the Glen Guilbeau Group is a music experience like any other. You'll love the way it swings. You'll fall in love with the funky and mellow sounds.

Just like New Orleans, Glen Guilbeau is red hot and cool, beginning around 8:00 o'clock. It's a musical experience that you won't soon forget. So come and enjoy an evening filled with ceremony, food, friends, music and entertainment and a surprise announcement. That's all I have, Commander.

COMMANDER BARTON: Thank you, Art. I have one announcement. We've discovered a pair of glasses somebody left up here. I don't know whose they are but after the close you can come and pick them up. I will now call on Chaplain Bastille for one, final story. (Applause)

CHAPLAIN BASTILLE: Three men were about to be executed by the guillotine. One was a Junior Vice Commander, one was a Commander and the other a Senior Vice Commander. The Commander went first. He was asked if he wanted to wear a hood over his head.

He declined and said he was not afraid. He was placed on the guillotine with his neck on the block. He looked up bravely at the sharp blade that was about to fall. The rope was pulled but nothing happened. His executioners believed it was an act of God. They freed him.

The same process was repeated with the Senior Vice Commander. He refused the hood, was set into place and the rope was pulled. Again, nothing happened. This, too, was interpreted as an act of God so they freed the Senior Vice Commander as well.

Now it was time for the Junior Vice Commander's execution. "Do you want a hood?" He refused. "Nope. I'm just as brave as those other two guys." They laid the Junior Vice Commander in the guillotine and were about to pull the rope when the Junior Vice stopped them. "Hey, wait just a minute. I think I found the problem with your guillotine." (Laughter) Let us pray.

Lord, God, sustainer and author of all that has meaning in our lives, be with us as we close our meeting. Help us to remember that what we have learned and what we have agreed to must now be shared with those we lead. Oh, God, we have accepted the mantle of leader, we have accepted the title, leader, and we have accepted the benefits of being a leader.

Guide us now as we get ready to serve our members and become responsible leaders of the Disabled American Veterans. Those we serve count on us. Give us the energy and commitment to do the tasks set before us. As we depart to serve, help us to treasure the friendships we have made and remember the good times we have shared. In the name of the Lord who loves us all, Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

COMMANDER BARTON: Will the Department of Arizona Honor Guard please retire the Colors.

(Whereupon, the Colors were retired.)

COMMANDER BARTON: Let's give them a round of applause. (Applause) Ladies and gentlemen, this 86th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans is now adjourned. (Applause)

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned on Tuesday, August 14, 2007, at 2:48 o'clock, p.m.)

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DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
85th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel New Orleans, Louisiana
August 12, 2007

The Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Grand Salon of the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana, on Sunday morning, August 12, 2007, and was called to order at 9:21 o'clock, a.m., by National Adjutant Maria M. Tedrow.

ADJUTANT MARIA M. TEDROW: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Okay, at this time would the National Sergeant-at-Arms please send the Pages down to the front of the room.

(Whereupon, the Pages proceeded to the front of the room.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please present National Commander Donna Tanner to the platform.

(Whereupon, the Sergeant-at-Arms escorted Commander Donna Tanner to the dais.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: National Sergeant-at-Arms have the National Officers escorted to the platform. National Auxiliary Adjutant—sorry about that. It's been a long day.

National Auxiliary Chaplain Judy Uetterling; National Judge Advocate Carol Gray; National Fourth Junior Vice Patrice Rapisard; National Third Junior Vice Susan Henry;

National Second Junior Vice Kay Egan; National First Junior Vice Sandy Dobmeier; and National Senior Vice Commander Kathryn Wiley; National Chairman Linda Acosta—and would you please bring her up on the platform.

National Sergeant-at-Arms have the Past National Commanders escorted to the chairs in the front of the room and the Immediate Past National Commander escorted to the platform.

National Commander, Lucille McCarthy—Past National Commander, sorry, Lucille McCarthy. Sorry, Donna. Past National Commander Dorothy Van Hoy; Past National Commander Betty Hall;

Past National Commander Rose Schilpp; Past National Commander Jane Troutman; Past National Commander Evelynne Dunn; Past National Commander Evelyn Dorsey; Past National Commander Paula Raymond;

Past National Commander Renee Jones; Past National Commander Linda Trulio; and last but certainly not least, our Immediate Past National Commander Judy Steinhause. And would you please bring her up to the stage. (Applause)

National Sergeant-at-Arms have the State Commanders or the delegates who will be casting the State Department votes escorted to the front of the room.

Alabama, Everlene Register; Arizona, Sharon Linton; Arkansas we have Brenda Prentice; California, Annie Stewart; Colorado, Wilma Langendorfer; Delaware, Lelia White;

D.C., Juanita Giles; Florida, Judith Clamp; Georgia, Shirley Mauldin; Hawaii, Lorna Kakesako; Idaho, Cathy Foster; Illinois, Amelia Tapp; Indiana, Kathleen Miller;

Iowa, Lei Dean; Kansas, Ellen Price; Kentucky, Bonnie Martin; Louisiana, Winona Gamble; Maine, Sylvia Heath; Maryland, Betty Swift; Massachusetts, Lillian Halpin;

Josephine Hishok, Michigan; Minnesota Lois McCarron; Mississippi, Janett Reece; Missouri, Lettie Warchola; Montana, Marjorie Purkett; Nebraska, Paulette Marquez; I'm sorry, but no one is here from Nebraska.

Nevada, Gail Bocage; New Hampshire, Francis Blancato; New Jersey, Barbara Williams; New Mexico, Angela Lara; New York, Matilda Brooks; North Carolina, Elizabeth Kafka; North Dakota, Faye Litzinger;

Ohio, Dorothy Clark; Oklahoma, Sue Parman—sorry, Parham; Oregon, Virginia Kula; from Pennsylvania, Suzanne Seyboldt; Rhode Island, Linda Folcarelli;

South Carolina, Linda Alexander; South Dakota, Joyce Jefferson; Tennessee, Dorothy Robinson; Clarice Konieczny from Texas; Utah, June Viator—Jean, I'm sorry, Jean Viator my glasses aren't working right this morning;

Vermont, Aura Lee Nicodemus; Virginia, Diane Brinkley; Washington, Annie Cameron-Adams; West Virginia, Louise Hass—nobody from West Virginia;

how about Wisconsin, Ann Glende, Ann Glende from Wisconsin; Wyoming, Margaret Lucas. No one is here from Puerto Rico. They are here, but they are not here.

National Sergeant-at-Arms would you present and post the State Colors of Louisiana.

(Whereupon, the State Colors of Louisiana were presented and posted.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: National Sergeant-at-Arms present the National Colors.
(Whereupon, the National Sergeant-at-Arms presented the National Colors.)
ADJUTANT TEDROW: National Sergeant-at-Arms will you post the National Colors.
(Whereupon, the National Sergeant-at-Arms posted the National Colors.)
ADJUTANT TEDROW: National Sergeant-at-Arms dismiss the Color Bearers, please.
(Whereupon, the National Sergeant-at-Arms dismissed the Color Bearers.)
ADJUTANT TEDROW: Now, if our National Musician will play "God Bless America" let's all join in and sing.

(Whereupon, "God Bless America" was sung by the membership.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: And now we will now have the prayer by our National Chaplain, Judy Uetterling. Judy.

CHAPLAIN JUDY UETTERLING: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CHAPLAIN UETTERLING: Let's pray. Dear Lord, thank You for bringing us safely to this Convention. We know you have put seconds, minutes, hours, and days in our hands.

Lord, we thank You for this for we have accomplished many great things this year and we still have plenty of time to accomplish more. We ask You to bless our members who are not with us and our troops. In Your name we pray. Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

ADJUTANT TEDROW: The Pledge of Allegiance will be led by National Americanism Chairman Susan Henry.

THIRD JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER SUSAN HENRY: Will you join me in the Pledge.

(Whereupon, Americanism Chairman and Third Junior Vice Commander Susan Henry led the Pledge of Allegiance.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: And now I'm going to ask you to stand just a couple minutes longer because our National Musician will now play the "Star Spangled Banner."

(Whereupon, the National Musician played the "Star Spangled Banner.")

ADJUTANT TEDROW: You may now be seated, you, too, Commander. I want to thank Nancy for her performance. Thank you, Nancy. And I also want you to notice what she is playing because the Auxiliary got tired of paying for the use of a piano or a keyboard and we went out and bought one. (Applause)

COMMANDER DONNA M. TANNER: It's beautiful.

ADJUTANT WILSON: 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 85th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary be convened at New Orleans, Louisiana.

Consideration and disposition of business—and watch the cell phones. (Laughter) Consideration and disposition of business brought before the Convention shall be conducted in accordance with the National Constitution and Bylaws now in force. To all present, take due notice thereof and govern yourself accordingly.

At this time—this is one of the highlights of my being Adjutant at the National Convention because I get to introduce to you the leader that you selected last year by your vote. And she has done a tremendous job.

She has been a great—nah, she's been pretty good. (Laughter) She has been a terrific Commander. She has made impressions wherever she has been. And we are lucky to have her.

At this time I would like to introduce to you our National Auxiliary Commander, Donna Tanner. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER TANNER: Thank you. We're adjusting things up here. Can you hear me?

(Response of "No.")

COMMANDER TANNER: Oh, she shut the microphone off when I got up here. (Laughter)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: No, I didn't touch anything.

COMMANDER TANNER: Any better? Better? Better? Better? No, I don't think it's working.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Oh, well. It knew when to quit, didn't it?

COMMANDER TANNER: Yes. I'll try this. Any better? Okay. Well, welcome, after all of that. Welcome to our Convention. I hope that we have a lot of fun.

We have a good group of people here. It's a pleasure for us to come in first because we get to look at all of you being marched in.

You, State Commanders or representatives, all look lovely. We were, Kathy and I were having a little fashion show while you were coming up. (Laughter) We'll talk to you later about where you bought your outfits. (Laughter)

And, of course, the Past National Commanders, they always look lovely. Got to butter them up. No, I'm only kidding. At this time it is my pleasure to introduce you to Linda Acosta. She's our National Convention Chairman from Louisiana. (Applause)

NATIONAL CONVENTION CHAIRMAN LINDA T. ACOSTA: Good morning, everybody.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CHAIRMAN ACOSTA: Are we having fun yet?

(Response of "Yes.")

CHAIRMAN ACOSTA: Bienveuu Louisiana, welcome to Louisiana. "Merci," she said. Well, thank you, in French. We have been busy. We're going to have more fun as the few more days go on.

If you all need any help, find District 8 or somebody in District 8, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, and Tennessee, they'll find me somewhere. Again, welcome.

We wish we had a little bit more ladies here but we're going to make it come out and have a good time. All righty? I have a little gift here. The Commander had a pretty necklace last night so she's going to get one today.

(Whereupon, Commander Tanner was presented with gifts.)

COMMANDER TANNER: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ACOSTA: And then this one is from the State of Louisiana. This one is from me. And, Ms. Maria, we have a little something for you.

(Whereupon, Adjutant Tedrow was presented with a gift.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ACOSTA: You need to open it, also, right now. Again, if I can be of help to anybody, it was a pleasure. And I appreciated being elected to chairman. And I'm doing the best I can, okay? Bye. I know there is a lot of business to go ahead, so. (Applause)

COMMANDER TANNER: Thank you, Linda.

CONVENTION CHAIRMAN ACOSTA: I have some gifts for the officers as well.

(Whereupon, Chairman Acosta presented gifts to the Officers on the dais.)

COMMANDER TANNER: Well, while she's passing out gifts, she mentioned that it might be a smaller crowd, but a smaller crowd, a smaller crowd is more fun.

You get to know everybody. You get to meet everybody so before these next couple of days are over you are all going to meet each other, right?

(Response of "Yes.")

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay. Thank you.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Quality, not quantity.

COMMANDER TANNER: Quality, not quantity, Maria says. We've got the cream here. Well, how are you all this morning?

(Response of "Good.")

COMMANDER TANNER: Got to get my how are ya's in.

CHAIRMAN ACOSTA: This is from me. It's a Cajun angel.

COMMANDER TANNER: Cool. Is it spicy? I like spicy. (Laughter)

CHAIRMAN ACOSTA: It's got an alligator on it. Look at that.

COMMANDER TANNER: Sorry, thought I lost it. At this time it is my pleasure to introduce our Past National Commanders that are here with us: Lucille McCarthy; (Applause)

Dorothy Van Hoy; (Applause) Maria Tedrow; (Applause) Betty Hall; (Applause) Rose Schilpp; (Applause) Jane Troutman; (Applause) Evelynne Dunn; (Applause)

Evelyn Dorsey, (Applause) Paula Raymond; (Applause) Carol Gray; (Applause) R. Renee Jones; (Applause) Linda Trulio; (Applause) and Judy Steinhouse. (Applause)

At this time it gives me great pleasure to bring Past National Commander Rose Schilpp to bring greetings from the Past National Commanders. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER ROSE SCHILPP: Good morning, Commander Donna.

COMMANDER TANNER: Good morning.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHILPP: I'm sure you've heard of the Past National Commanders.

COMMANDER TANNER: Yes.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHILPP: And—you can't hear me?

COMMANDER TANNER: Heard of them and heard from them.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHILPP: Oh, have you really? Well, that's what we like. You pay attention. (Laughter) Anyhow, on behalf of the Past National Commanders it gives me great pleasure to present a gift to you from the Past National Commanders.

And we have followed you this year, your travels. And you had a wonderful year.

COMMANDER TANNER: Thank you.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHILPP: And I know you've heard a lot about the Past National Commanders. And I'm pretty sure you will be accepted into this realm. We haven't taken a vote yet but all the things are very good in your favor.

COMMANDER TANNER: Thank you.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHILPP: We do appreciate all the work you have done and everything representing our great organization. And with reading your articles in the book and everything, it's been wonderful and we do appreciate it.

COMMANDER TANNER: Thank you.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHILPP: And I'd like to present this to you from the Past National Commanders.

(Whereupon, Past National Commander Rose Schilpp presented Commander Tanner with a gift.)

COMMANDER TANNER: Should I open it?

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHILPP: Certainly.

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay. This is a good job. You get presents. A-ha. A-ha. Now I can't open it, I'm too excited. I got my paperweight. (Laughter) Thank you.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SCHILPP: You're welcome. (Applause)

COMMANDER TANNER: Thank you. I've been bugging Maria all year about one.

ADJUTANT TANNER: She wanted to buy one and we said, "It's not for sale." Now you've got it.

COMMANDER TANNER: Wait, I've got to get my official duty here. Okay, at this time I dismiss the Nominating Committee so that they can return and get back to their business.

(Response of "Can't hear you.")

COMMANDER TANNER: Oh, for goodness. I'm dismissing the Nominating Committee so that they can complete their business, hopefully.

(Whereupon, the Nominating Committee withdrew from the Grand Salon.)

COMMANDER TANNER: I'm just dismissing the Nominating Committee; everybody else, we've got more business to do. (Laughter)

Okay, at this time—remember, I've got my gavel. Brad told me he was going to give me that big gavel he had but I said that would be a big mistake giving me that one. (Laughter)

Anyway, at this time I would like to bring Elaine Majors to the podium for the preliminary Credentials report.

MS. ELAINE MAJORS: I don't want her book. Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MS. MAJORS: Madam Commander, National Officers, delegates and guests, the Credentials report is as follows: total Units registered are 200; total Department registered, 43, total 243; delegates registered, 401; alternates registered, 19; guests, 53; total, 473; total Unit votes, 1,294; total Department votes, 43; National Officers, 5; Past National Commanders, 12; grand total, of votes, 1,354. Madame Commander, I move for the acceptance of this report.

COMMANDER TANNER: Thank you. I have a motion from Elaine Majors to accept the Credentials report. Can I have a second?

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER KATHRYN WILEY: Kathryn Wiley, National Senior Vice Commander, I second that.

COMMANDER TANNER: Thank you. Motion carried. This might be good because my back has been killing me so I can kind of lean here and you can hear me better. No, you can't hear me better they're going. All right, I'm going to yell but I'm not yelling at you, yet—no, only kidding.

The first order of business is the adoption of the National Convention Rules. Printed copies of the Convention Rules have been furnished to all the registered delegates.

The chair will now entertain a motion for the adoption of these rules. You need to go to the microphone because the—I can't see anything but poles in the middle but I'm sure they're there. Okay, go ahead.

MS. DEBBIE BARBUTO: Debbie Barbuto, Unit 88, New York makes the motion to accept the Convention Rules.

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, Debbie Barbuto, Unit 88, New York, made the motion. And I need a second. Go to a different microphone somebody, please, so we can see what works.

MS. OLIVE TOMLIN: Olive Tomlin, Colorado 6, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, Olive Tomlin, Colorado 6? 7?, 6, okay, seconded the motion. I'm repeating these so that the stenographer can get the information. We'll work on this later. Yes, we'll get somebody.

Okay, I have a motion and a second. All those in favor; opposed. The motion carried. At this time—oh, never mind. Yes, sorry, at this time may I have a motion to accept the agenda subject to changes.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER WILEY: Kathryn Wiley, National Senior Vice Commander, I so move. Did you hear me? (Laughter)

COMMANDER TANNER: Kathy Wiley.

MS. MIRIAM A. DALEY: Miriam Daley, Unit 27, Massachusetts, I second the motion.

COMMANDER TANNER: Miriam Daley, Unit 27, Massachusetts, seconds. All those in favor; opposed. The motion carried. Okay.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER WILEY: Good morning, everyone.

(Response of "Good morning.")

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER WILEY: I hope you all can hear me. If you can't, I'll just yell a little louder. It is my great privilege this morning to introduce someone who has served as our Commander this last year.

And it has been an honor and a privilege to have served with her. I'm not going to say "under" her because you guys have, you know. (Laughter)

She has been a terrific leader and a great role model for all of us. She is here this morning to give her report. I would like to introduce, Donna Tanner. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER TANNER: Thank you, thank you, thank you. Now, you know, this is going to be hard to scream. You guys got this in your packet, okay? You can't hear me, is that what you're saying? Hold on one minute, please.

All right, we're going to wait a minute because we sent for someone to come and try to clear the audio system. Okay? I want you to hear but you can read everything that I—not everything I did.

I've got some embellishments that I didn't put in there, but hang on for a minute, okay? Lee has a question? There was a packet that had all the officers' reports and the chairmen's reports. Okay.

Testing, 1-2. Testing. Any better? Somebody go to those other mics. This is it. Okay, can someone try the other microphones just so that we can be sure?

(Whereupon, the microphones were tested.)

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, someone grab the one in the middle. Annie—oh, okay.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: Donna—oh, this one is working.

COMMANDER TANNER: Oh, thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: This one is working now, too.

COMMANDER TANNER: Someone test the middle.

(Whereupon, the middle microphone was tested.)

COMMANDER TANNER: Thank you. Thanks, Jack. (Applause) We have some unsung heroes here. Okay, I'm going to read this anyway because then you can get the feel for it.

This has been an extraordinary year and most wonderful journey. The first thing that happened after the installation last year that totally amazed me—and this is the truth—was my mom.

My whole family was up here crying their eyes out and I said, "Would somebody from the family like to speak?" And everyone—and my mother stepped right up to that microphone and, honestly, that was not something that she would ever, ever, ever do but she did and I was so proud of her. It was great.

I arrived home last, after last year's Convention to find my whole porch decorated with red, white, and blue pinwheels, garland, huge "Congratulations" signs and my front door was decorated in big stars that said, "Grand Poopah." (Laughter)

It was fun. Of course my husband goes outside and my neighbors go, "What's the 'congratulations' for" and Jim yells, "Hey, Donna, bring the baby out." (Laughter) I'm like, not funny.

Well, I went to Florida for a little R-and-R so I could gear up for everything that was coming. And I was home for one day and I headed off to Pennsylvania for the Caring and Sharing Program. And it's a great, great VA program.

All the VAVS reps got together about 25 years ago and they put this program on. And they bring patients from all over Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, for four days in a row and they bring them onto a boat and they take them out for a ride up and down the river and feed them.

And when you get there it looks like mass chaos and then in about two minutes they have probably 300 wheelchair patients and everybody else that can walk on a boat and we're off. It was amazing to me. They have it down to a science.

But it was a fun day to be out there, too, because that was the day, the first day—I'm a big football fan—of the NFL was opening and Pittsburgh had been the champions the year before so there was all kinds of happenings and all kinds of like celebrities around and in the hotel so that was kind of a fun place to be. Anyway, next.

We have an Annual Golf Tournament for the, in Massachusetts. And, once again, I was working at it and they gave me no mercy. They made me work harder. It was not, you know, you're here as the Commander, you're here as the volunteer. That's the way it goes.

The Department of Massachusetts' Auxiliary was my first visitation, in my own state. And they brought me out to Western Massachusetts where I had gone to college and I hadn't been back there for like 30 years.

I should have said a shorter number than that, huh? (Laughter) It's a beautiful part of our Commonwealth. And it was wonderful to see so many of my old friends that live out there that don't always get to the Boston area.

We had a beautiful cruise, delicious food, an opportunity to address the DAV Auxiliary members. And we had a grand opening of a new VA outpatient clinic in Greenfield, Massachusetts. The Deputy VA Secretary, Gordon Mansfield, was there. And he's originally from Massachusetts.

After all my dear friends from Massachusetts did for me, the Auxiliary gave me the world. They gave me a glass replica of the universe, I guess is what it is. It's beautiful. It's absolutely gorgeous.

Then I went to, later in the year I went to a spring visitation in the beautiful Salt Lake City and that place was amazing to me. They took me to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir for a taping.

They tape that show. I forgot what it's called, something in the word. And thank God, I'm not kidding you, that they have a rehearsal because when they started to sing I burst into tears.

I was so overwhelmed because it was so beautiful. But it was wonderful. And then they introduced me, too, which was kind of cool, to all those people. It was wonderful.

The Fall Conference, we had a lot of you there for the first time. I hope you come back and bring your friends. That was so much fun. I had really a good time.

I tried to visit and meet as many hospitalized veterans this year as I possibly could. I was able to visit Bethesda Naval Medical Center and the Malone House at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Our young men and women in service to our country are truly amazing and courageous.

The Winter Sports Clinic is providing, is a proving ground for those able to attend. The strength and perseverance, the triumph over fears, and to prove that a disability only gives you the ability to learn in a new way was truly inspiring.

These young men and women that I met there just came home. They have severe trauma to their brain. They have—they're learning all over again how to do. And they were so proud of themselves when we could give them an award. It was amazing to me.

I visited polytrauma centers in Tampa and Minneapolis and I visited a young man from Massachusetts recovering from wounds he received serving in Iraq who is now at our local rehab center.

I visited the VA medical centers in Salt Lake City and was asked to be a panelist on Vision 1 VAVS Training program. It seems to me whether I was on official duty or just being Donna somehow I was always around where some veterans' thing was going on.

Literally in South Dakota—and this is the truth—I went to see the Crazy Horse Memorial and they're putting Crazy Horse's face into the stone wall. And they have a little bus ride that takes you down to get a closer view.

Well, I get on the bus and the bus driver says, "Ma'am, this is your lucky day. Today you are going to ride to the Memorial with all these men from the Park Springs VA Medical Center." And I just looked at him and I said, "Are you kidding me?" (Laughter)

And then later that day this guy kept coming over to me and saying, "I know you." I said, "No, you don't. Where are you from? I'm from South Dakota." "I'm from Massachusetts. There is no way you know me."

"Yes, I know you," he kept saying. "I know you." I said, "Are you from the VA?" He goes, "National Commander DAV Auxiliary." (Laughter) I'm like, oh, my God, run for my life. No. (Laughter)

I actually was having breakfast someplace in Saint Augustine, Florida and this guy—I had an Auxiliary shirt on. Good advertisement but I have to say this man wanted to know why we kept sending him so many labels. (Laughter)

Veterans' Day in Birmingham, Alabama is very impressive. There were so many wonderful ceremonies as well as a parade recognizing the sacrifice and bravery of America's veterans.

They take you for a ride in the car. I just need to throw this in because I thought this was hysterical. And it says "DAVA National Commander" on the side of the car.

And we've got the window open and we're waiving and we're waiving and all of a sudden you go around a corner and you hear people, "Oh, here comes the diva." (Laughter) I was like, "You've got that right." (Laughter)

I was invited to address a group of people at breakfast honoring Pearl Harbor survivors and the same day to address one of my dear friends' testimonial dinner honoring a D-Day veteran and his service to the DAV.

It was an honor and a privilege to attend these functions and recognizing America's heroes. During our Congressional visit I was invited to sit at the presentation table alongside the National Commander and staff when he addressed the Joint Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

I was very proud to represent the DAV Auxiliary at the CNA meeting as well as at the hearing. Commander Barton and Donna have been very good friends and I truly appreciate all that they have done for me this year.

Because of their generosity I was able to attend the Memorial Day Ceremonies in Washington, D.C. I was invited to the White House for breakfast—very impressive—and the opportunity to meet President Bush.

We were invited to the Memorial Day Concert at Capitol Hill followed by a reception at the Capitol Building. We had a wonderful dinner with a bunch of people from the Golden Corral.

And I met an interesting bunch of guys while I was out there that served together in Vietnam. And they had made a documentary on their service.

They had a CBS Correspondent who traveled with them and he got them all back together and they were so happy to see each other again after all these years.

The documentary is called "Shaky's Hill" and it was very, very interesting. And this was at the First Annual GI Film Festival. And they invited us to join them because they saw us wearing a DAV hat and a DAV Auxiliary shirt in the hotel.

So it was really, really nice. And at the end their film won the award for Best Documentary at the Film Festival.

We attended ceremonies at the Vietnam Wall where I carried the wreath at the request of the National Commander to be presented by him.

Commander Brad's testimonial was a fitting tribute to a kind and generous man still committed to serving his country and his fellow veterans.

And I want to say when I was in Washington, contrary to popular belief, I did not throw Maria down the escalator. (Laughter) But I wouldn't let her get behind me when we were going. (Laughter)

When she had fallen and they brought her back upstairs I heard that she fell and I went over to see her and they had her stretched out on this couch and she's in severe pain.

And this woman, I said, "Maria, I'm going to the hospital with you." Her finger comes up and she goes, "You have a duty to do." (Laughter) I wasn't going to argue with that. (Laughter)

I was very honored and proud at my testimonial. I wasn't too humble, though, I have to say that. (Laughter) But it was fun. It was a most memorable occasion.

We had a great visit to the J.F.K. Library followed by a tour of Boston with me as the tour guide. The city's history will never, ever be the same, believe me. (Laughter)

I think Judy Hezlep, that was her first time coming up there and we took her with us and I don't think she will ever forget that I told Donna Adams when she, I was giving the tour of the city and I said, "In the cemetery on the right is buried John Hancock and some of our founding fathers" and I'm giving all the thing.

And Donna says, "Well, who is buried over there?" And I said, "You will be if you don't stop asking questions." (Laughter) We had fun. Of course, when you threaten everybody—I had fun, anyway. (Laughter)

The red carpet was literally, literally laid out for me on my visit to North Carolina for their Fall Conference. And I was treated like a queen on my visit to Mid-Winter Conferences in Florida, Mississippi and the Ninth District NEC in Myrtle Beach where my parents also joined me. And they were treated like royalty as well.

My mom has never, to this day, gotten over the fact that she was asked to sit at the head table. She felt like the queen. She was really happy about that. And I just want to say thank you for all you do. It was great.

I attended Conventions in Minnesota, South Dakota, Colorado, New Hampshire, Wisconsin—and I have a cheese head to prove it—Illinois, Delaware and Pennsylvania.

And everywhere I went I was warmly welcomed and had a great time. You all work so hard for our, for the betterment of our organization and I thank you for that.

The State Commanders' and Adjutants' Association invited me to join them and address the at the Annual Orientation at National Headquarters. It was a great opportunity for me to meet and address the upcoming leaders and let them know that we are a valuable asset to the DAV.

I also got to visit our Auxiliary National Headquarters and say thanks for all the hard work that they do. You might hear about that later. (Laughter)

I was busy this year but I did get to squeeze in some time for my friends and family and I was able to attend a few installations and functions with my friends in Massachusetts, including a wonderful, wonderful testimonial dinner for our Auxiliary State Commander.

I attended the National Finance Committee meeting and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and I worked on the Education and Loan Committee.

And I want to tell you that last year when we were at the Fall Conference and I read you that cell phone thing, Maria charged me a buck because I walked into that Constitution and Bylaws meeting and my phone rang and she made me pay. (Laughter) So, fair warning, shut your phones off.

I took on two special projects this year and I had so much fun doing this and I hope some of you will adopt these. My flat juniors—everybody's saying, "I read your report. What's a flat junior?"

These are my flat juniors. The junior group in Michigan made a little boy and a little girl and they sent them to me and they asked me to take them on my travels.

And I would take them with me—they're tired. They're not going to stand up (Laughter)—and have their picture taken wherever I went.

I tried to have a picture taken with every Commander that we saw. And then I would e-mail them the pictures and a little story about what we did and how it went. And it was a lot of fun.

The other thing was my sister works in an elementary school and she asked me if I would adopt a fourth grade class and send them postcards from everyplace I traveled.

I had so much fun with that. I had more fun than the kids. (Laughter) I sent them postcards everyplace I went. We had gone to Alabama for the Veterans' Day.

We took a ride up to Huntsville, Alabama, and they have—whether people know it or not there is a NASA site there. And you can go in and it's very interesting. But they had a simulated space shuttle.

Well, man, I could fly that thing but I could not land it. I crashed that space shuttle twice. (Laughter) And I sent that in a postcard to the kids.

When I got there they said, "Did you really crash the space shuttle?" (Laughter) I said, "Did you hear it on the news?" (Laughter) No. But it was fun.

And I them about—they were very curious about the Winter Sports Clinic because some of them, their grandfathers—there was two young cousins in that class and their grandfather is a double amputee from Vietnam, a Vietnam veteran that's a double amputee.

So they wanted to know how much it cost to get a sled because they like to go skiing and now grampy can come skiing with them. So it was fun.

Anyway, I want to say thank you. I have to say that I am remiss because I made this whole thing up and you know how you always forget the ones you love? I forgot to say thanks to Massachusetts.

They supported me all these years. They've been great friends. I never have to say anything but "can you help me" and they're there. So I want to say thank you.

He's in there. I'm getting to him. (Laughter) Jim isn't here, I don't think. Oh, all right, Massachusetts, stand up. (Applause)

(Whereupon the Massachusetts' delegation stood up.)

COMMANDER TANNER: You know, this job is easy because you have so many great people to, that you represent. So you make it easy. And they help and they help and they help and everyone helps, so it's great.

I want to say thanks to all the officers for the outstanding leadership that they provided, a special thanks to the staff at Auxiliary National Headquarters for the outstanding job they do every day and when National Adjutant Maria was recovering from her accident.

Thank you, Judy for your help, support, direction and advice. Judy had a lot of firsts this year. (Laughter) And they were with me, thank heavens. (Laughter)

Thanks to Maria for making this job easy and enjoyable. I'm going to share this story because I told her—I called her when she was recovering and she said, "I really feel bad that I haven't been able to be there for you." And I said, "Maria, you probably saved yourself a lot of arguments." (Laughter)

Thanks to Jim Hall for his guidance. I want to thank Art Wilson, Dave Gorman, Rick Patterson, all the DAV officers and staff for all the courtesies they extended me.

The National Service Officers, they're the best. They are the best. If I needed a ride, if I needed anything I just had to ask an NSO and I was taken care of.

Thanks to all of you, my friends, and my DAV family, for making this job so much fun. It's very rewarding and I especially want to say thanks to my husband, Jim, because he is so supportive.

Of course, last night, though, he wants me to get a picture with somebody and he kept pushing me and pushing me and pushing me. I was like, "stop pushing me." (Laughter)

I was able to see America the Beautiful and I'm not kidding you, from sea to shining sea over these five years and to meet America's heroes and their families.

And I thank you, thank you, thank you for that opportunity. You have forever touched and affected my life and your kindness and thoughtfulness is so greatly appreciated. Thank you. (Standing Ovation)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: As Past National Commander, I, Maria Tedrow, make a motion to accept the National Commander's report.

MS. DALEY: Miriam Daley, Unit 27, Massachusetts, I second.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER WILEY: Miriam Daley, Unit 27, Massachusetts, second. We have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? All in favor; opposed. The motion carried. Madame Commander, you have your podium back.

COMMANDER TANNER: Thank you. Now I've got to find my place. (Laughter) Finance Committee report and budget adoption. Ellen Drogos is the Chairman of the Finance Committee, and here she comes.

CHAIRMAN ELLEN DROGO: National Commander Donna, National Officers, Past National Commanders, delegates, family and friends, good morning, all.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CHAIRMAN DROGO: The National Finance Committee meeting was held on April 21st, 2007, at 9:30 a.m. at the Drawbridge Inn in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky.

The voting members of the Committee present were: Donna Tanner, National Commander; Geneva Walker, District Number 13 NEC; Sandra Schulman, District 4, NEC; and Teresa Herrle, District 20, NEC.

Those present without a vote were: Kathy Wiley, National Senior Vice Commander; Judy Hezlep, Assistant National Adjutant; Sandy Smith, Comptroller.

Due to my hospitalization, I was not able to attend the meeting. National Adjutant Maria Tedrow was not able to attend. The purpose of the meeting was to set up and adopt a budget for the 2008 year.

At this time I would like to thank the Committee and the staff for all their help. The budget has been distributed and I would like to entertain a motion at this time for accept the budget.

MS. TERESA M. HERRLE: Madam Commander, Terry Herrle, Unit 61, Texas, I so move.

MS. SHERRY J. AARON: Sherry Aaron, Unit 1, Illinois, I second.

CHAIRMAN DROGO: A motion has been made and seconded.

COMMANDER TANNER: Are you taking over my job? (Laughter)

CHAIRMAN DROGO: You always get the last word. (Laughter)

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, sorry. Ellen is a dear friend. She's stabbing me right now. Terry Herrle has made a motion to accept the budget as adopted and Sharon Aaron from Illinois seconded it. Is there any discussion? All those in favor; opposed. The ayes have it. Thank you, Ellen.

CHAIRMAN DROGO: You're welcome.

COMMANDER TANNER: Now I would like to call Lucille McCarthy, Chairman of the Interim Constitution and Bylaws Committee for the first reading of the Constitution and Bylaws.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER LUCILLE McCARTHY: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER McCARTHY: The Constitution and Bylaws Committee met on Saturday, August 11th in Salon A of the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel.

And the following members served on the Committee—and if they will rise as their name is read: Lillian Halpin from District 1—wait a minute, this is wrong;

Diane Wisneski from District 2—I probably didn't pronounce that right; Ann Young, District 3; Linda Trulio, District 4; Loretta Nosko, District 5; Evelyn Dorsey, District 6;

Lucille McCarthy was District 7 and was elected chairman; District 8 was Juanita Upton; District 9, Jane Troutman; District 10 was Peggy Smith; District 11 was Jackie Hansen;

District 12 was Paula Raymond; District 13, Edith Jackson; District 14 was Faye Litzinger; District 15 was Rose Schilpp; District 15, Annie Stewart; District 17, Ramona Ganong;

District 18 was Paige—Pat Egel—it was written Paige Egel; District 19 was Micki Kraft; District 20 was Louise Rapisand; and District 21, Linda Stake; and Paula Raymond served as secretary.

And I thank you women very much. (Applause) They have proposed the following, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee has proposed the following proposed Bylaw amendments.

Number 1, Page N-36, Article XVIII, State Departments, Section 2, Paragraph 2, delete Paragraph 2 and substitute the following paragraph which shall read:

"An application for a State Department Charter must be accompanied by a \$50 National Charter fee and a \$10 per Unit signing the application. Such applications shall be approved by the State Executive Committee of the Disabled American Veterans."

Rationale, National Headquarters has not changed their charter fee for some time. This increase would help defray the costs of any expense that may occur prior to the charter being issued.

The next amendment was Page N-38, Article X, Local Units, Section 1, Paragraph 2, delete Paragraph 2 and substitute the following paragraph which shall read:

"All applications for a charter shall be made directly to National Headquarters. Applications shall be accompanied with a National Charter fee of \$25 and the entire amount of dues for each member."

The rationale is National Headquarters has not changed their charter fee for some time. This would help defray the costs of phone calls, returning applications, and other questions that must be resolved prior to a charter being issued.

The next amendment was Page N-39, Article X, Local Units, Section 2, Paragraph 3, delete Paragraph 3. And the rationale is the information in Paragraph 3 is no longer relevant.

The last amendment is Page N-40, Article X, Local Units, add new Section 8. New Section 8 shall read:

"National Auxiliary Headquarters shall charge a fee of \$10 to issue a duplicate charter."

The rationale is that this is a time, this is time-consuming and requires researching the records in order to issue a duplicate charter. That's it.

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay. We are now going to go into our awards program and the various categories. Monetary awards are given in each category to each program to the first place winning Unit.

Checks will be mailed from our National Headquarters after the Convention. Okay? So we will start with the Membership awards, Sandy Dobmeier.

FIRST JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER SANDRA DOBMEIER: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

FIRST JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER DOBMEIER: Serving as National Membership Chairman it is my privilege to now help recognize the people who have worked so hard on membership so we will get right into all of the membership categories, so the membership awards for 2006-2007.

And the first group of 10 to 50, there was a four-way tie, all of them having a 12 member increase: Will County, Number 103, Illinois, a 12 member increase; please come forward; we do have certificates for you.

If your Unit is not here, please have your State representative come up so we can not have to be here too terribly long. Also can start coming to the front, Cape May County, Number 44, New Jersey, 12 members, also. (Applause)

The next one, Edward G. Galion Memorial Number 212 from New York, also a 12 member increase. (Applause) And, Ash County Number 80, North Carolina, a 12 member increase. That is the first group, 10 to 50, all with 12 members. (Applause) Congratulations to all of you in Group Number 1 of 10 to 50.

Moving on to Group Number 2, 51 to 100, Decatur, Macon County, Number 17, Illinois, a 22-member increase. (Applause) Group Number 3, 101 to 200, Lufkin Number 84, Texas, 28-member increase. Please come forward. (Applause)

Okay, moving on to Group Number 4, 201 and over, Lieutenant Alfred Lucia Number 118, New York, 56-member increase. (Applause) Okay, moving on to Group Number 5, the new Unit with the most new members, Tri-County Number 233, Texas, 18 new members. (Applause)

We'll now move to Group 6, the Department with the largest percentage increase over quota, the State Department of Virginia, 1.34 percent over quota. (Applause)

Next, the Department with largest numerical increase over quota, the State Department of North Carolina with a 35-member increase. (Applause)

And, our top membership recruiter, give a big hand to Ruth Overcash, North Carolina, Number 27, signing up 21 new senior members. (Applause) That concludes. Thank you very much and thank you all for working hard on membership. We have a lot of work ahead of us but we can do it. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER TANNER: Unfortunately, we had a membership program this year that if anybody signed up 25 new senior members or more they would have been eligible to come to Convention. And close but no cigar I guess with 21. I'm sure she tried real hard, though.

Okay, the next program is Americanism, Susan Henry.

THIRD JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER HENRY: Madame Commander, Officers, PNCs, I really enjoyed being Americanism Chairman this year and I had a great Committee. And I would like to ask the chairman, LeeAnn Karg to come up.

The Americanism reports that were turned in this year were very good and I am amazed at the types of programs people are putting on and what they're coming up with. And some of them are listed in the National Americanism report so you can see what type of activities people are doing.

MS. LEEANN B. KARG: Good morning. Good morning, everybody.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MS. KARG: National Commander, National Adjutant, National Officers, Past National Commanders, delegates, guests of this 85th National Auxiliary Convention, the National Americanism Committee met in the Grand Salon C18 at 1:05 on August 11th. Our advisor was Susan Henry and our secretary was Diane Brinkley. Diane, would you please stand. Thank you.

The following Units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Americanism awards. In Group 1, 10 to 50 members, Unit 90, Massachusetts—Manchester, Tennessee, I'm sorry, Manchester, Tennessee. (Applause)

Group Number 2, 51 to 100 members, Jackson County Unit 8, Medford, Oregon. Oregon? Oregon. Oregon. (Applause) We're just going to keep this rolling. Group Number 3, 101 to 200 members, Frank Walker Senior and Junior 61, Mount Arey, North Carolina. Is that right? (Applause)

Group Number 4, 201 members or over, Alamo Unit Number 5, San Antonio, Texas. (Applause) Then we have special Americanism awards going in two groups.

Group 1 is 10 to 200 members, Knob Hill, Unit 26, Colorado Springs, Colorado. (Applause) And in Group Number 2, 201 members or over, Alamo Unit Number 5, San Antonio, Texas. (Applause)

Okay, I'm going to read off the members of our Committee and if they would all stand, and please hold your applause until they're all up: Jackie Burning, Unit or District 1; District 2, Matilda Brooks;

District 6, Diane Brinkley; District 7, Willie Hawkins; District 8, Sharon Johnson; District 9, Monica Stroud; District 10, Gloria Boozer; District 11, Cathy Carney;

District 12, Mary Scarsdale; I'm trying to read your writing, sorry; District 14, myself, LeeAnn Karg; District 15, Helen Mihal; District 17, Carol—oh, I'm massacring these names—Emeigh;

18, Helen Parcell; 19, Nita Lucht; 20, Sylvia Shurgot. Will you give these ladies a hand, please. (Applause) Did I forget one? Who did I forget? Pardon. Thirteen, Dolores Huff. I'm sorry. My apologies.

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, next is Community Service which would be Patti Rapisand. Community Service, Patti Rapisand. (Applause) Finally. We need excitement.

FOURTH JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER PATRICE RAPISAND: Commander Donna, National Officers, Past National Commanders, delegates and members, all right, everybody yawn right now.

You know what commercial where they carry on the yawn. Get it out of the way. Yawn. Big yawns, everybody. I don't see you doing it. There you go.

I'd like to introduce to you the Convention Committee Chairman, Angie McDowell. This was Angie's first Convention and she was selected as the chairman so—and she did an excellent job so I think she deserves a round of applause. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN ANGELA M. McDOWELL: I'm actually glad to be up here to move and warm my blood. (Laughter) Okay, National Commander, National Adjutant, National Officers, Past National Commanders, delegates and guests, the National Community Service Convention Committee met in the Grand Salon A3 at 1:00 o'clock on August 11th.

Our advisor was Patrice Rapisand. Sonia Figueroa was named, was appointed our secretary. The following Units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Community Service awards.

Group 1, 10 to 50 members, Albert W. Jardine, Idaho, Unit 22. (Applause) Group 2, 51 to 100 members, Millington, Tennessee, Unit 116. (Applause)

Group 3, 101 to 200 members, John T. Hensley, Florida, Unit 96. (Applause) Group 4, 201 members and over, Bay Pines Holiday Isle, Saint Petersburg, Florida, Unit 13. (Applause)

I do have a couple of recommendations, that after looking over all the reports. Community service, as we know, is a huge part of all our organization.

On the reports anything over \$1,000 is supposed to be itemized. What that means is that the sum of all your columns, should equal the total submitted either in the hours, miles or dollars spent, not just what you did. You need to itemize the actual hours, minutes, and dollars.

The Units also submit these to the state and it is up to the State Department to submit the complete forms. So if there is an attachment, make sure it is securely attached; otherwise, it's immediately disqualified and all those hours and dollars go completely unrecognized.

And then, lastly, each Unit needs to within its states needs to go over the Auxiliary manual to know actually what qualifies for these reports. A lot of stuff was on there that didn't belong on there.

People were putting Americanism items on Community Service. So you need to make sure that those are completed properly. Thank you. (Applause)

I need to recognize my Committee here and I hope I don't mess these names up, either. District 1, Barbara DeLuca; District 2, Sonia Figueroa; 3, Linda Folcarelli; 4, Mary Wischmann;

District 5, Sue Seyboldt; 6, Hazel Meyers; 7, Debbera McLaughlin; 8, Charlene Williams; Linda, or, I'm sorry, 9, Linda Kafka; 10, Josephine Hishok; 11, Judy Lenhart; 12, Rose Williams;

14, Jenny Forcier; 15, Velma Steinman; 16, Florine Hicks; 17, Wilma Langendorfer; 18, Iris Brzezinski; 19, Juanita Hackler-Wiley; and, 20, Belinda Hackney. Thank you, ladies. (Applause)

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, next is the Hospital Programs, Lynn Helms, the National Chairman. (Applause)

MS. LYNN C. HELMS: Commander Tanner, National honor—I mean National—National whatever (Laughter)—National Officers, guests, delegates, I just want to thank everybody for coming today and welcome you to the Convention.

I would like to thank Commander Tanner for having the hopeful and I'm proud to say we were going to do a good job with this and I hope we did. I just want to go over just a few things with you.

When the reports came in and it was really astonishing, even to me, to see the numbers. We had over 2,200 volunteers that reported in our reports that they've seen over 30,000 hospital patients and nursing home patients.

They spent over 142,000 hours performing volunteer services. They traveled over 688,000 miles and they donated over \$326,000. So I think they deserve a great hand. (Applause)

This is just in Hospital. So I'm real proud of those numbers that came in. Now I'm sure there is a lot more that didn't get on these reports. But at this time I would like to ask my chairman, Annette McClure if she will come forward. Annette, are you in the room?

MS. ANNETTE McCLURE: Yes.

MS. HELSM: She's behind me.

MS. McCLURE: Good morning. Thank you very much for this opportunity. It has been a great honor to serve in this capacity.

National Commander, National Adjutant, National Officers, Past National Commanders, delegates and guests of this 85th National Auxiliary Convention, the National Hospital Convention Committee met in the Grand Salon B7 at 1:00 o'clock on Saturday, August 11th.

Our advisor was Lynn Helms. And our secretary was Terry Skyler. May I ask Terry to please stand. I would also like to go ahead and ask the following individuals who served on our Committee to stand and remain standing.

District 1, Mary Bixby; District 2, Terry Skyler; District 4, Barbara Williams; District 6, Juanita Giles; District 7, Josephine Haynes; District 8, Janett Reece;

District 9, Betty Hewett; District 10, Lynn Trost; District 12, Bernice Vargas; District 13, Mildred Brown; District 15, Jackie Jarvis; District 16, Leona Galloway;

District 17, Jean Viator; and District 20, Jeanie Garriott. And I would like to thank each one of them for serving on this Committee and show their appreciation. (Applause)

The following Units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Hospital Awards: Group 1, 10 to 50 members, Van Buren Unit 61, Arizona; (Applause)

In Group 2, 51 to 100 members, Alma Unit 42, Arkansas; (Applause) Group 3, 101 to 200 members, Francis J. Beaten Unit 1, North Dakota; (Applause) and, Group 4, 201 members or over, Roll of Honor, Unit 120, New York. (Applause)

And we did have just a few recommendations. This pertains more on the state level. When reviewing the reports please don't make any marks on the report itself indicating any kind of grades. There were a few that did have that, but we ignored those notations.

Also, on Line 6 if the figure exceeds \$1,000 please make sure that that is itemized on the back of the report. For the most part that was used correctly but there were some groups that it would have been very helpful to have that complete information on the back.

And as far as the report itself, the form, there were no recommendations to change that. Thank you very much. (Applause)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: I don't have a gavel but I sure as heck have a cane. (Laughter)

MS. HELMS: And she's probably going to use it on me if I don't get out of here. (Laughter)

COMMANDER TANNER: Junior Activities, Debbie Barbuto. And we've got our Juniors. They came up from their nap so they're over here, our Flat Juniors.

You know, I couldn't find these one time and I was going to—I always kept them in my briefcase and then I don't know what happened, I must have cleaned out my briefcase.

And I was going to send the Juniors a note saying, "I'm sorry, you've been kidnapped" but I thought, oh, I might scare them a little bit so I'd better not do that. But I found them.

MS. DEBORAH L. BARBUTO: In second grade we call those Flat Stanleys but it was a great idea.

COMMANDER TANNER: It was a good idea. I think it was from Michigan. Lorraine, is she here? Where's Lorraine?

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: She's in the Nominating.

COMMANDER TANNER: Oh, all right, her Junior group made them.

MS. BARBUTO: So maybe they're like Flat Stanley and Flat Sammie or something like that. National Commander Donna, National Adjutant Maria, Officers, members, friends and guests, our Junior members have certainly been very busy this year.

The number of hours that they have committed to the DAV, DAV Auxiliary, schools, churches, and communities is phenomenal. I am pleased to report that our Juniors have not only met our expectations but have far exceeded any goals we may have charged them with.

Patriotism is alive and well in the youth of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary. When asked if patriotism is becoming a thing of the past one only needs to look at the acts of our children.

Reporting from 32 states and 287 Units within the reported states, 822 active Juniors, Junior members, have volunteered 35,227.5 hours of patriotic acts of kindness this past year. We are so proud of them. (Applause) They're awesome. I love kids.

I would like to invite Chairman Robi Riley up to join me, please. I do love them. They are awesome. You know, you hear that our youth aren't patriotic anymore but ours certainly are.

And it was difficult judging all of the beautiful, beautiful applications that we got in for the outstanding Junior members. They did an awesome, awesome job this year.

MS. ROBI RILEY: National Commander, National Adjutant, National Officers, Past State National Commanders, delegates, guests of this 85th National Auxiliary Convention, the Juniors Activity Convention Committee met in the Grand Salon B12 at 1:00 p.m. on August the 11th.

Our advisor was Deborah Barbuto and our secretary was Brenda Prentice. Will she stand. Is our secretary here? There she is. The following Units were judged to be the best in their category for National Junior Activities award.

Group 1, 1 through 25, G.P. Houston Memorial, Number 57, Arkansas. (Applause) Group 2, 26 to 50 members, Westcott Houghton, Number 56, Massachusetts. (Applause)

Group 3, 51 to 100, Pendleton King Number 10, Georgia. (Applause) Group 4, 101 and over, Clarence Tom Lindley, Number 24, North Dakota. (Applause)

Our Junior—we had two beautiful Junior Activity Books come in. And it was really, really hard for the Committee to choose one. But the winner of that is G.P. Houston Memorial Number 57, Arkansas. (Applause)

The National Junior Award, 15 through 17, Tiffany Dawn Robinson, Number 84, North Carolina. (Applause) Is she here? Or if someone could come up and get it for her.

National Junior Award, 11 through 14, Austin Stake, Number 57, Arkansas. (Applause) Our National Junior Award, 7 through 10 is Ronnie R. McLain, III, from Number 45, Ohio. (Applause)

Are any of the Juniors here that received these awards? Oh, we've got grandma here.

COMMANDER TANNER: You can come up if you want. Come up.

MS. RILEY: At this time I would like to introduce the, those who have served on the Juniors Committee. Number 1, Louise Barrett, District 1, Barrett; District 2, Helen Mazza;

District 3, Wanda Furbish; District 4, Sara Kashner; District 6, Francis Eaton; District 7, Judy Clamp; District 8, Faye Miller; District 9, Clarissa Brown;

District 10, Vada Kraai; District 11, Sally Keller; District 12, Ann Glende; District 13, Kathleen Miller; District 14, Robyn Kenney; District 15, Lettie Warchola; oh, I did good;

District 15, Bea Vieira; District 17, Pat Brunsvik; District 19, myself, Robi Riley; District 20, Angelyn Scott; and District 21, Brenda Prentiss. (Applause)

The Committee would like to submit the following recommendations. Make sure that the photos accompany the applications to National because it's really sad when you have an outstanding person but there is no photograph—and it is required.

Be sure to send the original application not a copy. The copies are really hard to read, especially if they are being copied from pencil.

That a certificate of appreciation should be sent to each applicant for the Outstanding Junior Award to recognize them because they're all winners in my book.

And have a separate committee for Outstanding Junior and History Book versus the Units because to take all that time to read, to give them what they deserve as far as reading the, their resumes and stuff, you know, it takes a while. So that's it.

MS. BARBUTO: Let's continue to support our kids in sending in these applications. With all of the work that came through on the reports we probably should have had more Outstanding Member applications. And with only 32 states reporting I know that all 50 states have kids working.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: You know, it's important, it is very important that we recognize Juniors. No one doubts that. But where we are actually failing, too, is on the State level.

You're not recognizing Juniors on the State level. There are some states that have a special banquet for their Junior Award winner. Or they can do many ways of recognition.

And if they see it on the state level it may encourage more reports to come in on the National level. So just remember, you know, we're not all going to be here the rest of our lives. (Laughter)

We've all got the same ending, one way or the other, so you need someone. You need to make a bridge to that next generation and it's through the Juniors that you're going to do it. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER TANNER: Congratulations to all the family members of the winners since the winners couldn't be here. That's kind of exciting, isn't it? The children aren't here. Maybe they can come next year and we could show them off. How is that?

Okay, next up, Kay Egan, Legislative Chairman.

SECOND JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER KAY EGAN: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

SECOND JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER EGAN: Want to stand up and stretch?

(Response of "Yes.")

COMMANDER TANNER: You're all freezing, right?

(Response of "Yes.")

SECOND JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER EGAN: Okay, while everybody is stretching would Lorna Kakesako come to the podium, please. Bend and stretch to the sky. Stand on tippy-toes. Okay, you've stretched. Okay, ladies, let's keep moving right along here. National Commander Donna, National Adjutant—

(Whereupon, Commander Tanner gave three raps of the gavel to settle the audience down.)

SECOND JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER EGAN: Thank you. National Commander Donna, Past National Commanders, National Adjutant, and all the rest of my friends, I'd like to introduce our chairman of the Legislation Committee, Lorna Kakesako. (Applause)

MS. LORNA KAKESAKO: National Commander, National Adjutant, National Officers, Past National Commanders, delegates and guests, the Legislative Committee met yesterday on the 11th at 1:00 p.m.

And the Committee members were as follows, if you would all stand, please: District 1, Nancy Mooney; she's not here; oh, hi, Nancy; I'm another short one, too;

District 2, Carrie Robinson; District 3, Aura Lee Nicodemus; 4, Elease Thomas; Number 5, Laurie Stoprya; I hope I pronounced that right; Number 6, Louise Bohliger;

Number 7, I was surprised, there was a gentleman in our group, Paul Vansandt; 8, Number 8, Pat Hicks; Number 9, District 9, Mary Jo Furr; District 11, Elaine Hishok; District 11, Sally Brandt; District 12, Clara Reynolds;

District 13, Tana Penland; 14, Marjorie Purkett; 15, Connie Bolton; 16, Babs Swisher; 17, Jean Addyman; 18, 19, Kay Morgan; District 20, Craig Johniken. (Applause) Thank you very much. Thank you.

The awards selected were as follows. Group 1, 10 to 50 members, John Blake Unit 15, Vermont. (Applause) Vermont, anyone representing Vermont? Okay, very good.

Group 2, 51 to 100 members, Jackson County Unit 8, Oregon. (Applause) A very hard working group. The response was terrific on that one.

Group 3, 100 to 200 members, Tri City Unit 46, Washington. (Applause) Group 4, 201 members or over, Roll of Honor Unit Number 20, New York. (Applause)

The recommendations from the Committee, it says try to be more specific. The more you are, the more the Committee can do because some of them were—

(Whereupon, Second Junior Vice Commander Kay Egan fell down.)

SECOND JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER EGAN: I'm fine. I'm fine. I do this all the time.

MS. KAKESAKO: Kay says she is fine. Try to be more specific when filling out your applications. Some were even written in pencil and they, it was very difficult to read them. And many were really incomplete. We thank you very much. (Applause)

SENIOR JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER EGAN: In case anybody is wondering, I'm fine. The floor is very slippery up here so anybody who comes up, again, be careful, particularly if you're wearing leather heels and leather souls.

You saw what I did. Yes, that too. We all turn into a bunch of fussy little old ladies in Oxfords. What are you wearing, Maria? That's sensible shoes.

I want to thank the Committee and there is one thing very interesting about doing legislation. It's all kind of cut-and-dried but it's, it's not a judgment call.

The facts and figures are there. But we could do more. I said this last year and I'm saying it again. You may not think that your communications with your Congressmen do anything.

Trust me, it does. We've gotten things defeated that we didn't want to go through. And we got things in that we wanted in so keep up the good work, ladies. Please, on behalf of our veterans and our soldiers, please. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, if you are called up or you win, come this way. That way we won't have to cut, worry about those panels that are slippery. Okay? Kathryn Wiley, Mae Holmes is next.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER WILEY: I'm still pretty excited. Washington 46 for Legislation. That's me. (Applause) That was exciting, Legislation. Well, Maria, you keep telling me to shut up, so. (Laughter) For the first time I shut up. You know, that's a miracle.

Now, Mae Holmes. You've all worked extraordinarily hard. Some of you sent your reports to me even though they were supposed to go to your NECs. I truly enjoy reading them.

I really, trust do enjoy reading them. I read every one of them. They're wonderful. It always tells me how much work you're doing out there. And it is an incredible number.

You've gone through most of the programs here. They've given you their numbers and they are incredible. You are to be congratulated for everything you do.

And just remember, every day you get up you're doing something important, it's a good day. Okay? So, now, the chairman for Mae Holmes here at the Convention is Doris Martelli, New Jersey.

Here she comes. Remember, go up the ramp, not the slippery way. Yes. Many of us fall easy here so be real careful here, especially if you're going over to Harrah's on those little cobblestones.

I've seen some people hurt really bad out there so be extra careful. Wear walking shoes. Who cares what you have on your feet as long as they're comfortable, okay?

Harrah's only cares about the green stuff you're carrying over there or the credit card you're going to use to get the green stuff while you're over there so just be extra careful going across the street. Doris.

MS. DORIS M. MARTELLI: National Commander, National Adjutant, National Officers, Past National Commanders, delegates and guests of the 85th National Auxiliary Convention, the National Mae Holmes Convention Committee met in the Grand Salon Room C13 at 1:00 p.m. on August 11th, of course, 2007.

Our advisor was Senior Vice Commander Kathy Wiley and Donna Reinhart was elected our secretary. The following Units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Mae Holmes Award.

Group 1, 10 to 50 Albert W. Jardine Unit 22, Idaho. (Applause) Group 2, 51 to 100, Anika, Unit Number 39, Minnesota. (Applause) Group 3, 101 to 200, Lufkin Unit 84, Texas. (Applause) Group 4, 201 members or over, Westcott Houghton, Unit Number 56, Massachusetts. (Applause)

The Committee members included District 1, Susan Stulsky, Massachusetts; 2, Anita Ingram, New York; Unit 4, Doris Martelli, me, New Jersey; Unit Number, District Number 6, Estelle Baker, Virginia;

Barbara Kurrasch, Florida; Unit Number 8, Winona Gamble, Louisiana; District Number 9, Linda Alexander, South Carolina; Unit Number 10, Hilda Cool, Michigan; Unit Number 11, Dorothy Clark, Ohio;

Unit Number 12, Betty Buck, Illinois; Unit Number—District Number 13, Donna Reinhart, Kentucky; District Number 14, Lois McCarron, Minnesota; I keep going to Unit, don't ask me why;

District Number 15, Phyllis Adamson, Missouri; District Number 16, Dori Bogan, California; District 17, Angela Lara, New Mexico; District 18, Renate Ogle, Nevada, sorry; District Number 19, Barbie Reding, Idaho; and District 20, Bergeron, Texas. (Applause)

I have some recommendations. Nobody stood up. I'm sorry. They did stand? I was looking down. I guess I wasn't looking up. The Committee submitted the following recommendations which are a little redundant because some of these suggestions were already made.

The states shouldn't write grades or any other marks on the forms. Only one report should be submitted from each state in each category. Remember to submit attachment if over \$1,000.

States shouldn't report if quota not met by due date. When reports are mailed to National make sure attachments are still attached.

A lot of the reports were missing—quite a few, I think, one in each group was missing attachments. And you could see they were there because of the staple marks. Thank you and thank you, Commander. (Applause)

COMMANDER TANNER: State History Book, Margaret Snelling. Are you here, Margaret? Okay, I see her. I was asking Maria if they had any sweaters for sale since you're all freezing to death.

I was going to try to boost up the sales but there are no sweaters. But they have three-quarter length sleeves so if you need longer sleeves you can do that.

And she said we're going to get someone to take care of the air conditioning, turn it down a little. Okay? Margaret, you're up, girl.

MRS. MARGRET M. SNELLING: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MRS. SNELLING: National Commander, National Adjutant, members, delegates, it has been a pleasure to be the History Chairman this year. I'd like to introduce to you our chairman, Diane Franz, if she would come forward, please.

And while she's on the way I'd just like to remind you, yesterday when we had the judging a lot of the people came in and said they came to the History Program because it was easy and quick. (Laughter)

But please tell your neighbors the next time it is not easy and you are there longer than the time allotted for you. So just be prepared to come. Thank you. (Applause)

MS. DIANE J. FRANZ: Thank you. National Commander, National Adjutant, National Officers, Past National Commanders, delegates and guests of this 85th National Auxiliary Convention, the National State Department History Book Convention Committee met in the Grand Salon C15, at 1:13 on August 11th, 2007.

Our advisor was Margaret Snelling and Peter Pauh was elected as secretary. I'd like to announce first our Committee members. District 1, Ellen Drogo; please stand when your name is called;

District 2, Peter Rauh; District 3, Francis Blancato; District 4, Lelia White; District 6, Elisabeth Horswell; District 7, myself, Diane Franz; District 8, Dorothy Robinson;

District 9, Nancy Spangler; District 10, Ruth Hindes; District 11, Carolyn Reed; District 12, Amy Tapp; District 13, Bonnie Martin; District 14, Rose Mary Miller;

District 16, June Adema; District 17, Barbara Langdon; District 19, Harold Wiley; and District, Joyce Humes. (Applause) Thank you.

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 Jill Wagner.

This is exciting. We'll give the recommendations that our Committee—W-a-g-n-e-r. W-a-g-n-e-r. No N? The Committee submitted the following recommendations.

Do not use Unit report forms in the book as your summary report in the different categories, in the different sections. And either type or print consistently throughout your history book.

Use the continuation of the fonts or printing that you've started with at the beginning of the book until the end. It just kind of flows a little bit better per page.

Thank you and we enjoyed looking at all the books that were submitted. And if you, the states that did submit books, they could pick them up in the Auxiliary Headquarters' Office before you leave. (Applause)

MRS. SNELLING: I'd just like to thank everybody who did submit books. I wish you would think a little more about doing a history book. It's really exciting to have all these things that have been done through your year as Commander.

I know now, I look back over my book occasionally and it reminds me of some of the things that happened during the year when I was Commander. And it is great to have mementos and pictures during your year. So think about it.

You know, you'd like to keep pictures. You go out and you take pictures when you traveling and then you go back and look at them at a later date. Do that for your Commander next year. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER TANNER: VAVS, Donna Adams. I just want to say I know everybody knew that that phone went off but it's very distracting, especially if you sit there and have a conversation. Put it on vibrate.

I know we all have them, you know, have family members that aren't well or whatever. And, please if it does go off, please step out of the room instead of having the conversation while you're there. Thanks.

MS. DONNA M. ADAMS: National Officers, Past National Commanders, delegates, guests, good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MS. ADAMS: We had a great Committee for VAVS and I'd like the chairman of the Committee, Ellen Keller, to come up, please. Ellen. Okay, Sharon Linton, Deputy VAVS Representative, are you here? Come on down.

And, Sharon Linton from Arizona, also, is the Deputy VAVS Representative. And she has just done a wonderful job this year in compiling and answering all of the annual reviews that have come in.

We thank you all the VAVS reps and deps, especially, for your very, very hard work and all of our wonderful VAVS volunteers. Thank you.

MS. ELLEN KELLER: National Commander, National Adjutant, National Officers, Past National Commanders, delegates and guests—I thought everybody could hear me. Okay, starting again.

National Commander, National Adjutant, National Officers, Past National Commanders, delegates and guests of this 85th National Auxiliary Convention, the National VAVS Convention Committee met in the Grand Salon A4 at 1:00 p.m. on 8/11/07.

Our advisor was Donna Adams. And our secretary was Mary Elizabeth Parker. The following Units were judged to be the best in their category for the National VAVS Awards.

Group 1, 10 to 50 members, Kathryn Early, Hawaii Unit 3, Honolulu, Hawaii. (Applause) She's on her way. Okay, Group 2, 51 to 100 members, Hoffman, Jackson County, Unit 8, Medford, Oregon. (Applause)

Group 3, 101 to 200 members, B. Hogan Oak Cliff, Unit 32, Dallas, Texas. (Applause)

Group 4, 201 members or over, National Headquarters' Award, okay, Unit 3, Burton, Michigan. (Applause)

The Committee submitted the following recommendations. Donations must be itemized. Okay, our Committee was made up by the following. Our Committee on the VAVS members were:

District 1, Kerry Walsh from, that's Unit Number 96, Massachusetts; District 2, Fran Ortiz—they're correcting me because I'm going to probably butcher some of these names, sorry—New York, 212;

District 3, Donna Folcarelli, okay, she's from Rhode Island; that's Unit Number 1; District 4, Sandra Schulman, New Jersey, Unit Number 26; okay, District 6, Betty Swift from Maryland; District 7, Jean—are these ladies all standing?

(Response of "Yes.")

MS. KELLER: Okay. Okay, District 7, Jean Sursely, Florida, Number 16; District 8, Cornelia Cobb, Alabama, Number 4; District 9, Shirley Mauldin, Georgia, Number 8;

Number 10, Brenda Ott, Michigan, Number 3; Number 11 is myself, Ellen Keller, Ohio, 45; District 12, Sherry Aaron from Illinois, Number 1; Number 13, Debbie Loetz, L-o-e-t-z, Indiana, Number 23;

Number 15, Veronica Bergquist, Kansas, Number 4; 16, Mary Parker, California, Number 19; 17 was Earnestine Bennett, Colorado, Number 11; Number 18, Sharon Linton, Arizona, Number 1;

19, Cathy Foster, Idaho, Number 13; District 20, Clarice Konieczny, Texas, Number 139. And it was a lot of fun, a lot of hard work working on that. Give everybody a big hand. (Applause)

MS. ADAMS: Thank you, Ellen. Commander Donna, this has been a wonderful adventure and I thank you for the appointment. And thank you all for all your hard work. Have a great Convention. (Applause)

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, at this time I'm going to ask National Adjutant Maria Tedrow to come and speak to us about the Service Support Fund.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: National Commander Donna commented on the staff during my absence and it's a great lesson because I believe in cross training and delegating duties.

And it sure showed up when I was sick because Judy did a fantastic job and so did the rest of my staff. (Applause) I want to talk a little bit to you about the—we were going to have Education and Loan but she's in you-know-where.

I do want to talk to you about Service Support, though. The Service Support program is a program of course that helps those that need financial assistance.

And we do not pay to the person that is requesting the funds, we pay to her debts. At the office the applications come in. I look them over. I verify what your bills are and that they are exactly as the person says they are.

I then call to make sure. And sometimes it's a utility bill that's going to be shut off immediately or the next day so I call and tell them that they will have a check within a couple of days to avoid the shutoff.

It is then sent back and checked and Judy looks at it and then our Comptroller, Sandy Smith, double checks to make sure I've got everything where it should be and the check is issued.

That's how we operate at National Headquarters. But why I am standing up here now is I got a letter from a recipient. Excuse me. And we said when the Service Support Program was formed that no one would know who received the money but everyone would know who gave.

This is from one who received the money and of course I will not mention her name. The letter was a tribute to all of you.

"I am a member and friend and I wish to thank the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary so much for coming to my aid in my great time of need.

"May God bless you with riches and may they be bestowed upon all of you that decided in my behalf to help me.

"There are not words that I can say that can tell you all what my heart feels.

"I would have responded to you back earlier but I have had so much pain and emergency medical problems so I am going to try to explain to you now.

"I am praying for this organization and for each of you that our Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary remains strong, thankful, and true. And whatever is given out from this organization will return in many blessings.

"The perfect gifts always come from God. Thank you, again, for helping and supporting me in your prayers and in your generous financial need at this time." Excuse me.

"Miss Maria Tedrow, I personally want to thank you so much for what you did for me.

"I will never forget you and may God bless you in every part of your life. This is from my heart. Keep up the good work and God bless."

And that was from one of our recipients. So your money is going to help people. (Applause) And we do have people with us that really respect it and appreciate it.

Also, I want to say at this time, if the Commander will give me a moment, I want to thank everybody who sent cards and prayers on my behalf so that I would get well.

Believe me, I appreciate it. I appreciate all you have done. And I am certainly glad to be here today. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, what we're going to do now is I'm going to say thank you to everybody, too, for all the great work that you did in all your programs.

We are going to recess for lunch. And when we come back this afternoon we'll have the Education Loan report and take any donations. We will have the second reading of the Constitution and Bylaws and take the vote.

And we will have a workshop by your National Officers. So, I have one announcement that I know of and I don't know, do you have other ones besides that one?

Okay—wait a minute, she's talking money. All right, I don't know what's going on but she said bring your money this afternoon, so. (Laughter)

Oh, the Nor'easter Luncheon, for any of those that have bought tickets to that, is today at 12:00 o'clock, when we recess, which is in a few minutes, in the Jefferson Room on the Third Floor. Okay?

We'll work on the air conditioning but go get your jackets. And we will reconvene at 1:30. Okay? So come back. We've got lots of fun stuff this afternoon.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 11:54 o'clock, a.m.)

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY

85th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel New Orleans, Louisiana

August 12, 2007

The Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary reconvened in the Grand Salon of the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana, on Sunday afternoon, August 12, 2007, and was called to order at 1:57 o'clock, p.m., by National Commander Donna M. Tanner.

COMMANDER TANNER: Can you hear me?

(Response of "No.")

COMMANDER TANNER: Stop talking. (Laughter) All right, well, I apologize for being late but I'm not used to wearing pantyhose anymore so we had a few moments of difficulty. (Laughter) But, I survived, and so did the pantyhose, which is the good news.

Anyway, welcome back. What we're going to do now, we're going to move, since you so nicely said we could have changes to our agenda, we're going to move the Education Loan report to Tuesday.

So that will be the first event for Tuesday. Hopefully we'll get through everything we need to do today and we won't have to come back for tomorrow's session and we'll come back on Tuesday and start with that.

But what we do need to do is wait for the people that are serving on the Nominating Committee to come back in for the Constitution and Bylaws second reading and the caucus and so they can vote.

And we need to wait for the Constitution and Bylaws Chairman to come back. So, having said that, we need to wait a minute. So you can talk again but then you—oh, she's here. Okay.

Well, then, at this time—okay, I'm going to call Lucille McCarthy to come up and she can come up and I see some of the people from the Nominating Committee here so I'm sure they're getting the word as it goes.

And we'll have Lucille come up and she can stall for a few minutes. Well, we need to wait for the—yes we could do that, caucus first. Okay, why don't we do this, we're going to caucus. Go to your District caucus.

Whoever was sitting on their Constitution and Bylaws Committee will explain the proposed changes. And as those people come in from the Nominating Committee welcome them and keep them up-to-speed.

And then we'll have Lucille. So we'll take five or ten minutes, anyway, to caucus, five minutes to caucus. Okay?

(Whereupon, District caucuses were held from 1:58 o'clock, p.m. to 2:14 o'clock p.m.)

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, Are you guys ready? Okay, all right, all right.

(Whereupon, Commander Tanner rapped the gavel to call the session to order.)

COMMANDER TANNER: I have a couple of announcements first. Margaret Snelling, someone has picked up her bag and it has her camera in it. Did you find it, Margaret?

MS. SNELLING: No.

COMMANDER TANNER: What type of bag is it? Is it your Convention bag? Her black Convention bag so can you check your bags.

Also, please, if you turned your cell phones on, like me, which I've got to turn mine off, turn them off or turn them on to vibrate. That may be fine. You can have fun, too, right? I just don't want to know where you put them.

And then someone asked me today and I'm so sorry, I can't remember who it was. Someone said their bags did not have a list of the officers' reports in it. Who was that? Oh, okay, I've got one here for you. Okay?

All right, we're going to call back to order. And we are going to start with the second reading of the Constitution and Bylaws. Lucille McCarthy, please approach. Maria, you have something to add before we start.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Before Past National Commander Lucille McCarthy comes up, this is an announcement and the Commanders agreed to it, every time a cell phone goes off it is one dollar.

It's going to be up to the Pages to check it. You're going to have to keep your eyes open and be alert. And right now I want to see blue books. Whoever does not have a blue book pays a dollar.

Okay, hold on. Yes, I know. I want everybody to be honest because I can't see everybody. Be honest. If you do not have your blue book, please stand. Please stand.

(Whereupon, those without blue books stood.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Come and pick it up. There is another one. There is another one over here. Come on, Pages, you've got some money to collect.

(Whereupon, the Pages went around the room collecting one dollar from each member standing.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: You know, the thing is while they're collecting the money, everybody got one in their packets so there is no excuse for not having it here.

I was in a state once and they said that they felt the fine was unfair because they never carry the blue book. And I said, well, then, why did you buy it? Well, because somebody told me that I had to have one but I never take it anyplace.

So, when you have a blue book, use it. And in your states do it. You know, when you're at your State Convention make the announcement, all right, I want to see the blue books. Where are they?

And then if you collect some money that morning say the next day you do it again because they'll think you're not going to do it again. And we collected \$75 in one small state just doing that. So, everybody pay for their lack of their blue book?

COMMANDER TANNER: Terry Herrle, stay right there. Clarice, you owe her a buck for trying to cheat. (Laughter)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Ladies and gentlemen, members of the Auxiliary, in this short span of time we have collected \$53. (Applause) Here comes \$54. And I collected \$3 for cell phones from this morning.

So that means that 53 people in this room had something in their packet that they really needed to bring to the meetings. But, like I said, do it in your Units or your State Conventions. You'd be amazed at how many times you'll catch them. Thank you for your patience.

COMMANDER TANNER: Mary felt guilty so she sent \$4 so there you go. Okay. All right, let's go. We're going to roll here. Do you need a Page over there? We have more money. Don't worry. Wanda is running over.

Here we go. We're going to have Past National Commander Lucille McCarthy come to the podium.

(Response of "We can't hear you.")

COMMANDER TANNER: Stop talking. (Laughter) I've got a gavel but I wasn't going to tell you where it was. Okay, here is Lucille and we're going to do the second reading of the Constitution and Bylaws.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER McCARTHY: Okay, Madame Commander, Officers and delegates, first place I would like to apologize because I failed to recognize Carol Gray. She was the advisor to our Committee. So I do thank you, Carol, for being a good advisor. We appreciate that.

So this is the second reading of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee recommended and each one of these amendments will need to be adopted.

Page N-36, Article IX, State Departments, Section 2, Paragraph 2, delete Paragraph 2 and substitute the following paragraph which shall read:

"An application for a State Charter must be accompanied by a \$50 National Charter fee and \$10 per Unit signing the

application. Such applications shall be approved by the State Executive Committee of the Disabled American Veterans."

Madame Commander, I move that this amendment be adopted.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER PAULA K. RAYMOND: Past National Commander Paula Raymond, Illinois, I second it.

COMMANDER TANNER: The motion was made by Past National Commander Lucille McCarthy, seconded by Past National Commander Paula Raymond. All those in favor—oh, sorry. Discussion. Excuse me. Is there any discussion? Okay, all those in favor; opposed. The motion carried.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER McCARTHY: Page N-38, Article X, Local Units, Section 1, Paragraph 2, delete Paragraph 2 and substitute the following paragraph which shall read:

"All applications for a charter shall be made directly to National Headquarters. Applications shall be accompanied with a National Charter fee of \$25 and the entire amount of dues for each member."

Madame Commander, I move that this amendment be adopted.

COMMANDER TANNER: I have a motion. Can I have a second?

MS. KATHERINE A. SNIDER: Katherine Snider, Unit 6, Colorado, seconds—7.

COMMANDER TANNER: Where is she?

MS. SNIDER: Katherine Snider, Unit 7, Colorado.

COMMANDER TANNER: I totally forgot your first name. Carol, right?

MS. SNIDER: Katherine.

COMMANDER TANNER: So sorry. Okay, motion by Lucille McCarthy, Past National Commander, second by Katherine Snider, Unit—

(Response of "Seven.")

COMMANDER TANNER: — 7 of Colorado. Excuse me. Is there any discussion? All those in favor; opposed. The motion carried.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER McCARTHY: Page N-39, Article X, Local Units, Section 2, Paragraph 3, delete Paragraph 3. Madame Commander, I move that this amendment be adopted.

MS. SHERRY J. AARON: Sherry Aaron.

MS. LILLIAN R. HALPIN: Lillian Halpin, District 1, Worcester Chapter 4, State Department, I move that this be approved.

COMMANDER TANNER: You second it.

MS. HALPIN: I second.

COMMANDER TANNER: You're seconding the motion. Past National Commander Lucille McCarthy made the motion. Lillian Halpin, State Commander, Massachusetts, seconded the motion. Is there any discussion? All those in favor; opposed. The motion carries.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER McCARTHY: N-40, the last one is Page N-40, Article X, Local Units, add new Section 8. Section 8 shall read:

"National Auxiliary Headquarters shall charge a fee of \$10 to issue a duplicate charter."

Madame Commander, I move that this amendment be adopted.

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, Amy.

MS. TAPP: I'm Amelia Tapp. Sorry, Amelia Tapp, Illinois Commander, I second the motion.

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, the motion has been made by Past National Commander Lucille McCarthy, seconded by Amelia Tapp, Department Commander of Illinois.

MS. TAPP: Unit 53 of Illinois as well.

COMMANDER TANNER: Well, but you're registered as your Department Commander, right? Okay. All those in favor—oh, sorry, sorry, sorry. Any discussion? No discussion. All those in favor; opposed. The motion carries.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER McCARTHY: I want to thank, again, all the Committee who served on this Constitution and Bylaws Committee. It was a very easy Committee this year. And I do appreciate, though, their input. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, we decided or I started deciding and then we all worked together as a team, our officers, that we were going to have a workshop at this Convention.

And because I feel that we're kind of stagnant and our numbers seem to be dwindling so we thought we could maybe generate some information from you that could help us to better our organization.

Oh, yes, before we go any further, as the Nominating Committee is running out of the room, you are dismissed to complete your business.

(Whereupon, the Nominating Committee withdrew from the room.)

COMMANDER TANNER: Since we don't want you to fall asleep, they're coming in to turn the air up just a tad.

(Response of "No.")

COMMANDER TANNER: You're still freezing?

(Response of "Yes.")

COMMANDER TANNER: Oh, they're going to turn the air down. Sorry. Well, I think because I'm hot everybody else is.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed and the Workshop convened at 2:29 o'clock, p.m. on Sunday, August 12, 2007.)

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY

85th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel New Orleans, Louisiana

August 14, 2007

The Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary reconvened in the Grand Salon of the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana, on Tuesday morning, August 14, 2007, and was called to order at 9:15 o'clock, a.m., by National Commander Donna M. Tanner.

COMMANDER TANNER: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

COMMANDER TANNER: Well, welcome back to our final business session. I'm going to call upon Judy Uetterling for our opening prayer and then Susan Henry for the Pledge of Allegiance.

CHAPLAIN UETTERLING: Let's hold hands. Heavenly, Father, help us to follow your path to best serve You. Reveal to us any area of our lives that we should be giving to someone right now.

Open our eyes to see the need. Give us a generous heart to give to others. Help us with the blessings You have given us by sharing what we have with others.

Fill us with Your love for all people. Use us to touch each other with the hope that lives in us. God bless our troops. Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

THIRD JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER HENRY: Free your hands. Stand at attention. Place your right hand over your heart and join me in the Pledge.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Third Junior Vice Commander Susan Henry.)

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, you can be seated. Now, we all make mistakes and I made a big one the other day and I'm very sorry about that.

I wanted to know, how many people are here for the first time? So if you're at a Convention, a National Convention for the very first time, please stand up.

(Whereupon, first-time National Convention attendees stood.)

COMMANDER TANNER: Yes. (Applause) Thank you. Now, did you have fun?

(Response of "Yes.")

COMMANDER TANNER: Well, come back and bring someone else with you the next time. Okay, the National—no. Linda Acosta. She'll be right back. All right, we're going to pass on that. We can make an announcement.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: There was an error made in the awards the other day. An award was given to 61, Arizona. Arizona doesn't have a Unit 61. (Laughter) Would Arkansas please come forward? It's Arkansas 61. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative from Arkansas came forward to accept the award.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: And this was a National Hospital Award. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN ACOSTA: I'm back.

COMMANDER TANNER: Well, come here. (Laughter)

(Whereupon, Chairman Linda Acosta came to the dais.)

COMMANDER TANNER: I think we need to give a big round of applause to Linda and all the people from Louisiana for this great Convention. (Applause)

CHAIRMAN ACOSTA: Thank you. Thank you. Good morning, everybody.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CHAIRMAN ACOSTA: Well, this is the end. Thank God. (Laughter) My nerves are about shot but I loved it. I enjoyed doing it. I thank my state for appointing me and I felt I did the best I could.

Now I'm going to cry. Forgive me. I have to thank you all very, very much. We collected \$1,450 yesterday for the bell ringers. (Applause)

And they practice every Tuesday and Thursday. I'm going to home tonight and I'll get them Thursday at their practice and present it to them. And I know they're going to be overwhelmed. They appreciated your attention yesterday.

I talked to one of the directors yesterday afternoon, evening, rather, by the time they got home. And she said, was so pleased at your reception of them.

And they are special and they work very hard. And I thank you all and continue to enjoy the rest of the day and the evening. Thank you all again. (Applause)

Plus the DAV gave a donation. The DAV Auxiliary gave us \$500, also, for the bell ringers. (Applause) Thank you all very, very much.

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, that was good. Judy Steinhause, Education Loan. We couldn't get to that because she was tied up with the Nominating Committee so she's going to do that now.

And after she does her report we will take any donations that you would like to give or that you have brought with you. Thank you.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER JUDY M. STEINHOUSE: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

(Response of "Good morning.")

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: National Commander Donna, National Adjutant Maria, National Assistant Adjutant Judy, Line Officers, Past National Commanders, DAV Auxiliary members and guests, in your packets that you got, you got my report on the Education Loan Fund so I'm not going to read that and bore you, put you all to sleep, because we have business to do.

But I just wanted to make note of the fact that the total number of grants, new grants received this year or applications was only nine. We know that there is lots more kids out there that are going to school, grandkids going to school.

We're here to help. We have money to give out as educational loans. They are interest-free loans up to \$2,500 a year if they are granted. They are renewable in the next year by application again.

You do have to maintain what works out to be about a C average, a 2.0 grade point average, a full-time student and a full-paid life member.

And this means all of you out there who are full-paid life members. So you don't have to be 18 years old and just graduated from high school to get an Ed Loan.

If you're going back to school full-time and you're 88 years old—someplace in the United States a lady just graduated with a master's degree at 95. You can all go back to school—put in an application for the loan.

They are renewable, as I said. They are paid back after you complete school or after you leave school, whichever comes first, if you, heaven forbid, drop out.

And then they are repaid on a monthly basis over the next seven years. They are interest-free so we're not going to charge you any interest on them. The applications can be received from National, so, please, put in a loan application.

We also had 22 renewal loans that we gave out this year. So, those who have gotten them before have appreciated them and because they are continuing their education have come back for renewals.

They, that thought just left my mind completely. (Laughter) Thank you. Is there any questions about the Ed Loan fund? Marian. Mic, please, Marian.

MS. MARIAN TRUSCELLO: Is it working?

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Yes.

MS. TRUSCELLO: Let's play peek-a-boo. My question, perhaps the lower number of applicants is because they can't afford a full membership to join to apply for it. It may be too expensive for them to be a life member. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: That is a possibility. That has been thought of. Yes, ma'am.

MS. BARBARA J. WILLIAMS: Barbara Williams, New Jersey. It's not the life membership that is expensive. It's being able to go part-time to college. I work and I wouldn't mind having a little bit of money to go back to college and finish my education.

A lot of people can only afford to go part-time to college. And if the loan was extended to part-time students, maybe you would get a lot more applicants. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: I'm writing these down. I'm writing these down. We will, we do appreciate the recommendations. And the National Education Loan Fund does meet, if not upfront and personal, via phone calls or e-mails.

The necessity to have a face-to-face meeting can take place and does take place. And any recommendations that are forwarded to us or brought to us or just as we have right now are sent to National and will be considered by the Committee.

The chairman next year will be your lovely National Commander right here. But we will take these all into consideration. Judy Hezlep would like to say something. We appreciate that.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT JUDY HEZLEP: I would just like to make a comment on the life membership. For years it went to the mother or grandmother's life membership in the Auxiliary.

But then when we accepted the male gender into the Auxiliary the Committee felt that they're entitled to be a life member, they're eligible so that they should be a life member.

I have several students now that joined or got their loan through a mother, a grandmother, who is now deceased and I cannot locate the students and we're not getting repayment on any of these loans.

I have one in particular that she got, at the time it was \$4,000, \$1,000 for the four years. Once she got out of school she disappeared. Her parents were elderly and we have not gotten one cent back on that loan.

And I guess because I work with it, it's kind of a, it's very close, near and dear to me, whatever. But I don't think there is any place in this country that you can go and get any kind of a loan grant or scholarship, I guess a scholarship, that doesn't have to be repaid, that's interest-free.

And I think it's a very good program. I think it's a very generous program. And it really is "a bug in my craw" when we cannot locate the students to repay these loans.

The only way this program can succeed is for the repayment of the loans. You're very generous in your donations but we have to get these loans repaid. And we have been looking into ways to try and go back to, with the Social Security Number to try and locate some of these students.

And, as I said, the Committee several years ago felt that if they're entitled to be a life membership, they're getting interest-free money, and at least they could support the organization and maybe when they're out of school we do have a way to trace them back and locate them. Thank you. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Thank you, Judy. No more questions? Okay, we will open the floor for any contributions that you might have brought with you.

Just please come up this way and state your name and where you are from for us. Please be very careful up here. It is slippery.

If you have shoes that are slick on the bottom, I, the very first morning I almost took a header or a, the other end (Laughter) a sitter. I almost took a sitter. (Laughter) Thank you. Come on up.

MS. BONNIE RUTH MARTIN: Bonnie Martin from the Department of Kentucky. We have \$25 for the National Education Fund and also \$25 for the Service Fund. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Thank you very much.

MS. MATILDA J. BROOKS: Matilda Brooks from New York, \$342 for the Education Loan and \$442 for the Service Fund. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Thank you.

MS. JUDITH A. CLAMP: Judy Clamp, Commander for the State of Florida, we have \$1,000 from the State of Florida for the Service Support. (Applause)

MS. BRENDA PRENTICE: Brenda Prentice, Arkansas, we have \$200 for the Service Support Fund and we have \$50 for the Education Loan. (Applause)

MS. CATHRYN A. FOSTER: Good morning. I'm Cathy Foster, State of Idaho. We have \$100 for the National Education Loan Fund and also \$100 for the National Service Support Fund. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Thank you.

MS. LINDA L. GERKE: I'm Linda Gerke, Unit Number 2, Kansas City, Missouri. I have \$150 for the Education Loan Fund. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Will the lady from Arkansas who gave me the checks, would you please come back up here, please. Thank you.

MS. ELLEN DROGO: Ellen Drogos, Department of, State of Massachusetts. On behalf of Margaret Korinska, the Past Department Commander, in memory of her husband, John, I have a check for the Service Fund in memory of her daughter, Barbara Ann Depasley I have a check for the Freedom Foundation, and in memory of Florence Daley, Past National Commander, a check for National Education. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: We have some Department checks up here that have only one signature on it. How many do we need?

(Response of "Two.")

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Two. New York and Kentucky.

MS. SUZANNE M. SEYBOLDT: Sue Seyboldt, Commander of Pennsylvania, we have a check here in Kathy Watkins' name for the National Service Fund. We also have a check for the National Freedom Foundation and also the National Education. (Applause)

MS. AURA LEE NICODEMUS: Aura Lee Nicodemus, Department of Vermont. We have \$100 for the Service support Fund and \$100 for the Education Loan Fund. Thank you. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Good morning.

MS. GAIL BOCAGE: Gail Bocage, Department of Nevada, a check for the Educational Fund. (Applause)

MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning. Barbara Williams, Department of New Jersey, I have \$100 for the Education Fund, \$100 for the National Service Fund, and \$100 for the National Freedom Fund. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Thank you. Good morning.

MS. FAYE A. LITZINGER: Faye Litzinger, Department of North Dakota, I have checks for the National Education Fund, the National Service Support Fund, a donation to the Freedom Foundation, and a donation to the Winter Sports Clinic. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Thank you. Good morning.

MS. MARJORIE A. PURKETT: Good morning. Marjorie Purkett from Big Sky Country, Montana. I have a check for the Service Fund for \$302. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Wonderful.

MS. ANNIE ADAMS: Annie Adams, State Commander of Washington, I have a \$25 check to the DAV's Special Olympics in the memory of my husband. (Applause)

MS. LEI K. DEAN: Lei Dean, State Department Commander of Iowa, we have \$50 for the Freedom Foundation, \$100 for the Hospitalized Veterans' Riding Project, \$50 for the Ed Loan, and \$100 for the Auxiliary Service Fund. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Thank you.

MS. FRANCES BLANCATO: Frances Blancato, State of New Hampshire Commander, \$25 for the Support Fund and \$50 for National Education. (Applause)

MS. SHIRLEY BEILMAN: I'm Shirley Beilman. I'm Senior Vice at the State Department, Savannah, Georgia. Sorry. Okay, I have a check for the National Service Foundation. And I have one for the Freedom Foundation. And I have one for the Paralyzed Veterans and the National Education Fund.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: This is fun.

MS. BEILMAN: And a gift for the National (unclear).

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Oh, wonderful. Thank you. (Applause)
Good morning. Good morning.

MS. KARG: Good morning. LeeAnn Karg, State Adjutant from Minnesota, I have a personal donation for the Ed Loan Fund. (Applause)

MS. SANDRA SCHULMAN: Good morning. My name is Sandy Schulman. I'm making this presentation on behalf of our PSC, Charlotte Alvino, whose project this year was to send somebody to Miracles on a Mountain and she did and this is the balance of her money.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Thank you. (Applause) Good morning.

MS. JENNIFER FORCIER: Jenny Forcier, Chaplain, State of Minnesota, a personal donation to the Service Fund. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Thank you.

MS. ROBYN S. KENNEY: Robyn Kenney, Unit Commander, a \$50 personal donation for the school.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Ed Loan.

MS. KENNEY: Ed Loan Fund. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Good morning.

MS. LILLIAN R. HALPIN: Good morning. I'm Lillian Halpin from the Department of Massachusetts. I'm the State Commander. I have two checks, one for National Service Fund for \$435 and the other for the National Loan Fund for \$100. (Applause)

MS. JOYCE V. JEFFERSON: Good morning. Joyce Jefferson, Department of South Dakota. In honor of my mother, Vadine James, who shared the birthday with our National Commander, Donna Tanner, \$100 Educational Loan Fund.

When Commander Tanner came to visit the Department of South Dakota I told her we would celebrate my mother's birthday and hers.

Unfortunately, I could not celebrate my mother's birthday but we can celebrate Commander Tanner's birthday. Shall we sing "Happy Birthday" to her? (Applause)

(Whereupon, "Happy Birthday" was led by Ms. Jefferson.)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Thank you so much for being so generous with all your checks for the Ed Loan Fund, the Service Fund and the rest of the projects that we sponsor.

We will hopefully have a report back while we are in session today as to how much was actually donated. Thank you very much. It has been a pleasure. Next year I get to sit down there. (Applause)

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, I just want to give you a friendly reminder to turn off your cell phones and save yourselves a buck, just in case, or turn them down.

At this time we will, okay, we're going to have some announcements and then the National Adjutant will call the roll of newly-elected National Executive Committee members and alternates. And as your name is called, please come forward for the purpose of installation.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: I only have one announcement and it says if someone lost a camera last night at a hospitality room, it was taken to security and you can pick it up there. So if you know of anybody that lost a camera, it was taken to security. You got it?

And, Madame Commander, can I read something before we go into roll call? No, I can't. Someone laid this on the table here and I thought we'd have a little laugh over it, I hope.

A little boy wanted \$100 so he prayed and prayed and prayed for weeks but nothing happened. Then he decided to write God a letter requesting the money.

When the postal authorities received the letter addressed to "God, U.S.A." they decided to send it to the President of the United States. (Laughter)

The President was so amused that he instructed his secretary to send \$5. The President thought this would appear to be a lot of money to such a little boy.

The little boy was delighted with the \$5 and sat down to write a thank-you note which read,

"Dear God, thank you very much for sending the money. However, I noticed that for some reason you send it through Washington, D.C. and, as usual, those turkeys deducted \$95 of it." (Laughter)

We will now have the roll call of the newly-elected NECs and Alternates, and they are to come forward for installation. And these are only the newly-elected.

District 1, Susan Stulsky; District 3, Sylvia Heath; District 5, Marian Sawdey; District 7, Marna Barnshaw; Harriet Hudson, District 9; District 11, Marjorie Davies;

District 13, Tana Penland; District 15, Lei Dean; District 17, June Schow; District 19, Juanita Wiley-Hackler; District 21, Linda Stake.

All right, now I will call the newly-elected Alternates and if the NEC would move forward so that they could be. Newly-elected Alternates from District 1, Mary Bixby; District 3, Aura Lee Nicodemus; District 5, Loretta Nosko;

District 7, Jean Surseley—and if that name sounds familiar, her husband happened to be a Past National Commander; District 9, Monica Stroud; District 11, Jacqueline Hansen; District 13, Debra Loetz;

District 15, Veronica Bergquist; District 17, Patricia Brunsvik; District 19, Robi Wiley—Robi Riley from Washington, D.C.; sorry about that, the wrong side of the country, the State of Washington; District 21 is Brenda Prentice.

All of the newly-elected NECs and Alternates are present, Commander.

COMMANDER TANNER: Thank you. You are requested to remain silent during the ceremony of installation.

The fact that you've been selected by the members of this Auxiliary for your respective offices shows that you have the, they have the confidence in your ability and that they feel assured you will strictly and impartially discharge all duties incumbent upon you.

They confide the welfare of this Auxiliary to your keeping. And they are expected at all times to respect your position. Let their confidence, therefore, be fully justified by your fidelity.

Let us all remember gratefully the heroism of our veterans whose names we proudly bear. Realizing fully these responsibilities, are you willing to assume the obligation of your office?

(Response of "I am.")

COMMANDER TANNER: Will the members please rise. Place your right hand over your heart, and pronounce your name, repeat after me the oath of your office.

"I, Donna Tanner, having been selected as a National Executive Committee member or Alternate of this Auxiliary, do most solemnly pledge myself to faithfully and impartially perform in letter and in spirit all the duties of the office I am about to enter.

"I promise to obey the lawful orders of my superior officers and exact the obedience of others thereto to the best of my ability and means. When my successor has been duly selected and installed I promise to surrender all the property of the organization in my possession, all of which I now affirm."

You may lower your hands. The audience may be seated.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Diane Brinkley, I failed to call your name. You're an alternate.

COMMANDER TANNER: Is Diane Brinkley here, from District 6.

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: She's not here.

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, sorry. Okay, delegates, members and guests, I now present to you the National Executive Committee members and Alternates of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

I trust that you will aid them in their performance of their duties. With your help their term of office will be highly successful. Officers, about-face or Committee members, about-face. (Applause)

(Whereupon, photographs were taken.)

COMMANDER TANNER: If everybody is done with their photo ops you may return to your seat. Okay, Credential Chairman, Elaine Majors.

(Whereupon, Linda Acosta called something from the floor.)

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, Credentials Chairman, Acting, Linda Acosta for the final credentials report.

CHAIRMAN ACOSTA: Madame Commander, National Officers, delegates and guests, the Credentials report is as follows: total Units registered 203; total Departments registered, 44, a total of 247;

Delegates registered, 409; alternates registered, 18; guests, 58, a total of 485. Total Unit votes, 1,329. Total Department votes, 44. National Officers, 5. PNCs, 12. A grand total vote of 1,390. I move for the acceptance of this report.

COMMANDER TANNER: Linda Acosta has made a motion to accept the final Credentials report. Do I have a second?

MS. GERTIE DUPLECHAIN: Gertie Duplechain of Unit 17, Louisiana, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER TANNER: Gertie Duplechain, of Unit 17, Louisiana, seconds the motion. Okay, is there any discussion? All those in favor say; opposed. The motion carried. All right, would the chairman of the Nominating Committee please come forward.

CHAIRMAN VICKI O'NEAL: National Commander Donna, National Adjutant Maria, National Assistant Adjutant Judy, National Line Officers and DAV members and guests, I'd like to introduce our Committee that was on the Nominating Committee.

When I announce your names, please stand so everybody can see you. District 1, Fran Costa; District 2, Lucita Christian; District 3, Sylvia Heath; District 4, Marjorie Fleming;

District 5, Marian Sawdey; District 6, Carol Simmons; District 7, Merallyn McDonald; District 8, Lynda Shepherd; District 9, Renee Jones; District 10, Renee Lawton;

District 11, Joyce Hutchinson; District 12, Kathy Hicke; District 13, Geneva Walker; District 14, Mary Lou Weber; District 15, Dorothy Van Hoy; District 16, myself;

District 17, Jean Jackson; District 18, Evelynne Dunn; District 19, Ruth Hammer; District 20, Betty Hall; and District 21, Sue Parham. Thank you, ladies. (Applause)

Our recommendations from the Committee, coffee and/or cold drinks should be available to the Committee and possibly a light lunch could be brought in (Laughter) due to the extensive hours the Committee meets. And that is true. (Applause)

A form listing each candidate and the positions that they are considered for could save time, and a separate form for the Committee members to tally the votes. Those were our recommendations.

Okay, now our slate of officers is Commander Kathryn Wiley; Senior Vice Commander Sandy Dobmeier; First Junior Vice Kay Egan; Second Junior Vice Susan Henry; Third Junior Vice Patrice Rapisand—I hope I said that right; Fourth Junior Vice Donna Adams; Chaplain Judy Uetterling; and Judge Advocate Carol Gray.

I would like to thank my Committee for nominating me as chairman. It was definitely an experience I'll never forget. (Laughter) I love you all. Thank you so much. (Applause) I move for the Committee to be dismissed.

COMMANDER TANNER: She talked faster than I could write. Sorry about that. Okay, we have a couple of things for announcements and then we'll move on.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Okay, we want to tell you how much was collected this morning. Excuse me. Service Fund, \$3,389.00; Hospitalized Veterans' Riding Project, \$200.00; Freedom's Foundation, \$400.00; Education Loan, \$1,567.00; Sports Clinic, \$387.39; bringing the total to \$5,943.39. Thank you. (Applause)

And with the Commander's permission I would like to say there are some men here. I would like to know how many of the male gender are holding an office in the Auxiliary. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the men holding Auxiliary offices were recognized.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: We thank you. When two or more candidates are nominated for any one office roll calls shall continue until completed unless a candidate or candidates withdraw. The person receiving the majority of the roll call votes shall be elected.

COMMANDER TANNER: Okay, at this time I would like to thank the members of the Nominating Committee for their efforts and the long hours that they've put in.

I would like to discharge the Nominating Committee and all other Convention Committees now. Also, would the officers please leave the podium and go back to your respective Districts for the purpose of nomination and election.

(Whereupon, the National Officers withdrew from the dais.)

COMMANDER TANNER: I'm going to appoint three tellers. Okay, I'm appointing three tellers and if we have a roll call vote we'll find a spot for you to meet. You'll come up here.

All right, Debbie Barbuto, Aura Lee Nicodemus, Jennie Forcier. She knew I was looking at her for a reason. (Laughter) Actually, you can stay where you are right now. If it ends up in a roll call vote we'll call you.

(Whereupon, delegates called out that a phone went off.)

COMMANDER TANNER: What's the matter? A phone. A phone. (Laughter) Maria just told me she collected \$8 in fines for telephones going off by people that admitted that it happened and they gave her the money yesterday in the Forget-me-not Luncheon.

But we're all pretty good about rattling each other out, aren't we? (Laughter) The money goes to a good cause. Okay, are we ready?

You have heard the report of the Committee on Nominations. Kathryn Wiley has been nominated by the Committee for the office of National Commander.

Are there any other nominations? Have you got something to say, Ruthie? Do you want to second her nomination? Okay, sorry.

For the position of National Commander, can I have a second? And Ruth Hammer would like to come to the podium to second Kathryn's nomination.

(Whereupon, someone on the floor made a comment away from a microphone.)

COMMANDER TANNER: Yes, that's a good idea. So sorry. Kathryn is from the State of Washington. (Applause)

MS. G. RUTH HAMMER: National Commander, National Judge Advocate, Maria, National Officers, and guests, it is my privilege and honor to second the nomination for Kathryn Wiley to the office of National Commander for the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

Kathryn was born in the "Apple Capital of the World," Wenatchee, Washington, and never leaving her farm roots far behind she became a bookkeeper, an accountant, for one of the largest wholesale fruit tree nurseries in the world.

Okay, I'm okay. (Laughter) She retired in 1992 and returned to run the family apple orchard as her father successfully battled cancer. Kathryn's eligibility is through her husband, a combat-wounded Vietnam Veteran, and her father, a combat-wounded World War II Marine.

Kathryn knows the issues facing the veterans and their families on a first-hand basis. She has been an active member of the Auxiliary since 1983 when she became a life member.

She is a member of the DAV State Department of Washington, Tri-City Unit Number 46. She has held all offices, chairmanships, in her Unit, all State Department, and served for many years as the Deputy VAVS representative at Walla Walla VA Medical Center.

Kathryn also volunteered as a DAV driver for several years. She has been the Alternate NEC, 19th District, District NEC, okay, and National VAVS representative, National Third, National Second, First Junior Vice Commanders, and is currently the National Senior Vice Commander.

She has served on a National committee learning all about this great organization. Kathryn works very hard to support the veterans and their families in our state and as nation-wide, working diligently on legislation.

And, believe me, I know that because I've had to help trans some of her reports on all veterans in her communities. She also assists in all veterans in her community.

And now that's my canned speech. However, she thought she was going to get away very easy. Everybody likes Kathy, right?

(Response of "Right.")

MS. HAMMER: Everybody knows Kathy?

(Response of "Yes.")

MS. HAMMER: Wrong. (Laughter) We put 250,000 on one of my cars and 140 miles on my Tahoe for National and for the State. And I would like to just tell you one thing. We know all the food places to get, all the cheese places to get, all the jerky places to get. (Laughter)

And I'd like to tell you a little story. We went, we stopped at this place and it said, well, it had beef jerky and it had moose jerky and it had every kind of jerky, turkey jerky and everything. (Laughter)

So we got in there and we decided we'd like to try all of these weird things. They were too many to tell you about. So we bought them. Well, we had them in a bag and we'd take a little taste of it.

Well, we put it in the bag, "Well, Lew and Harold will eat that." And the next one, and we put it in the bag, "Lew and Harold will eat that." And we did this about five times, right?

Well, we got home, we gave it to Lew and Harold and they tried but, God, they couldn't eat it. (Laughter) So they tried to give it to the dogs and the dogs wouldn't even eat it. (Laughter)

So I want to tell you that Kathy is not only supported by her dear, sweet husband, Harold, but see how much he goes to bat for her when he will even try to eat something as raunchy as we brought home to him. (Laughter) And I know he will support her greatly.

I am so proud to have been her friend for so long. And we can all be assured that we can be proud of her as our National Commander. And I proudly second her nomination. (Applause)

COMMANDER TANNER: Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of National Commander.

All those in favor of Kathryn Wiley for the office of National Commander, signify by saying aye; opposed. (Laughter) The ayes have it and Kathryn Wiley has been elected to the position of National Commander. (Applause)

COMMANDER TANNER: Sandra Dobmeier has been nominated by the Committee for the office of National Senior Vice Commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of National Senior Vice Commander.

All those in favor of Sandy Dobmeier for the office of National Senior Vice Commander signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Sandy has been elected to the office of National Senior Vice Commander. (Applause)

(Whereupon, someone called from the audience and asked where Sandra Dobmeier is from.)

COMMANDER TANNER: So sorry. I've got to write this down. (Laughter) North Dakota. I'm writing down the next one.

Okay, Kay Egan of Florida has been nominated by the Committee for the office of National First Junior Vice Commander. Are there any other nominations?

Hearing none, I declare nominations closed for the office of National First Junior Vice Commander. I almost said junior mice commander. (Laughter)

All those in favor of Kay Egan for the office of National First Junior Vice, signify by saying aye; those opposed. They ayes have it and Kay Egan has been elected to the office of National First Junior Vice. (Applause)

Susan Henry of Tennessee has been nominated by the Committee for the office of National Second Junior Vice Commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of National Second Junior Vice Commander.

All those in favor of Susan for the office of National Second Junior Vice Commander signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Susan has been elected to the office of National Second Junior Vice Commander. (Applause)

Patrice Rapisand of Texas—no? All right, sorry, Patti. Patrice Rapisand of Texas has been nominated by the Committee for the office of National Third Junior Vice Commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare nominations closed for National Third Junior Vice Commander.

All those in favor of Patti for the office of National Third Junior Vice Commander signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Patti has been elected to the office of National Third Junior Vice Commander. (Applause)

Donna Adams of Arizona has been nominated by the Committee for the office of Fourth National Junior Vice Commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of National Fourth Junior Vice Commander.

All those in favor of Donna signify by saying aye; all those opposed. The ayes have it and Donna Adams has been elected to the office of National Fourth Junior Vice. (Applause)

Judy Uetterling of Ohio has been nominated by the Committee for the office of National Chaplain. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare nominations closed for the office of National Chaplain.

All in those in favor of Judy for the office of National Chaplain please signify by saying aye; opposed. The ayes have it and Judy has been elected to the office of National Chaplain. (Applause)

Carol Gray of Michigan 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 signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Carol has been elected to the office of National Judge Advocate. (Applause)

So, your National Commander Kathryn Wiley, Senior Vice Commander—I forgot—Sandy Dobmeier—sorry, I didn't write it down—

First Junior Vice Kay Egan, Second Junior Vice Susan Henry, Third Junior Vice Patti Rapisand, Fourth National Junior Vice Commander Donna Adams, Chaplain Judy Uetterling, Judge Advocate Carol Gray.

The election having been completed, I now ask the National Sergeant-at-Arms to come to the podium for the purpose of introducing the National Executive Committee members and those members who have served as Pages.

And the officers, please return to your seats. Come back. Anybody that was an officer for this past year come back. (Laughter)

(Whereupon, the officers return to the dais.)

COMMANDER TANNER: They did a good job I think, don't you, Sandy and Donna? (Applause)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SANDRA D. FINCEL: National Commander Donna—whoops.

(Whereupon, a cell phone rang.)

COMMANDER TANNER: You waited until they all came up here. Somebody in the audience collect that dollar. (Laughter) Hold on. First off, I told you we'd make mistakes. Tellers, you're dismissed. Thank you for serving. I'm sorry.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS FINCEL: National Commander Donna, National Adjutant Maria, all other delegates and guests, it has been my honor and privilege to serve as National Sergeant-at-Arms this past year.

I would like to thank you for allowing me to do so. I had a great time. It is a lot of work but I had a tremendous amount of help from a great group of ladies.

First, I would like to introduce and thank the Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms Donna Folcarelli. (Applause) She was like having an extra right hand. Thank you to all the NECs and Pages.

Without them I would not have been able to do it all. They were so helpful in all they did. As they say, "Many hands make less work." I would now like to introduce them to you.

Personal Pages for Commander Donna Tanner, Nancy Mooney. (Applause) For Kathryn Wiley, Ruth Hammer. (Applause) Sandy Dobmeier, Faye Litzinger. (Applause)

Kay Egan, Marna Barnshaw. (Applause) For Susan Henry, Connie Stewart. (Applause) Patrice Rapisand, Ruth Gates. (Applause) Carol Gray, Peggy Smith. (Applause)

Judy Uetterling, Ellen Keller. (Applause) We had two Junior Pages, Abby Gibbs (Applause) and Danasias Lara. (Applause)

The NECs that helped: Ellen Drogos, (Applause) Anita Ingram, (Applause) Wanda Furbish, (Applause) Sandy Schulman, (Applause) Marian Sawdey, (Applause)

Barbara Forbes, (Applause) Bernadette Sorrentino, (Applause) Angela Stewart, (Applause) Barbara Williams, (Applause) Kathy Hicke, (Applause) Geneva Walker, (Applause) Mary Lou Weber, (Applause) Rose Schilpp, (Applause) June Adema, (Applause) Susan Miller, (Applause) Lorna Kakesako, (Applause) Jeanette Carulli, (Applause) Teresa Herrle, (Applause) Linda Stake. (Applause)

And I also had some extras help with the Memorial Service the other night, Sandy Resner, (Applause) Elaine Majors, (Applause) and Miriam Daley. (Applause)

Thank you for all of your help and all you do for our disabled veterans and their families. I will never forget you.

Also, I'd like to thank everybody for the cards and kind words of sympathy to my husband and myself for our recent loss of our son in Florida. I never realized how great it is to have an extended family until now.

ASSISTANT SERGEANT-AT-ARMS DONNA M. FOLCARELLI: Sandy, on behalf of all the Pages and all the NECs and everybody that worked with you, you did a wonderful job. You're a great leader and we want to thank you very much with this small little token of our affection. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms Donna Folcarelli presented Sergeant-at-Arms Sandra Fincel with a gift.)

COMMANDER TANNER: You are dismissed. We dismiss them and she still gives orders. (Laughter) Jim, you want to come up here? Okay. Hang on just a second.

At this time I'd also like to acknowledge—and I'm not sure if they're all still here or in the room—the National Color Bearers were Susan Stulsky and Margaret Simpson. If you're here can you please stand.

(Whereupon the National Color Bearers were recognized.)

COMMANDER TANNER: Thank you very much. (Applause) And, of course, our National Musician, Nancy Coulombe. Nancy, are you still here? Yes, there she is. Good. (Applause)

(Whereupon, National Musician Nancy Coulombe was recognized.)

COMMANDER TANNER: You know, I don't know that you ever hear the music that Nancy plays but she always, like it just comes to you. When you're walking in the room and I'm coming down the aisle and she starts playing, "Oh Donna," you know, or she plays something. (Laughter)

You know we really wanted "When the Saints Come Marching In" this year, Nancy, but, you know, I'm not sure that happened. But, anyway. (Laughter) She plays things that go with it.

And at Fall Conference if you have a villain in your skit she plays the villain music and it's really just, she does a really, really good job and I thank you so much, Nancy. I thank all of you who serve. (Applause)

Well, apparently my husband has something to say. So this is Jim Tanner. (Applause)

(Whereupon, James Tanner came to the dais and pinned a corsage on Commander Tanner.)

MR. JAMES TANNER: I got the first pin in.

(Whereupon, someone called from the audience, "We can't hear you.")

MR. TANNER: I got the first pin in. I want to wish my wife a Happy Birthday and I want to thank you for letting, sending her back to me on her birthday. (Applause) It's been a good year for her.

Our mailman will be very thankful where I was NEC and she was National Commander. I think he will be giving us a check on Christmas so he'll no longer have to deliver the mail. (Laughter) Thank you.

COMMANDER TANNER: Thank you. (Applause) Okay, well, I would like to say congratulations to all the newly-elected officers. And just to let you know, I did start this journey in Dallas, Texas, on my birthday so they had a big party when I was on my way in and they're going to have a party tonight on my way out. And you're all invited. (Laughter)

I know, I just want to say that I know I'm passing the touch of leadership to an outstanding group of officers. And they will be, they will move our organization forward and with your help. We need to look forward. We need to stop looking back.

We just need to go ahead and we need to grow. So I'm going to challenge all of you, and especially the State Commanders, to meet your membership goals next year. And this is a challenge so we always rise to the occasion, right?

(Response of "Yes.")

COMMANDER TANNER: And I want the State Commanders to challenge their members in their Departments to get them the help that they need and to work together. Because when we work together we do shine.

So at this point is there any other business to come before this Convention? Aha, we had another \$25 for the bell ringers. I think 25 more and we hit \$2,000, right? I'll pledge—what? With the DAV Auxiliary's money? Okay, I will pledge \$25 more dollar to you and I will give that to you. (Applause)

Okay, hearing none, I now declare the 85th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans' Auxiliary adjourned.

We will immediately go into the Installation of the National Officers followed by the National Executive Committee meeting so don't leave.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 10:26 o'clock, a.m., on Tuesday, August 14, 2007.)

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