105th Congress, 2d Session – – – – – – – – – – – – House Document 105–353

P R O C E E D I N G S

of the

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS 1998 NATIONAL CONVENTION

August 22–27, 1998
Las Vegas, Nevada

PROCEEDINGS—1998 NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

105th Congress, 2d Session – – – – – – – – – – – – – House Document 105–353

1998 NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

TRANSMITTING

THE REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ORGANIZATION'S 1998 NATIONAL CONVENTION, PURSUANT TO 36 U.S.C. 90i AND 44 U.S.C. 1332

DECEMBER 18, 1998.—Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and ordered to be printed

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS,
October 30, 1998.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: As business manager of Disabled American Veterans, and as secretary of its National Convention, I hereby certify as to the authenticity of the reports and the proceedings of our National Convention, held in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 22–27, 1998, and submit them to you through the office of this organization located in Washington, DC, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 186 of the 72d Congress, as amended, to be printed as a House document in accordance with the authorization of section 1332 of title 44, United States Code.

The enclosed National Convention proceedings include an independent audit report of all receipts and expenditures as of December 31, 1997, as required by the provisions of section 3 of the Public Law 88–504, approved August 30, 1964.

Sincerely,

ARTHUR H. WILSON,
National Adjutant.

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NATIONAL OFFICERS 1998-99

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

National Commander
Andrew A. Kistler, 802 Grant Street, Franklin, PA 16323

Senior Vice Commander
Michael E. Dobmeier, P.O. Box 6188, Grand Forks, ND 58206-6188

First Junior Vice Commander
Armando C. Albarran, 10114 Ironside Drive, San Antonio, TX 78230

Second Junior Vice Commander
George H. Steese, 4186 W. Terrace Avenue, Fresno, CA 93277

Third Junior Vice Commander
Edward R. Heath, Sr., P.O. Box 115, Mechanic Falls, ME 04256

Fourth Junior Vice Commander
Alan W. Bowers, RFD #2, Bolton Road, Athol, MA 01331

National Judge Advocate
Edward G. Galian, 200 Atlantic Avenue, #1, Lynbrook, NY 11563

National Chaplain
Rev. Alfsonso Todd, Jr., 505 South 26th Street, Saginaw, MI 48601

Past National Commander
Harry R. McDonald, Jr., 6161 North Hwy. 393, Crestview, FL 32539

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

First district: John F. Gilpin, 485 Plain Street, Rockland, MA 02370
Second district: William Novak, Jr., 1231 Route 211 West, Middletown, NY 10940
Third district: Edward S. Lastowski, 945 Mammoth Road, Manchester, NH 03104
Fourth district: Albert E. Church, 75 Crown Street, Bristo, CT 06010
Fifth district: James E. Turner, Jr., 3520 North 24th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19140
Sixth district: Thomas C. Johns, 4916 Ridgeview Lane, Bowie, MD 20715
Seventh district: Jimmy Meeks, 802 Cedar Knoll Drive South, Lakeland, FL 33809
Eighth district: Lloyd E. Helms, 5419 Foxglove Drive, Bossier City, LA 71112-4913
Ninth District: Wallace E Tyson, P.O. Box 28146, Raleigh, NC 27611
Tenth district: Ben Benzing, 3790 155th Avenue, Hersey, MI 49639
Eleventh district: David A. Goliver, P.O. Box 3084, Elida, OH 45807
Twelfth district: Clyde E. Dartey, 6209 S. Cory Avenue, Cudahy, WI 53110
Thirteenth district: James T. Ashby, 3207 Mildred Drive, Louisville, KY 40216
Fourteenth district: Dale D. Hafer, 161 Old Corvallis Road, Hamilton, MT 59840
Fifteenth district: Franklin C. Bergquist, 4255 S. Laura Lane, Wichita, KS 67216
Sixteenth district: Glen M. Halsey, 3044 Wolfe Court, Antelope, CA 95843
Seventeenth district: Banjamin Palomino, 457 Jones Avenue, Las Animas, CO 81054
Eighteenth district: Floyd W. "Pete" Buell, 780 Fountain Hills, Henderson, NV 89015
Nineteenth district: Harold E. Wiley, P.O. Box 447, Soap Lake, WA 98851
Twentieth district: Leonard F. Humes, 9419 Stones River Drive, San Antonio, TX 78245-2052
Twenty-first district: Robert D. Cohoon, 6104 Allison Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73112

Andrew A. Kistler
National Commander
1998–1999
Disabled American Veterans

Harry R. McDonald, Jr.
National Commander
1997-1998
Disabled American Veterans

NATIONAL OFFICERS 1997-98

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Edward G. Galian, 200 Atlantic Avenue, #1, Lynbrook, NY 11563

National Chaplain
Rev. Alfonso Todd, Jr., 505 South 26th Street, Saginaw, MI 48601

Past National Commander
Gregory C. Reed, 6924 N. Fairfax Drive, #114, Arlington, VA 22213

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

First district: Alan W. Bowers, RFD #2, Bolton Road, Athol, MA 01331
Second district: Sal R. Tornatore, 170 W. 22nd Street, Huntington Station, NY 11746
Third district: Edward S. Lastowski, 945 Mammoth Road, Manchester, NH 03104
Fourth district: Grove D. Penn, 2116 Elder Drive, Wilmington, DE 19808
Fifth district: James E. Turner, Jr., 3520 North 24th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19140
Sixth district: Josue N. Saez, Guadalupe 26, El Alamo, Guaynabo, PR 00969
Seventh district: Jimmy Meeks, 802 Cedar Knoll Drive South, Lakeland, FL 33809
Eighth district: Charles W. Mills, 2241 Edinburgh Drive, Montgomery, AL 33116
Ninth District: Wallace E. Tyson, P.O. Box 28146, Raleigh, NC 27611
Tenth district: Roger L. Jansen, 4925 Butternut Drive, Holland, MI 49424
Eleventh district: David A. Goliver, P.O. Box 3084, Elida, OH 45807
Twelfth district: Richard R. Harris, 40154 Lakeview Avenue, Antioch, IL 60002
Thirteenth district: James T. Ashby, 3207 Mildred Drive, Louisville, KY 40216
Fourteenth district: Harry F. VandeMore, 48402 292nd Street, Hudson, SD 57034
Fifthteenth district: Franklin C. Bergquist, 4255 S. Laura Circle, Wichita, KS 67216
Sixteenth district: Robert D. Salisbury, 2562 N. Courtland Street, Orange, CA 92867
Seventeenth district: Benjamin Palomino, 457 Jones Avenue, Las Animas, CO 81054
Eighteenth district: Michael J. Smaydy, 321 S. Lynx Creek Road, Prescott, AZ 86303
Nineteenth district: Harold E. Wiley, P.O. Box 447, Soap Lake, WA 98851
Twentieth district: William A. Bone, 205 Coventry Drive, Hewitt, TX 76643
Twenty-first district: Robert D. Cohoon, 6104 Allison Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73112

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDERS

1921-22: Robert S. Marx, Cincinnati, Ohio (deceased 1960)
1922-23: C. Hamilton Cook, Buffalo, New York (deceased 1935)
1923-24: James A. McFarland, Dalton, Georgia (deceased 1942)
1924-25: Frank J. Irwin, New York, New York (deceased 1942)
1925-26: John W. Mahan, Bozeman, Montana (deceased 1947)
1926-27: John V. Clinnin, Chicago, Illinois (deceased 1955)
1927-28: William E. Tate, Atlanta, Georgia (deceased 1949)
1928-29: Millard W. Rice, Minneapolis, Minnesota (deceased 1980)
1929-30: William J. Murphy, Santa Ana, California (deceased 1931)
1930-31: H. H. Weimer, Chicago, Illinois (deceased 1955)
1931-32: E. Claude Babcock, Washington, D.C. (deceased 1958)
1932-33: William Conley, Los Angeles, California (deceased 1941)
1933-34: Joe W. McQueen, Kansas City, Missouri (deceased 1969)
1934-35: Volney P. Mooney, Jr., Los Angeles, California (deceased 1945)
1935-36: Marvin A. Harlan, El Paso, Texas (deceased 1970)
1936-37: M. Froome Barbour, Cincinnati, Ohio (deceased 1985)
1937-38: Maple T. Harl, Denver, Colorado (deceased 1957)
1938-39: Owen Galvin, Minneapolis, Minnesota (deceased 1956)
1939-40: Lewis J. Murphy, South Bend, Indiana (deceased 1966)
1940-41: Vincent E. Schoeck, Detroit, Michigan (deceased 1966)
August 16, 1941-August 15, 1943: Lawrence R. Melton, Dallas, Texas (deceased 1978)
August 15, 1943-September 20, 1943: William J. Dodd, Jersey City, New Jersey (deceased 1957)
1943-44: James L. Monnahan, Minneapolis, Minnesota (deceased 1980)
1944-45: Milton D. Cohn, Buffalo, New York (deceased 1968)
1945-46: Dow V. Walker, Newport, Oregon (deceased 1957)
1946-47: Lloyd F. Oleson, Ventura, California (deceased 1982)
1947-48: John L. Golob, Hibbing, Minnesota (deceased 1976)
1948-49: Jonathon M. Wainwright, San Antonio, Texas (deceased 1953)
1949-50: David M. Brown, Akron, Ohio (deceased 1982)
1950-51: Boniface R. Maile, Grosse Pointe, Michigan
1951-52: Ewing W. Mays, Little Rock, Arkansas (deceased 1994)
1952-53: Floyd L. Ming, Bakersfield, California (deceased 1975)
1953-54: Howard W. Watts, Indianapolis, Indiana (deceased 1977)
1954-55: Alfred L. English, Shelbyville, Tennessee (deceased 1987)
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
1969-70: Raymond P. Neal, Daly City, California
1970-71: Cecil W. Stevenson, Jonesboro, Arkansas
1971-72: Edward T. Conroy, Bowie, Maryland (deceased 1982)
1972-73: Jack O. Hicks, Larue, Ohio
1973-74: John T. Soave, Detroit, Michigan (deceased 1984)
1974-75: Walter T. Greaney, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts (deceased 1994)
1975-76: Lyle C. Pearson, North Mankato, Minnesota
1976-77: Frank J. Randazzo, East Meadow, New York
1977-78: Oliver E. Meadows, Godley, Texas

1978-79: Billy O. Hightower, Grand Junction, Colorado
1979-80: Paul L. Thompson, Baltimore, Maryland (deceased 1993)
1980-81: Stan Pealer, Holts Summit, Missouri
1981-82: Sherman E. Roodzant, Santa Ana, California
1982-83: Edward G. Galian, New York, New York
1983-84: Dennis A. Joyner, Apollo, Pennsyvlania
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

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 77TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS HELD AT LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

August 22-27, 1998

JOINT OPENING SESSION

August 23, 1998

The Joint Opening Session of the Disabled American Veterans and Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Conrad Ballroom of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, Sunday afternoon, August 23, 1998, and was called to order at 1:00 o'clock p.m. by Commander Harry R. McDonald, Jr.

COMMANDER HARRY R. McDONALD, JR.: Ladies and gentlemen, we hope you enjoyed our military service medley. (Applause)

I now call to order the 77th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans.

Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant, will read the call to convention.

ADJUTANT ARTHUR H. WILSON: The Constitution and Bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans state that the supreme legislative powers of this organization shall be vested in its 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 77th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans to be convened at Las Vegas, Nevada, 1:00 p.m., August 23rd, 1998.

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

COMMANDER McDONALD: Present Colors.

(Presentation of Colors.)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Ladies and gentlemen, our National Anthem.

(Singing of National Anthem.)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Dismiss the Color Guard.

(Dismissal of Color Guard.)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Please be seated.

(John Wayne presentation, followed by Pledge of Allegiance.)

COMMANDER McDONALD: The Color Guard is dismissed with our thanks. I think they did an outstanding job. Let's show them appreciation for it. (Applause)

I will now call on the national chaplain for an invocation.

CHAPLAIN ALFONSO TODD, JR.: Lord God, You've called us from the East, from the West, from the South and from the North. We have come together to not only remember those who have given so much for the cause of democracy, but we've come together to share in clearer understanding and wisdom as it relates to the business of DAV and DAVA.

We pray now that as we present ourselves as living sacrifices in doing Your will, that You will breathe on us Your Holy Spirit. Anoint us so that we may be led and given truth in Your way and Your thinking. And Lord, we thank You for our leaders. Strengthen them, give them the victory as we press towards the mark of our high calling. In His Precious Name we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Chaplain Todd.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in celebrating the majestic beauty of the American landscape as we watch together a music video of Neil Diamond's "Coming to America."

(Video presentation, followed by presentation of flag by T.J. Coleman.)

MR. T.J. COLEMAN: It is known as "The Stars and Stripes." The union consists of white stars, ancient symbols of sovereignty, against a blue background. There are as many stars as there are states, but no particular star for an individual state. The stripes represent the 13 original colonies that declared their independence from Great Britain in 1776.

The original symbolism of the colors is not known. However,

when Congress chose those same colors for the Great Seal in 1782, it was indicated that red is for hardiness and valor; white for purity and innocence; and blue for vigilance, perseverance and justice.

These are mere words from a book, a book's definition of our nation's flag, yet these words do not say how we feel in our hearts.

The flag stands for many things, things evident in the Declaration of Independence, where all men are created equal, rights of life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, the right of the people to alter or abolish any form of government that becomes destructive. This is what we live for, to be free. Our flag is a symbol of that freedom and what we will fight for in order to keep us free and flying high.

The flag stands for the Constitution of the United States of America, again, a land and a flag of freedom, freedom of religion, speech, press, the security of persons in their homes. It also provides for a fair and a swift trial. It abolished slavery and gives each individual 18 or older the right to participate in the voting process, to have a say in his or her future.

Our flag represents all of these things and many more. In reality, we don't think of the flag in terms of what it has done for us, but again, in terms of how each and every one of us feels. The flag stands for freedom, whether in peacetime or during war, and also what we would fight for in order to conserve the ideals our forefathers meant for us.

The flag flies for you, Commander McDonald. It flies for me. Long may it fly and wave. As the Statute of Liberty states, "Free am I, free are you." God bless our flag. God bless America. (Applause)

ADJUTANT WILSON: Please, once again thank T.J. Coleman, who is an employee of the VA Regional Office in Oakland, California. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Please be seated.

Well, you know, they say sooner or later you're going to make a mistake, and I made one a few minutes ago, the first one I ever made. But ladies and gentlemen, please join me in thanking the members of California Alhambra Chapter Number 22 for the Color Guard here today at our ceremonies. (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, look around you and you will see a successful convention under way. Let me assure you that a successful National Convention requires countless men and women working together to ensure that our annual gathering is the most fun-filled, exciting and rewarding event of the year for all of us.

To successfully plan and accomplish a great National Convention requires wise leadership, commitment, unlimited drive and enthusiasm. Leading such a dynamic group of people is a tremendously rewarding challenge. Meeting that challenge this year is a National Convention chairman whose leadership style leaves nothing to chance.

That kind of man is Norman B. Hartnett. Gabby, as his friends call him, and I count myself among them, is a wartime, service-connected disabled veteran who was wounded in the invasion of Leyte in the Philippines in 1944.

He began his DAV career in Boston as a National Service Officer in 1946 and served as National Director of Employment, Deputy National Service Director and DAV National Director of Services, supervising the DAV National Service, Legislative and Employment Programs until retiring in 1983.

But Gabby didn't really retire. He just became an expert on veterans' health care system and went to serve as the Chief of Staff to Jesse Brown, who's the former Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Gabby continues to serve as a consultant to the DAV on major issues.

Comrades and guests, please join me in welcoming the man behind the convention, the DAV's own Gabby Hartnett. (Applause)

MR. NORMAN B. HARTNETT: National Commanders McDonald and Dunn, Reverend Clergy, Secretary West, United States Senators Reid and Wellstone, distinguished guests, officers and members of the DAV and its Auxiliaries: It's my pleasure today to welcome you to

the convening of the 77th National DAV Convention. And I want to thank particularly Bill Brzezinski and Pete Buell, who did yeomen work in having a successful convention for you.

Let me reminisce a bit. My first DAV National Convention was in Las Vegas, Nevada in 1947 as a National Service Officer trainee from the Boston Office. I guess I fell in love with Las Vegas at that time, although I hadn't quite made up my mind to retire here. That didn't occur until 1983, when I retired from the DAV Washington Office and went from "Who's Who" to "Who's he?" (Laughter)

In '47, we had less than 135,000 members. We have exceeded that number in the past few years by more than one million members, thanks to the yeomen efforts of all of you.

While here, I hope you enjoy the glitter and glamour of The Strip, its hotels, casinos and entertainment. But more importantly, I hope that you get out to see our majestic mountains, our Lake Mead, Hoover Dam and the many other attractions we have for families.

I want to conclude by asking you to resolve with me that before Congress cuts or curtails or terminates any veterans' benefits that we ask all of them to view the movie, "Saving Private Ryan." Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Gabby, would you join me up here for a moment, please?

MR. HARTNETT: Oh, I'm sorry. Pete Buell and Bill Brzezinski, stand up and take a bow, Pete and Bill. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: What I called you up here for, Gabby, this is something in appreciation for your more than 50 years of membership in the DAV. It is a token of our esteem. (Applause)

At age 30, Harry Reid became the youngest Lieutenant Governor in Nevada history. In 1977, he was appointed chairman of the Nevada Gaming Commission, and later returned to private practice before being reelected in 1983 to the first of his two terms in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Nevadans sent Harry Reid to the U.S. Senate in 1986 and reelected him in 1992. As Nevada's senior senator, he was tapped to chair the Senate Democratic Policy Committee. He is the right-hand advisor to Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle and is often at the helm of national issues requiring a trusted statesman to navigate.

And now it is my pleasure to introduce the Honorable Harry Reid, senior United States senator from our host, the great State of Nevada. (Applause)

SENATOR HARRY REID: Conventioneers, I welcome you to the State of Nevada.

I especially welcome Secretary Togo West, who is going to be one of the fine Secretaries we have of Veterans Affairs. There's no one that's better qualified than he.

I also want to welcome my friend Paul Wellstone, a member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, and someone who, in his eight years in the United States Senate has done an outstanding job of representing the State of Minnesota, but done such a marvelous job of representing the underdog, the downtrodden, the people who are oppressed in this country. No one in Washington, no one in the Congress stands for representing those people who need help, those that are not represented, those that have no lobbyist, those that have no advocates for them -- Paul Wellstone does that. So welcome to Nevada, Senator Wellstone.

I welcome you to the State of Nevada, as has Gabby. I welcome you to the State of Nevada which is a unique state. The State of Nevada is the most mountainous state in the union except for Alaska; 314 separate mountain ranges, with mountain peaks over 11,000 feet high 32 times. Thirty-two mountains over 11,000 feet high, with one 14,000-foot mountain. It's a unique, beautiful state, a state with massive wilderness areas where you can go and look at deer and elk and antelope and beaver and golden eagles, mountain sheep. And we have even mountain goats in Nevada. It's a great state.

It's a state, though, that's changed over the years. This may surprise you as did the description of the mountains: Nevada is

the most urban state -- not the most rural state -- the most urban state in America, more urban than New York, California, Texas, Florida, Ohio or any other state you name. The reason that's the case is 90 percent of the people in the State of Nevada live in the two metropolitan areas of Reno and Las Vegas. So we welcome you to the State of Nevada. It's a wonderful state.

But let me just say that I live, was born and raised 55 miles southeast of here in a little town called Searchlight. The reason I mention Searchlight to you today is one of America's heroes came from Searchlight. The famous Nellis Air Force Base needed a name. It was then called the Las Vegas Gunnery School.

There was a young man from Searchlight who volunteered for service in the Second World War, flew 68 missions in the European Theater, volunteered for one last mission because of the sickness of one of the pilots, a mission that he didn't have to partake in, and was shot down over Belgium. Bill Nellis from Searchlight, Nevada is the namesake of Nellis Air Force Base. Bill Nellis is still buried in a military cemetery some place in Belgium.

But, you know, all over America, there are Bill Nellises, people who have sacrificed their lives for this great country. In this room today are people who came close to sacrificing their lives, and maybe didn't sacrifice their lives but sacrificed their bodies, missing limbs and eyes, part of their nervous system. You've sacrificed a great deal.

The Bill Nellises of the world and the Disabled American Veterans is what makes this country what it is, why, when the military songs are presented to us, chills run through our spines, through our bodies. When these pictures are shown to us, we all recognize the sacrifices that have been made.

When the John Wayne namesake presents his salute to the flag memorial, we all recognize that this is not for Senator Wellstone, Senator Reid and Secretary West; these presentations are for you in appreciation of what you have done to allow us to enjoy the freedoms in this country that we enjoy.

You do Las Vegas proud. You do Nevada proud. We welcome you here. We congratulate and applaud you for the personal sacrifices you've made. May God bless America. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Senator Reid. We really appreciate you taking the time to come in and visit with us at our convention.

Ladies and gentlemen, serving as your national commander this past year has been extraordinary. First of all, I rediscovered why the DAV is so meaningful in the lives of disabled veterans and their families. And in just a few minutes I will share with you some of my best memories.

But right now I want you to watch along with me a short film entitled, "A Sentimental Journey." This film has been produced by our National Communications Department and takes us along a nostalgic, toe-tapping and sometimes whimsical remembrance of the DAV during the past 12 months as presented through the pages of our own DAV Magazine.

(Video presentation.)

MR. CHARLES LUTTJOHANN: And now, let's meet your DAV national officers. At the Past National Commander position, from Arlington, Virginia, let's welcome back Greg Reed (applause); from Saginaw, Michigan, your National Chaplain, a heavenly welcome for Alfonso Todd (applause); from Lynbrook, New York, National Judge Advocate Ed Galian (applause); your National 4th Junior Vice-Commander, Mechanic Falls, Maine, let's hear it for Ed Heath (applause); from Fresno, California, a big hand for National 3rd Junior Vice-Commander George Steese (applause); the National 2nd Junior Vice-Commander position from San Antonio, Texas, a great ovation for Armando Albarran (applause); and from Grand Forks, North Dakota, your National 1st Junior Vice-Commander, let's please welcome Mike Dobmeier (applause); your Senior Vice-Commander from Franklin, Pennsylvania, let's hear it one more time for Andy Kistler. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: The Honorable Togo West, Jr. was sworn in as Secretary of Veterans Affairs on May 5th, 1998. Secretary West directs the Federal Government's second largest department,

responsible for a nationwide system of health care services, benefits programs, and national cemeteries for America's veterans and dependents.

Secretary West is an Army veteran and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Field Artillery Corps in 1965 and later served in the Judge Advocate General Corps after completing law school. For his military service, he was awarded the Legion of Merit and the Meritorious Service Medal.

He moved over to the VA from the Department of the Army, where he served as Secretary beginning in 1993. He also held a number of other high-level government positions, including Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Associate Deputy Attorney General with the Justice Department, General Counsel for the Navy and General Counsel for the Department of Defense.

Secretary West, as you will soon see, is a passionate and captivating speaker, so be prepared for a real treat.

Please welcome the Honorable Togo D. West, Jr., Secretary of Veterans Affairs. (Rising applause)

SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TOGO D. WEST, JR.: Thank you. Well, I thank the national commander for that introduction, but I think I'm in trouble if I don't live up to the billing. Being captivating will be a challenge indeed.

I thank you, Harry, and your adjutant, and all of you for the invitation to join you here at this, your 77th National Convention.

Senator Harry Reid, a moment ago, said that you honored the State of Nevada by being here. Well, you honor me by allowing me to be in your presence, in view of the commitment of this organization twice over, three times over to the welfare of this nation, first by being willing to step forward and don this nation's uniform and serve in harm's way; second, by enduring the harm that did come your way, disabling you; and thirdly, by returning to the service of your nation in this organization, for almost 78 years serving this nation again, by serving her disabled veterans and in that way by making us a better nation.

So thank you for having me here. It's a pleasure to be with you.

It is a pleasure to be in the presence of Senator Wellstone, who, as you know, had a great deal of influence on my ability first to get into this office as part of the body of the Senate that had to confirm me, but also because the Senate, like this organization, keeps quite a careful eye peeled on my performance and the performance of this department, and that is appropriate.

Senator Wellstone, for your support, but also for your candid appraisals from time to time of our ability to conduct our affairs, I thank you. We need it, and we need your service.

And I say again to Senator Reid, not only thanks for welcoming us all here to his state, but over my five years in this Administration, four years as Secretary of the Army, the last nine months as either Acting Secretary, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Senator Harry Reid has proven himself time and time again a good friend and a strong supporter of your men and women in uniform who serve today, of you the veterans, who gave up your yesterdays so that this country might have her tomorrows. So I'm privileged to be here in his state and to have been in his presence.

I see that the entire family is here. This is your joint opening ceremony of the Auxiliary as well as the DAV, and I say to you that my family, my wife of some 33 years, whom I met and married in law school, would like to be here as well. In fact, it is her practice to travel with me. And I'm not at ease when she is not with me. And so the fact that she could not be with us today is my loss. But I say to you it is your loss as well.

And here's why. After 33 years, I think you know that she has emerged as my most severe critic, although she assures me my most loving. She keeps me straight. She tells me the truth, whether I'm ready for it or not. And it is her practice when she knows I will speak, to caution me. She said it to me this morning as I left.

She said, "Dear, I know that you're going to be talking to some very important people today, the Disabled American Veterans

and their Auxiliary." She said, "I know you have some very important things to say to them. You would not take up their time otherwise." She said, "I'm sure they'll want to hear every important word of it. But remember this: The longer it takes you to say it, the less they will want to hear it." (Laughter and applause) But she's not here. (Laughter)

We woke over the last several days to news in the headlines that America's at war, a war against terrorism, because terrorists have declared war on America. President Clinton went on nationwide television to tell how he had ordered American Tomahawk cruise missiles to strike two locations connected to Osama bin Laden, the shadowy Saudi businessman who is financing terrorism against the United States.

He reminded us that this was in part to cripple and disrupt plans for future strikes against the United States, as well as in retribution, retaliation for the cowardly attack of some days ago on our embassies.

Twelve Americans were lost, along with 200 or more others whose sole crime on that day was that they were near the American Embassy. And of those 12, two men and one woman in the uniform of the United States were among the Americans, an Army sergeant, a Marine sergeant, an Air Force senior master sergeant. It could be said of those 12 and of the others as well that with their bodies they absorbed the blows that were meant to be struck at the United States of America, our country.

And even as we mourn their loss and we husband our anger, we know that thus it has always been. For two and a quarter centuries, men and women of the United States have absorbed the blows struck at our liberty, and we know those men and women. They are you. They are those whom you represent.

In 1775, when this nation was struggling to be born, Thomas Paine, the patriot who held nothing back, wrote about men and women such as they, such as you, who'd be needed to bring a new nation into life and to preserve it. He said, "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in time of this nation's crisis, turn from his nation's call, but he that will stand it now will earn the love and gratitude of every man and every woman."

America's veterans have stood, have served and have protected America, and have earned the love and gratitude of every man and woman who lives in this country. (Applause)

Since 1920 in the aftermath of the First World War, the DAV has organized and has stood to assist our government, maybe even to prod our government to see that we delivered on that debt of gratitude, delivered on that debt of gratitude to those men and women who let their bodies absorb the blows intended for America. DAV's program of advocacy, of representation of service members, of veterans, of advice and counseling to veterans, of volunteerism, has over those 78 years made us a better nation because we have served our veterans better as a result.

Last year alone, two million DAV and Auxiliary volunteers served in the medical centers of the VA to help veterans. Another two million served in state nursing homes and non-VA locations. Seven hundred and fifty-five vans have been donated by the DAV for the use in transportation of veterans in the last ten years; 147 just two months ago in the capital. That is an extraordinary record. (Applause)

And you have not left it at that. Drivers have volunteered and have transported untold numbers of veterans on the theory that if the vans do not have drivers, then you will see to it. And in seeing to it, you have gotten disabled veterans and poor veterans to a place where health care can be provided.

Your Winter Sports Clinic, which you co-host with VA at Crested Butte, each day, each hour, produces examples of a determination to have life, to make the most of it, to overcome that inspire not alone, not solely, the disabled veterans who come there, but all in America who learn of it. You serve veterans there and in so doing you serve America.

Your National Service Officers, your representatives, who pursue cases in behalf of veterans, bring a professionalism and an

advocacy to the veterans' side of the equation that is essential if we are to do our job properly.

And so, as my first duty here as your Secretary of Veterans Affairs, I say on my behalf, on behalf of the department I head, and on behalf of all citizens of the United States, thank you for what you do, thank you for what you have done, and thank you for what your continued existence offers to the future of America.

We stand as you gather here for your 77th convention on the dawn of a new millennium. January 1st of the year 2000 is less than 17 months away, and I know that the experts tell us, well, "January the 1st of 2000 is not the beginning of the millennium; it's a year later, January 1st of 2001." But you and I know that when that date occurs, it will feel like a new millennium, whatever the expert say.

You know, when I was growing up, just a new year was a big deal for me: we'll be putting the date with a different number. Then as I grew older and learned about decades, it seemed like every decade when instead of talking about '60s, you talked about '70s or '80s, that was a big deal. A century's a big deal. Many people don't get to see a new century. My dad was born on 1905. He died in the '70s. He will not get to see the change in centuries.

And so the opportunity to see the new millennium is an exciting one for me. But it will bring change, for change is inevitable.

John F. Kennedy more than 30 years ago as President, said, "Change is the law of life. And those of us who stand with our eyes too firmly fixed on the past or too focused on the present are sure to miss out on the promise of the future. Change then will come to us."

It is already happening in our delivery of health care services to veterans. You have seen it. And it is for me an unsettling thing, as I suspect it is for many of our veterans. Any change, any disruption of what I'm used to makes me uneasy. Indeed, you and I can agree that change may be the law of life, but we don't want any part of it unless it brings the certain prospect for improvement. (Applause)

And that is what we must have and what we are committed to in the delivery of health care services. The changes that you see around you, the continued emphasis on outpatient clinics, must be designed and must result in improved health care. And the tests that we will have for ourselves and that you should apply to us are more health care for more veterans, better health care, better delivery, with no diminution in the important aspects of VA health care that are unique to us.

And you know what I mean by "unique." It is VA that uniquely has grown the expertise in the health care problems of the aging, in prosthetics and rehabilitation, and in the special injuries that affect our veterans and our disabled.

So even as we seek the improvements, some 600 outpatient clinics opening and more to come, I assure you, even as we seek the improvements, not only must we obey the physician's cause of doing no harm, we must bring better care.

Now, change also can bring some unfortunate rumors. You know about them. As I've traveled around, for example, I keep running across the rumor that says VA's about to close down its vet centers. You and I know that vet centers are a unique American response, a unique way in which America responds.

We think out of the box. And so when it turned out that in response to the Vietnam experience we needed a unique way of providing health care, the veterans centers were established. They are too important. We will not terminate them -- hear me -- not on my watch. (Applause)

And there are other rumors as well. You know the Internet. We've got all sorts of ways of communicating. And the Internet has put out its -- well, it seemed to put out the information that enrollment is coming, it's coming on the 1st of October, and if we're not enrolled, too bad for us.

Well, you, I know by now, understand how that will work. But let me say it again for the record: Yes, we are required by law,

if we are to provide health care to a veteran on and after October 1st, for that veteran to be enrolled. That does not mean, however, that a veteran who has not enrolled by October 1st will not get health care to which he or she is entitled. No. It means that when the veteran comes, we will process the application for enrollment and provide the health care.

And for those who have received health care at a VA facility since October of 1996, we have already processed your enrollment application, even if you didn't. And so you will continue to receive your health care as well. (Applause)

I can go into any hospital, any medical center, any outpatient clinic, and speak to a veteran, whether in the lobby where they wait in the reception area or in a ward, and the veteran will tell me that his doctor and her nurse are the absolute best, they're getting great care. Not so sure about Joe Veteran down the hall, but "I'm doing fine."

I think you and I understand that. First of all, it's human nature. We want the health care we receive from our doctors to be the best. We demand it. But also I think it's true. It's occurring.

But I can ask the same veteran this question, "Is there anything else bothering you?", and two out of three -- and that's not a scientific sampling, that's my sort of reaction -- two out of three will say, "Well, you know, I have this claim." Now, I tell that to you not to criticize any of the folks who handle VA claims. You know as well as I do that we have one of the most dedicated and competent work forces in the government, and one of the most highly motivated because every day they come to work knowing they're going to do some good.

But it is a reminder to us all that the claim of a veteran is an important part of his or her life. He or she lives with it, and measures us and our government and our nation's gratitude by how we handle it. (Applause)

You may have heard in my biography, my introduction by the national commander, that I am a lawyer by training. In the law we have a saying, "Justice delayed is justice denied." I say to you that every -- (applause). You have the point already. Every day that we delay in resolving a claim, even though I understand about the reference back to the day if it's granted, when it's granted, every day that we delay operates as in fact a denial for that day of that claim to that veteran. That should inspire us all to move quickly and accurately, and it does. (Applause)

And so the commitment that you will hear and have heard from the new Under-Secretary for Benefits, Joe Thompson, to proceed both on timeliness and on getting it right is an absolutely true one, to which I and all of VA are committed.

I was at an event in the northeastern part of the United States, and a veteran came up to me and said, "Mr. Secretary, I believe America no longer remembers the Battle of the Bulge." And implicit in that is also and why we were there and what we did and its effect. Indeed, some part of what he said is undoubtedly true. Because of our veterans, because of your service and sacrifice, our children and grandchildren are growing to adulthood with a lesser memory of the perils and dangers of war.

But part of what he said is wrong as well. America does remember, for two reasons. The first is this: Go outside the door. Walk the streets of America. Go into cities across the land. There you will look at the children at play, the families going about their business in freedom. They are your memorials, testament to your courage in protecting them and this nation.

Go into the hamlets and villages across America. See churches and schools. See homes and neighborhoods. They are your monuments, testaments to your perseverance in keeping totalitarianism away from the shores of this nation.

Go to the remotest parts of this nation, to the desert, to the mountains, to the forests, to isolated beaches, inhale the air. It is the air of freedom, a testament to your belief in the ideals of this nation and your commitment. That is one reason there is a second that America will remember, because there will always be those who will tell her.

More than a hundred years ago, America remembered when Abraham Lincoln wrote Mrs. Bixby. You know the words of the letter from Lincoln to Bixby, to speak about her sacrifice, her family's sacrifice. Hear them again:

Dear Madam:

I've been shown in the files of the War Department a document that states that you are the mother of five sons who died gloriously on the field of battle. I fear how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine that would seek to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. I tender such consolation as you may find in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray Our Heavenly Father to assuage the anguish of your bereavement and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and the lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice on the altar of freedom.

America remembered again just three short years ago when President Clinton led the nation, the world in commemorating the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of World War II. He said during that time, to a worldwide audience, "Look at the veterans before you. They are old today, but when they were young, they saved the world." (Applause)

And America has remembered today. Already the movie by Steven Spielberg, "Saving Private Ryan," was mentioned from this podium. And you heard the words in that interview with Spielberg afterwards. He said, "If the best thing that comes of this movie is that someone who has seen it is driving past a veterans memorial cemetery" -- Spielberg's words -- "and sees those gravestones and remembers why they are there and what price was paid and who we are and how we are the beneficiaries of their sacrifice, then I will be satisfied that it has achieved all I would have wanted."

Spielberg spoke of reminding America of your sacrifice, of the sacrifice of all her veterans. Well, God bless you for that devotion to your nation. God bless all who have served this nation over the 200 and some 25 years of her existence. Bless those who serve today.

And on this day in the desert some 110 degrees outside, on this the opening ceremony of your 77th Annual Convention, and on many such days in the future, whether they are in good times or times of social or economic challenge, whether during peace as we pray, or if need be at war, may God bless as well the dear and noble nation which takes its strength from the spirit and the will and the souls of its citizens and draws her majesty and her nobility from the courage, the dedication, the patriotism and the noble hearts of her veterans.

God bless you. Thank you all. (Rising applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for coming. I know you have a plane to catch, so we'll excuse you and let you be on your way.

Paul Wellstone is the senior United States senator from Minnesota. In 1990, he mounted a vigorous campaign on a modest budget and became the only 1990 Senate contender to unseat an incumbent. He was able to do so because he put together a dedicated volunteer force and generated grassroots participation in the political process.

In 1996, he was elected to a second six-year term in the United States Senate.

Senator Wellstone serves on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee and has been a strong, steadfast advocate for this nation's veterans. Most recently, Senator Wellstone stood up against those in Congress who wanted to plunder veterans programs to pay for a huge budget-busting increase in spending for highways and other transportation programs.

Although the efforts of Senator Wellstone and others who fought against this travesty were unsuccessful, he nonetheless has continued the fight to protect veterans' rights and the benefits that we have earned for ourselves and our families.

Senator, will you join me at the podium? I would like to present to you this special recognition of your steadfast support for America's veterans. (Applause)

In recognition of and great appreciation for your outstanding support for America's veterans and their families.

Through your unwavering efforts for equitable legislation and policies, you have helped to ensure that America continues to honor its commitments to veterans.

Noting all of your achievements, and on behalf of more than 1.1 million members of the Disabled American Veterans, it is our pleasure to honor you as a great public servant and a true champion of America's veterans.

Signed, Harry R. McDonald, Jr., National Commander, and Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant. (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the Honorable Paul David Wellstone, the senior senator from the great State of Minnesota. (Applause)

SENATOR PAUL DAVID WELLSTONE: Thank you so much. Let me first of all just say to the commander, I really appreciate your graciousness in letting me precede your address to the convention. I want to thank everybody here.

It was wonderful hearing the words of Secretary West. He will be a strong advocate for veterans.

And he reminded me, as long as we're talking about staying within reason, that when I first came to the Senate, I gave a speech from the floor. I thought it was my very best. I marshalled evidence for my point of view. I tried to be a powerful speaker. I finished up, was feeling proud. Fritz Hollings, senator from South Carolina, at age about 76 junior senator from South Carolina, came up to me and he said, "Young man, you remind me of Hubert Humphrey." Now, I'm going to tell you all, I was really just about ten feet tall. And he went on and he said, "You talk too much." (Laughter) So I will remember that.

To Minnesotans, and there are many, Lyle Pearson and Roy Hansen, and all the Minnesotans that are here -- we have a delegation of about 50 -- I would never be here to receive this honor, I wouldn't be in the United States Senate, if not for your support. And you know exactly what I mean. (Applause)

I want to thank you for this plaque, for this award, because it is from an organization that I respect and I admire and I love. Whenever there are two of you gathered together, patriotism is there. And the DAV is all about service. You exemplify service.

To the national commander, thank you. To the Senior Vice-Commander Andy Kistler, thank you. National Adjutant Art Wilson, thank you. Auxiliary National Commander Evelynne Dunn, thank you. National staff, all my DAV friends from Minnesota, and all the Auxiliary members from around the country, I cannot tell you how much this recognition means to me. I'm so proud to be a senator for veterans.

Now, I haven't seen him yet, but I have been told that my very good and close friend, Secretary for Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown, is here, and I just want to say to everybody that I look to Jesse for leadership and advice. Senator Reid has been a strong senator for veterans. I know he would say the same thing. Time and time again, Jesse Brown's passion and determination have made a positive difference in the lives of veterans.

He always tells it like it is. And when he was Secretary, he would upset congressional leaders -- do you remember? -- who wanted to use budget tricks to squeeze billions of dollars out of veterans programs. But Jesse wouldn't let them get away with it. Remember what they did? They cut his travel budget to try and keep him from talking with veterans from around the country.

And I remember going to the floor of the Senate and telling my colleagues, "These types of personal attacks are wrong and, in any case, you won't silence Jesse Brown." The attacks didn't silence him. They didn't slow him down. He was there to challenge anti-veteran priorities then. He continues to fight for veterans today. Secretary Brown set a standard, and we need to carry on the fight for veterans in the Jesse Brown tradition.

Where are you, Jesse Brown? Where is Jesse Brown? There he is, right there! (Rising applause)

DAV, you have a proud and rich history of service to our country. That service continues today. It's the kind of

commitment and the kind of attitude and sense of community and service that we sorely need in America.

Because of you, disabled veterans, hard hit by a devastating tornado in Saint Peter and Comrey, Minnesota this spring, got a helping hand. Hank Sadler, Mike Pugliese led the DAV's efforts of service to community, of patriotism.

Because of you, the VA medical centers get 147 new vans through your new Transportation Program. Because of you, we have a veterans health care system and we have service-connected benefits. Because of you, we extend some help, though not enough, to homeless veterans, service to veterans.

Because of you, we have prosperity. Because of you, we have freedom. Because of you, we have democracy, service to the nation, service to community, patriotism.

To me as a senator, giving back to veterans strengthens our nation, and my advocacy for veterans is all about giving back to you and trying to serve you for all that you've done for our country. (Applause)

But I'm going to pose a question, have we done enough in America for veterans?

(Response of "No.")

SENATOR WELLSTONE: Many veterans came home from serving our country and many veterans, many here, have lived very distinguished lives, no question about it. But there are many veterans that look to us for help and support. And the question I ask is, does more need to be done?

To answer to that question, listen to the Persian Gulf veteran who returned home with a long and complicated list of ailments. We can and we should do everything in our power to support Persian Gulf veterans. And as a senator and as an organization, we won't rest until they get the answers, the health care and the compensation they deserve. (Applause)

Listen to the aging disabled World War II veteran, who's worried about losing touch with family and friends by being placed in a nursing home. We have to now, now develop a strategy for long-term care as more and more of our veterans and their families live to be 85. Thank God. It's not complicated. It means a commitment to veterans nursing homes. But it means more than that.

We should not put veterans in a situation where this is their only choice. Our policy as a nation in a good veterans health care system should be to make sure that elderly veterans for as long as possible are able to live at home in as near normal circumstances as possible, with dignity. That means a commitment to home-based health care for elderly veterans in the United States of America. (Applause)

Does more need to be done, DAV? Listen to Smokey Parrish. It could be Gene Toronto from my State of Minnesota. They came here to Nevada. They were atomic veterans; they are atomic veterans. They went to Ground Zero with little or no protection to measure radiation. And for all these years, so many of these veterans and their families, their children and their grandchildren, have struggled with terrible illnesses. Many of them have died.

I passed a bill finally out of committee, finally. This is just to me -- you know how this happens to you? I can't let go of it. Finally it came out of committee that those veterans exposed to radiation -- and DAV has helped me on this, Commander -- will now receive additional presumptive service-connected assistance from lung, ovarian and brain and central nervous system cancers. But it actually should be a longer list of cancers.

But I want to say here today that as a United States senator and as an organization, the DAV, we will not rest until the atomic veterans get the justice that they deserve in the United States of America. (Applause)

Have we done enough? Have we done enough for veterans? Ask the disabled veteran whose claim for service-connected disability took five years of appeals and remands to get approved. I'm so pleased to hear the Secretary's commitment to make a difference here. On the average, 111 days for a claim for benefits to move through a regional office; 881 days for an appeal to move through the Board of Veterans Appeals. Forty-one percent of the cases at

the Board of Veterans Appeals in 1997 were remanded and sent back to the regional offices for further work.

I say to the Disabled American Veterans that it is too long for a claim, and it's too many mistakes. Justice delayed is justice denied. And I agree with National Adjutant Art Wilson: We must get the decision right in the first place; we must get the decision right the first time. That is critically important for veterans in our country. (Applause)

And I get to shout this from the mountaintop. Of course, the VA must reengineer its claim process and do better. It's always easier said than done. And, of course, we need new technology. But we've got to stop this practice of every time we get a new computer, cutting staff. Computers can't replace trained professionals, especially in adjudicating complicated claims for veterans. We need to fully fund the VA regional offices and VA staff in this country. (Applause)

Have we done enough? Listen to the disabled veteran living and struggling with PTSD. I've seen so many of those veterans. He's been back from the war several decades now, but he still drowns his pain in alcohol. Access to treatment is critical.

Listen to the disabled homeless veteran, who's living on the streets in most of our cities. How can it be that in the United States of America today, at our peak economic performance when we're doing so well economically, it is estimated that one-third of the homeless in our country are veterans? We've got to put a stop to that. That's a national shame. (Applause) One-third of the homeless people are veterans. It's not acceptable, and we can do better as a nation.

Better access to VA treatment for mental illness and chemical dependency is critical. Better access to transitional housing is critical. Better access to job training is critical. That's how we can make a difference, a positive difference in the lives of homeless veterans.

And listen to the disabled veteran who depends upon the VA medical system for health care in an era of cutting staff and flat, no-growth budget. Dr. Kaiser has moved forward with some changes. Secretary Brown was a part of some positive changes. I know that Secretary West will continue with this. We had a strong advocate in Secretary Brown, and we'll have a strong advocate with Secretary West.

But we need at this gathering, not in the spirit of anything but determination, only in a positive way, we need to make something clear to the Congress. It is time for the Congress to put veterans' concerns, the concerns and circumstances of veterans' lives and their families, back on the agenda, back on the table. It is time for the Congress to take positive action, forward-looking action, be pro-active, when it comes to good, positive veterans' health care legislation, and it is time to stop squeezing money out of our VA health care system. (Applause)

I get to introduce a bill. It's just the beginning. It's an honor. I hope with Senator Cleland, who was here earlier today, I hope with Democrats and Republicans, bipartisan, we can do several things. It's not difficult to figure out. We fully fund the medical system, we make a commitment that we do that.

If third-party payments mean that we come up short, we make a commitment to provide the additional funding. We pass a nationwide Medicare reimbursement so that all Medicare eligible veterans have the freedom to choose VA, if that's their choice for their care.

We give veterans a stronger voice as we see this consolidation and actually giving advice, so that we deliver care in a humane and dignified fashion. And we make a commitment again to looking at a population that is becoming older, at the long-term needs of veterans.

And any senator, whether he or she is a Democrat or Republican or independent, will receive a tremendous amount of satisfaction from having made this kind of commitment to the veterans community and will come away with a renewed sense of commitment of wanting to do more.

This attitude, however -- I'm going to say this to you -- has not been on display recently in the capital. A case in point: A

Congress and an Administration which was committed to what I think was highway robbery, and I make my case, and it is as follows. Maybe you believe that there should have been direct compensation for tobacco-related illnesses, and maybe you don't. But either there should have been -- and this was scored $17 billion -- either there should have been direct compensation, or that same amount of money should have been invested in the veterans community.

Was the $17 billion that was used for highways, that didn't go to veterans for tobacco-related compensation -- that's the way it was scored -- was it used to help Gulf War veterans? No. Did they use the savings to enhance long-term care for senior veterans? No. Did they use the savings for justice for atomic veterans? No. Did they use the savings to fully fund veterans' health care? No.

The savings were used to pay for all sorts of different transportation projects. Now, I am for a good transportation system in our country. I am for rebuilding our nation's infrastructure. But if the Congress, whether they're Democrats, Republicans or others, want to fund highways, want to fund infrastructure, let them take it out of subsidies for the oil companies or the tobacco companies, or the pharmaceutical companies, or the insurance companies, but don't take it out of veterans' health care in the United States of America. (Applause)

Now we no longer have a budget deficit, and now we can make the investment. There are no more good excuses. So it's time we hold them accountable.

And I leave you with this idea. I think that the biggest challenge, Secretary Brown, is to confront a philosophy right now that we see in our nation's capital. I'm being very bipartisan and nonpartisan in how I describe it. I call it the new isolationism, not as in foreign affairs, but as in human affairs. I call it the new isolationism. I see a lot more of it from Republican leadership, but I see too much of it, period.

Because what it says to individuals is, "You're on your own." It says to those of us in the veterans community, but those of us in our country, "You're on your own." If you should be 60 years old, and you have Parkinson's disease -- both my parents had Parkinson's disease -- you're on your own.

If you should have served in Vietnam and then one day you go in to take a shower -- Glenwood, Minnesota, Erickson family -- but then you get out of the shower and you never say another word to your family because you're struggling from post-traumatic stress syndrome, you're on your own.

If you should have a child that's born developmentally disabled, you're on your own. If you're poor, and you can't put food on the table, you're on your own.

This philosophy is not the greatness of our country, and we need to take on this new isolationism with what is the DAV philosophy. It is devotion to country, it is commitment to one nation as a whole, it is a commitment to a national community. It is a commitment to the idea that we all do better when we all do better.

It is a commitment to the idea that every child, no matter color of skin, no matter gender, no matter rich or poor, no matter boy or girl, rural or urban, that every child will have the same chance to reach his full potential and her full potential in America. That is the greatness of our country. That is the goodness of our country.

Let us see an America as we move into the next millennium that honors the veterans. Let's build a new American century of justice and patriotism. We can do better as a nation. We can do much better.

Wendell Phillips was one of my favorite speakers. He was speaking in the 1840s. He was speaking with a lot of passion and determination. Actually, he was condemning slavery. He wouldn't equivocate. He said it was a moral outrage, and then he finished, and a friend came up and said, "Wendell, why are you so on fire?"

DAV members, Wendell turned to his friend and he said, "Brother May, I'm on fire because I have mountains of ice before me to melt." We have mountains of ice before us to melt. Let's organize veterans and families around the country. You're going to

have to lead the charge again, Commander, DAV. Let's organize in the Jesse Brown tradition. Let's organize in the DAV tradition.

And I don't have to tell you what I tell every single young person that I speak with today in our country: The future in America will not belong to those who are content with the present. It will not belong to cynics. It will not belong to people who stand on the sideline. The future will belong to people who have passion and work hard to make our country better. The future will belong to those women and men who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

Thank you. (Rising applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you for coming, Senator. We look forward to your continued support for disabled veterans. I know you're on a tight schedule as well, so we'll let you go at this time.

(Whereupon, Senior Vice-Commander Andrew A. Kistler assumed the chair.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER ANDREW A. KISTLER: As you know, leadership, commitment to our mission, and service to our fellow veterans are necessary qualifications for the position of DAV National Commander. And Harry McDonald certainly has demonstrated those qualifications during his leadership of our organization.

He joined the DAV immediately after leaving a 28-year career in the military. He enlisted in the United States Navy in 1945. In 1949, he left the Navy for a career in the Army, rising from the enlisted ranks to a commission as an officer.

His many assignments included tours of duty in Germany, Korea, China, Japan and Vietnam, and earned him numerous military decorations, including the Bronze Star.

As a life member of DAV Chapter 57 in Crestview, Florida, Harry's dedication to serving veterans and his commitment to the DAV mission earned him considerable respect and recognition. He has held numerous positions in the Department of Florida, including department commander for 1984 and '85, and six years as Department Service Commission chairman.

At the DAV level, Harry McDonald served as a member of the National Executive Committee from 1985 to 1987. In 1993, Harry was elected national 3rd junior vice-commander, and just one year ago, this membership unanimously elected Harry to lead the organization as DAV national commander, a post he has held with great honor and distinction.

He is a man of purpose, a man of commitment, and a person who is unquestionably dedicated to service and our mission of building better lives for America's disabled veterans.

It is my pleasure and genuine honor to present to you Harry R. McDonald, Jr., national commander of the Disabled American Veterans. (Rising applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Andy, for that kind, very kind introduction.

National Adjutant Wilson, Auxiliary Commander Dunn, honored guests, friends and delegates to the 77th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans: It seems like only a short time ago I addressed you as your new national commander. Now the time has come to hand over the reins of command to another. I do that with the secure knowledge that the DAV will be in good hands.

Since this will be my final address to you as your national commander, I will take a moment to recognize all the helping hands that have made this a great year for me and for the DAV. As you know, the DAV is more than a few individuals dedicated to serving our nation's wartime disabled veterans. It is an organization, a team of people across the country who work hard for all of us every day.

These include my fellow line officers, the National Executive Committee, the National Finance Committee and our National Headquarters staffs in Cincinnati and Washington, led by National Adjutant Art Wilson and Executive Directors Rick Patterson and Dave Gorman. I want to thank all those at the chapter and department levels for their assistance.

A special thanks goes out to our corps of very dedicated National Service Officers and their support staffs for all of their

fine work on behalf of this nation's veterans and their families. And I thank all of those who work in the Hospital Service Coordinator Program and the multitude of volunteers who work in the DAV and the DAV Auxiliary volunteer programs: Our VAVS Program, the DAV Transportation Network and the whole range of state and local volunteer activities that help build better lives for disabled veterans and their families. There is a special place in my heart for all of you.

It is notable that this year marks the 100th anniversary of George Gershwin's birth. The master songwriter once penned, "Our Love is Here to Stay," a song we all remember. But if I had written that song, I might have said, "Gibraltar may tumble, the Rockies may crumble, but the DAV is here to stay." (Applause)

Our organization has a long history, 78 years of service to veterans. Our past is legend, and our future is rich. It is the present that is sometimes troubling.

My year as national commander has given me a unique vantage point to observe what is happening in the world of veterans affairs. As an organization, we have achieved successes and fought many stressful battles. We won many victories, but we have also suffered some setbacks.

Always during this time, I have been sustained by hope and faith in the future. As I turn the leadership of this organization over to my successor, I am proud of the DAV's strong, vibrant and pro-active mission to serve America's disabled veterans.

As I leave you, I also leave with an important challenge. You, the membership of the DAV, as well as the leadership, must unite as never before to fend off assaults by Congress and the Administration on the hard-won benefits we have fought so desperately to preserve.

We are strong because we are many. But we have seen a Congress and an Administration eliminate 15 and one-half billion dollars -- that's right, billion dollars -- in disability compensation, and use that money to fund budget-busting highway projects. There is not one among us in this room who agrees with that.

It was done because, as one elected representative put it, "Veterans don't vote." I urge you to change their minds. If the DAV calls on you for help to write a letter, to make a phone call, or to send a telegram, do it. If the DAV needs your support on an issue, even though it may not directly affect you, give it.

And, most importantly, we need to send a message to Washington that veterans do show up at the ballot box and we do exercise our right to vote. It is a constitutional right that we fought for. We should not give up that important privilege at a time when it's needed most.

General Douglas MacArthur told Congress at the moment of his retirement, "Old soldiers never die. They just fade away." Well, this is one old soldier who is not going to fade away. Come election day, our representatives in Washington will hear from me. Will they hear from you?

(Response of, "Yes.")

COMMANDER McDONALD: I hope they will. (Applause)

I urge you not to be deceived by the political maneuverings used by Congress to sidestep responsibility on this huge breach of faith with America's veterans. You may hear talk of one and a half billion dollars in increased benefits that Congress passed, but that money is nothing compared to the 15 and one-half billion dollars Congress took from veterans in the transportation bill.

We are also challenged by the House federal budget plan which could mean deep cuts in veterans programs to help pay for billions in tax breaks. It's obvious and shameful that some in Congress see veterans programs as a pot of gold they can raid to achieve political ends.

The bottom line is that veterans could face even longer delays in getting their claims processed and decided, and thousands of sick and disabled veterans could be denied much-needed health care.

The clear signal that every DAV member must send to Congress is: We will not stand by and allow them to break America's promise to its veterans. (Applause)

So, as I hand over this mantle of leadership, I will carry with me many wonderful memories. I wish all of you could have seen the remarkable pageantry in Washington this past June when the DAV donated 147 vans to VA medical centers in 41 states to provide free transportation for sick and disabled veterans.

This was our largest one-year contribution, valued at more than $3 million. It was a hot day when most of us would seek shade, but nearly 3,000 VA employees joined us at VA Headquarters to accept those vans.

Since 1987, the DAV and its chapters and departments have donated 755 vans, worth nearly $14 million, to transport millions of veterans needing treatment at VA hospitals and clinics.

Over the last 11 years, DAV Transportation Network volunteers have logged almost 158 million miles and given more than eight million volunteer hours to serve our comrades. In fact, last year alone, DAV volunteer drivers drove more than 21 million miles and provided 610,000 rides for veterans. (Applause)

I will always cherish the heartwarming experience of the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic at Crested Butte, Colorado. I witnessed countless miracles on that beautiful mountainside. Severely disabled veterans come away from that experience with a new sense of accomplishment and renewed self-confidence by reaching far beyond what they believed were their physical limitations.

I watched as our brothers and sisters joyfully reached the bottom of the mountain, filled with the awe of new possibilities and new dreams of what could be.

It was Robert Frost who wrote that, "Some people see things as they are and ask why? I dream of things that could never be and say why not?"

I cannot relate to you how honored I felt when representing you during my many trips to the White House to meet with President Clinton and members of his Administration. I did my best to represent you and to further the goals of the Disabled American Veterans.

I felt an even greater sense of pride and honor as I addressed two new classes at the DAV National Service Officer Training Academy. It's located in Denver. These 57 very capable young men and women are now at work in DAV National Service Offices nationwide assisting veterans and their families.

Their faces reflect their youth and enthusiasm for the work of the DAV, but their experience is rich. They are veterans of Grenada, Panama, Bosnia and the Persian Gulf. They have maturity beyond their years earned in the sobering realities of modern warfare.

They have earned our respect as brothers and sisters and will be the ones who carry the DAV forth in its mission well into the 21st century.

During this year, I was personally grateful to represent the DAV at the World Veterans Federation Conference in Korea. I proudly took that pilgrimage back to where I had also served to further the goals of the DAV and to ensure that veterans of that war will never be forgotten.

It has often been said that generosity and charity are never forgotten, and the generosity and compassion of Lois B. Pope will forever be in the memory of the DAV. The Lois Pope LIFE Foundation and the DAV have embarked on several joint projects to honor America's disabled veterans. Last November, on the eve of Veterans Day, we recognized Past National Commander Chad Colley as the first recipient of LIFE's Presidential Unsung Hero Award.

This prestigious award recognizes the extraordinary accomplishments of disabled veterans, and it is altogether fitting that it is presented on Veterans Day eve at a gala dinner in Washington.

In addition, Mrs. Pope and the DAV continue to work to make sure that the service and sacrifice of disabled veterans are remembered with a national memorial in Washington. We look forward to a long, productive association with Mrs. Pope as we join forces to help ensure that America continues to remember and honor those who bear the deepest wounds and scars of their service to this

country.

So I challenge you to exhibit the same fundamental beliefs of Mrs. Pope. I encourage you to work together to believe in the wonderful possibilities that can be ours. Cast doubt and pessimism aside. Roll up your sleeves and join in, working together towards a common goal, to build better lives for our nation's disabled veterans and their families.

Sadly, I must bid you farewell as national commander of the Disabled American Veterans. I now become part of the history of the DAV, and as I look back, I see with crystal clarity this was a good year. In fact, it was just about as good as it could get.

In conclusion, I leave you with my heartfelt appreciation for all of your work, and I leave you with immense pride in your association. Thank you for giving me the opportunity of a lifetime. I still think being your national commander is the greatest job anyone could ever have.

God bless you and God bless America. (Rising applause)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER KISTLER: The Chair will entertain a motion to accept the national commander's report. Yes.

NEC 2ND DISTRICT SAL R. TORNATORE: Sal Tornatore, NEC 2nd District, New York, move to accept the commander's report.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER KISTLER: Thank you. Is there a second to that vote?

(Motion seconded from the floor.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER KISTLER: Thank you. There's been a motion and a second. Question on the motion? No question. All in favor, say Aye; opposed. The vote is unanimous. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Commander McDonald resumed the chair.)

COMMANDER McDONALD: It is rare when the great Hollywood image-makers can empathize with the experience of disabled veterans. When that happens, our mission of service and hope becomes easier.

In 1994, during our National Convention in Chicago, we presented the DAV National Commander's Award to actor Gary Sinise for his portrayal of a combat-injured double amputee in the Academy Award-winning movie, "Forrest Gump."

Mr. Sinise brought sensitivity and honesty to his portrayal of the character of Lieutenant Dan. We all appreciated that. But the presentation of the DAV National Commander's Award proved to be a treasured moment for Mr. Sinise.

In August of this year, Mr. Sinise was interviewed by CBS Correspondent Charles Osgood on the CBS "Eye on the People" weekly "Signature" series. Mr. Sinise talked about his lasting memories of the moment when he stood before the Disabled American Veterans and expressed his appreciation.

(Video presentation.)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Mr. Sinise's comments validate the pride of the DAV and all that we stand for. His commitment to help advance the mission of the DAV will play a critical role in our future initiatives. We are indeed proud to have his support and close relationship.

At this time, I would like to introduce the National Executive Committee. Please hold your applause until I have them all introduced.

1st District, Alan W. Bowers of Massachusetts; 2nd District, Sal R. Tornatore, New York. Sitting in for the 3rd District NEC Edward S. Lastowski of New Hampshire is NEC Alternate Harold Smith of Maine. 4th District, Grover Don Penn of Delaware; 5th District, James E. Turner, Jr. of Pennsylvania; 6th District, Josue Saez of Puerto Rico; 7th District, Jimmy Meeks of Florida.

Sitting in for the 8th NEC, Charles W. Mills of Alabama is NEC Alternate Hollis Bridges of Alabama. 9th District, Wallace E. Tyson of North Carolina; 10th District, Roger Jansen of Michigan; 11th District, David A. Goliver of Ohio; 12th District, James R. Harris of Illinois; 13th District, James T. Ashby of Kentucky; 14th District, Harry VandeMore of South Dakota; 15th District, Franklin C. Bergquist of Kansas; 16th District, Robert D. Salisbury of California; 17th District, Benjamin Palomino of Colorado; 18th District, Michael J. Smaydy of Arizona; 19th District, Harold E. Wiley of Washington; 20th District, William A. Bone of Texas; and

the 21st District, Robert D. Cohoon of Oklahoma. (Applause)

And of great assistance to me this year was my National Chief of Staff Tommy R. Simms of Florida. Are you in here, Tommy? Okay. Officer of the Day Larry O. Kyser of Florida; and Sergeant-at-Arms William J. Samuels of Louisiana. (Applause)

It is an honor once again to share the lectern with DAV National Auxiliary Commander Evelynne Dunn. During my term as your national commander, I've had the pleasure and privilege of seeing her exemplify the leadership, love and dedication that has so capably led the Auxiliary through this past year.

Commander Dunn is a member of the DAV Auxiliary Unit 13 right here in Las Vegas. She is also an avid volunteer at the VA Medical Center and is one of the DAV National Transportation Network volunteer drivers who drives between Las Vegas and California transporting sick and disabled veterans for needed medical treatment.

A proven Auxiliary leader, she has held nearly every DAV Auxiliary office from unit through national level, and she has held them with distinction.

A Native American of Mohawk ancestry and mother of four grown children, Commander Dunn's membership eligibility is through her late husband, Fred, who was wounded in the Battle of the Bulge in France during World War II.

Here to deliver her report to the National Convention is my friend and a truly dedicated woman, DAV Auxiliary National Commander Evelyn Dunn. (Rising applause)

AUXILIARY COMMANDER EVELYN DUNN: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you, Commander, for your kind introduction.

National officers, past national commanders, distinguished guests, delegates and members of the Disabled American Veterans and its Auxiliary: As a Las Vegas lady -- and I have lived here for 35 years; even though I wasn't raised here, I have lived here for 35 years, so I consider myself a Las Vegas lady -- I would be remiss if I did not welcome you to the most vibrant and exciting city in the country. I invite you to enjoy all the amenities that this city has to offer.

Whatever you have heard about the hot weather in Las Vegas, I can assure you it is all true. (Laughter) In other places, most people stay home and hibernate in the wintertime. Not so in Las Vegas. We do all that in the summer.

Commander McDonald, it has been a special time for me to serve with you this past year.

And at this time, it's my pleasure to introduce to you the dedicated women who rose to the challenge and led the Auxiliary this year. As I introduce them, please hold your applause.

National Senior Vice-Commander Evelyn Dorsey, Washington, D.C.; 1st Junior Vice-Commander Paula Raymond from Alton, Illinois; 2nd Junior Vice-Commander Carol Gray, Grand Rapids, Michigan; 3rd Junior Vice-Commander Jacqueline Fossiano, Hyannis Port, Massachusetts; 4th Junior Vice-Commander Renee Jones, Gastonia, North Carolina; National Chaplain Gertrude Tidwell, Atoka, Oklahoma; National Judge Advocate Shelia Allred from Concord, North Carolina; Immediate Past Commander Margaret Hass, Bowbells, North Dakota; and my friend, National Adjutant and Past National Commander Maria Tedrow; and Assistant National Adjutant Judy Hezlep. Thank you, ladies. (Applause)

Next, I would like to introduce our National Executive Committeewomen. Please, again, I ask if you'll hold your applause until they are all introduced.

1st District, Miriam Daley; 2nd District, Dolores Robidoux; 3rd District, Ann Kelley; 4th District, Beatrice Albanese; 5th District, Rebecca Anderson; 6th District, Mildred Velazquez; 7th District, Grace McLaughlin; 8th District, Elaine Majors; 9th District, Betty Bryant; 10th District, Gwen McCracken; 11th District, Florence McGovern; 12th District, Beraldine Errett; 13th District, Edith Jackson; 14th District, Sharon Kramer; 15th District, Bonita Mitchell; 16th District, Alma Fowlkes; 17th District, Jean Jackson; 18th District, Joan Fletcher; 19th District, Norma Parker; 20th District, June Bradford; and 21st District, Sara Douglass. (Applause)

Thank you, ladies.

At this time, I would also like to introduce a very gracious lady who has made our last four National Conventions that were held here in Las Vegas such great successes: Our National Convention Chairperson Helen Parcelle, from right here in Las Vegas. (Applause)

And last, but not least, there is a special group of ladies here today that I would introduce to you. They are the women who paved the way so that the Auxiliary would continue to be the vibrant, optimistic and forward-thinking organization it is today. They are the past national commanders of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

Ladies, would you please stand and be recognized? (Applause) Thank you very much, ladies.

We are gathered at this 77th National Convention to renew the commitments we made when we assumed the mantle of membership. With the close of this century upon us and the beginning of not only a new century but a new millennium, we are at a threshold in time when we must indeed prioritize the covenant we made to this organization. In so doing, the Disabled American Veterans and its Auxiliary will continue to be viable instruments in helping veterans and their families into the future.

The partnership between the Auxiliary and the Disabled American Veterans was forged with bonds of indissoluble respect and esteem over 75 years ago. The goals that we set for ourselves as members are the same: goals that allow veterans and their families live more comfortable lives.

As national commander of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary, my theme for this past year was, "Let us rise to every challenge with compassion, priority and resolution," in short, CPR. I can state that undeniably the ladies of the Auxiliary have risen to the challenge in the many programs we offer to serve veterans and their families.

Over the years, the Auxiliary has stood shoulder to shoulder with our parent organization. We have confronted national budget cuts, downsizing of VA medical facilities and disappointments in veterans legislation. Yet through it all, we have prevailed in our continued efforts on behalf of veterans and their families.

This year, I was privileged to be at the side of Commander McDonald as he made his presentation to the Joint Veterans Affairs Committee in Washington, D.C. We stood together and watched in awe as veterans challenged the mountain at the 12th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Crested Butte, Colorado. We led the parade of 147 DAV Nationwide Transportation Network vans down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C.

Commander McDonald, you have my sincere admiration for the dedicated leadership you have shown for so many years, and especially this year.

The veterans in this hall today, men and women, served this country for an idea and were so possessed by a sense of duty and honor, they were willing to risk death for it. And the idea, of course, is liberty.

Liberty is America's core. It is central to our being, not only because it's practical and beneficial, but because it is morally just and right. However, that liberty can be retained only by the eternal vigilance that has always been its price.

Our history reveals a passion to explore, to build and to renew. The American spirit is not driven toward the domination of others. Never has the American soldier been sent overseas to fight in the cause of conquest. Not once did they come home claiming a single square inch of another country as a trophy of war. The American spirit understands that free people who respect the dignity of the individual do not wage war upon their neighbors. To live together in peace is the American dream.

Our duty today is clear: To help those veterans and their families who need us, and to ensure that they are not forgotten. Yes, some of the very veterans who survived the atrocities of Bataan; stormed the beaches at Guadalcanal and Normandy; and fought in other campaigns of World War II; and the veterans of Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Haiti and numerous other

conflicts, depend on our help every day.

Many veterans have lost family and friends and face a lonely future. Many are homeless and in need of medical care. They struggle with war-related disabilities, but most of all, they struggle with bureaucratic red tape that binds their ability to get the benefits and health care that they need.

The belief that sustained our troops in combat was as great as America herself. Their heroism was prompted by faith in the fundamentals that have guided this nation from its beginnings, the idea that liberty must be protected, whatever the cost. We must nurture and sustain those who distinguished their lives in the defense of freedom. We must provide a dignity befitting heroes, whatever the cost.

We should remember our history as we prepare for our future. Remember to be vigilant against threats to democracy and, what is most important, we must ratify our contract with American veterans.

What we do today will help preserve what our country has promised us: To care for those who have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan. Staying true to this promise will assure those veterans who are here today and those veterans who come after us will have lives made more comfortable by our efforts.

There will be change, both today and in the future. However, what must not change, not today, not tomorrow, not ever, is our recognition of the debt we owe to America's veterans for keeping the American way of life free and safe. And the Auxiliary will be there shoulder to shoulder with the Disabled American Veterans to meet the future, of that you may be assured.

I thank you all for your attention, and I wish you all a most successful and productive convention. Thank you. (Rising applause)

I have another pleasant duty while I'm up here, and I ask for your attention for just a few moments more. I have a presentation to a very special individual who has honored me and honored our organization in leading the Disabled American Veterans, and this presentation is from the Auxiliary.

Commander McDonald, would you come forward, please? This is something special for you that says: "In appreciation of distinguished service given to the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary." And it's 1997-1998. Signed by National Adjutant Maria Tedrow and Evelyn Dunn, National Commander. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you so much.

AUXILIARY COMMANDER DUNN: Again, thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: You know, they say behind every man there's a good woman, and I need somebody to keep me from being upside-down. (Laughter)

Evelynne, thank you for that outstanding report, and it has been the highlight of my year, my traveling with you. I will always remember it and hold you dear to my heart.

The DAV's Nationwide Transportation Network, in partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs, is a unique program that exemplifies the spirit of selfless volunteerism. Under this vital program, more than 5,000 DAV volunteer drivers transport sick and disabled veterans to VA medical facilities for treatment. During the past year alone, these volunteer drivers logged more than 21 million miles, providing 610,000 rides. What an accomplishment! That is great. (Applause)

As everyone here knows, the DAV national organization and its departments donated 147 new vans to the Department of Veterans Affairs during a four-day "Capitol DriveAway" celebration in Washington, D.C. this past June.

The van donation, worth more than $3.2 million, is the largest one-year contribution to the VA since the DAV established the Transportation Network in 1987. It brought the DAV's total donations since 1987 to 755 vans worth more than $13.9 million.

Join me now as we celebrate together a remarkable film documentary that captures the special meaning and joyful memories of the "Capitol DriveAway" that began with a Flag Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia on June the 14th.

Drivers, start your engines!

(Video presentation.)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Let me take you back to August of 1996. During a special ceremony at the Henry Ford Estate in Dearborn, Michigan, Ford Motor Company Chairman Alex Trotman presented the keys to 11 1996 Ford 15-passenger Econline vans to the DAV's Nationwide Transportation Network.

It was noted at that time that Ford's generosity represented more than a needed donation to a worthy cause; it was rather the continuation of a great tradition, a tradition that began with Henry Ford dating back 76 years to the earliest pages of the DAV history.

Our relationship with Ford began in 1922 at the DAV 2nd National Convention in San Francisco. Thus began an alliance and a friendship that continues to this day. Ford's partnership with us is a real boost to our efforts to help every disabled veteran who is without transportation to get to their VA medical appointments.

Many of you will recall that during last year's National Convention, Ford's executive vice-president of corporate relations, Pete Pestillo, pledged 12 additional vans to the DAV. In case you haven't noticed, there are now nine new Ford vans adorning the convention area today. It reminds me of something that baseball philosopher Yogi Berra once said, "It's deja vu all over again."

Ladies and gentlemen, give a warm welcome to Ford Motor Company's executive vice-president for corporate relations, Mr. Peter Pestillo. (Rising applause)

MR. PETER PESTILLO: Commander McDonald, thank you. Ladies and gentlemen of the DAV, thank you, too. Our fine relationship with the DAV is predicated on one belief, and it was the original Henry Ford's view that your efforts at the preservation of our freedom were a debt. And those of us who succeeded him continue that debt yet unpaid.

As you know, Commander, those 1996 vans were a loan. And I was sent last year to take them back. And those decals you'd put on them, in some way they kind of kept me from being able to sell them and I couldn't peel them. (Laughter) So we told you to keep them. (Applause)

And we'd loaned you the 1997 vans as a way of tiding you over for another year till you got on your feet, but I couldn't peel them either. And I was sent back this year to get at least a few of them back, but I still can't do it. So you'd better keep them, too. (Applause)

Now, while I was out here, I learned that the Indianapolis Chapter had declared war. They'd declared war on the term "homeless veteran." And it seems kind of silly that those of us who relied on these people to offer us the security of our homes can be without even modest ones of their own.

So I want to offer you a challenge, and I know you're competitors, because I've seen you in the casinos. (Laughter) So I want to offer you this, in cooperation with the National Office, if we can find six of you who will find programs to deal with eliminating the term "homeless veteran," we'll find a way to get you six vans to do that. (Applause)

Now, the National Office will make the determination, but I can't believe there aren't six of you out there who can't find a program to challenge Indianapolis. So on with that.

But, Commander, I was looking at the "Sentimental Journey," and I think in the course of it I discovered a Dodge van in one of those pictures. (Laughter) You know, I've got a challenge of my own. As much as the Indianapolis Chapter wants to eliminate the term "homeless veteran" from our vocabulary, I'd like to remove the term "Dodge van" from our vocabulary. (Laughter)

So, as a very, very modest but meaningful start, I'd ask you to step up, if you will, please. I'm not going to ask you to start your engine or anything, Commander. But we've found another dozen vans because you've had those decals, and I've got to let you borrow them for a while, too, if that's okay with you.

COMMANDER McDONALD: I'll accept them with pleasure, sir. (Applause)

MR. PESTILLO: And I'm obliged to tell you, they're only a loan. (Laughter)

COMMANDER McDONALD: We'll accept that also. (Applause)

The generous heart of the Ford Motor Company is being felt throughout the community of disabled veterans everywhere. On behalf of the more than one million members of the Disabled American Veterans, please accept our heartfelt thanks for providing these beautiful Ford vans to the DAV Transportation Network.

Ford Motor Company has made a wonderful contribution to improving the lives of millions of America's veterans, an asset that will never appear on Ford's bottom line, but is priceless in the hearts of those whom Ford has helped.

I hope that in some small way, all Ford employees will feel pride in our partnership and their individual contributions, sir. (Applause)

Mr. Pestillo, would you please join me at the podium, sir? On behalf of more than 1.1 million members of the Disabled American Veterans, its Auxiliary and the thousands of volunteers who work hard to make sure that the needs of America's disabled veterans are never forgotten, I am honored to present you with the manuscript of the U.S. House and Senate Concurrent Resolution Number 102, which recognized the Disabled American Veterans and allowed the DAV to conduct the 1998 Capitol DriveAway on the west front lawn of the U.S. Capitol on 17 June.

Sir, it's a pleasure for me to present this to you. (Applause)

The Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year represents an individual who has overcome personal, social and physical barriers to excel in life as an example to all. This individual inspires courage over fear, strength over hardship, and achievement over seemingly insurmountable odds.

From DAV Chapter 53 in Del Rio, Texas comes such a disabled veteran. His name is Roberto Barrera, but nearly everyone knows him as Bobby.

Bobby Barrera joined the Marine Corps in 1969 and soon saw action in the Vietnam War. On September the 16th, 1969, while riding in a convoy of armored personnel carriers to retrieve a hidden reserve of rice reported by a Viet Cong prisoner, the enemy detonated a 500-pound bomb rigged as a land mine beneath his vehicle.

The explosion ignited the vehicle's fuel cells, and a fireball ripped through it, engulfing Bobby and seven other Marines. Though everyone lived, all were seriously burned; Bobby severely burned over 40 percent of his body, including his face. His injuries also caused the loss of his right hand at the wrist and his left arm at the shoulder.

Bobby underwent extensive treatment at the Fort Sam Houston Army Hospital in San Antonio, Texas. He also returned for 32 more surgeries after leaving the hospital in 1970.

Through it all, he met every challenge with the support of a caring family. And in 1974, he gained the support of his lovely new bride, Maricellia, who is at his side today.

Bobby not only met challenges, he excelled. In 1978, he completed a bachelor's degree in psychology at St. Mary's University in San Antonio before returning to Del Rio to teach at the high school there.

He continued to excel, earning his master's of education degree through evening classes in 1980, while raising a family that eventually included two boys, Rene and Aldo, and a girl, Karla.

Bobby was soon an active, contributing member of his community, helping others through a variety of activities and counseling.

He left his teaching position in 1983 to become a juvenile probation counselor with the 63rd Judicial District and positively impacted countless youth and their families.

In 1989, he was hired as director of the Family Support Center at Laughlin Air Force Base in Del Rio, where he currently provides a full range of family services to more than 5,500 military members, DoD civilians, retirees and their families.

From church activities to keynote speaker, Bobby Barrera is not only an outstanding disabled veteran, he is an outstanding human being, whose belief in himself, appreciation of the support

of others and strong relationship with God has earned him recognition and numerous individual awards.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is indeed an honor for me to introduce Mr. Bobby Barrera, and to present him with the DAV's highest individual award on being selected as the Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year. Mr. Barrera. (Rising applause)

National Commander's Award to the Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year: Roberto "Bobby" Barrera.

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

Signed, Harry R. McDonald, Jr., National Commander, and Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant. (Applause)

MR. ROBERTO BARRERA: Thank you very much. I'm honored.

My relationship with the DAV started back in '69 and '70 when I needed some representation, for my own case was being processed through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

But I would also like to say something. I was talking to a gentleman yesterday, and I shared with him a story. When I do presentations at schools through Veterans Day and patriotic activities, invariably a young kid will ask me which is the best branch of service in the Department of Defense.

My answer is this: I was a Marine. When I got hurt, a Marine Corps helicopter, Medivac chopper, picked us up, took us to the USS REPOSE, a Navy hospital ship. An Air Force hospital plane transferred me and the other seven Marines to the Burn Center at Fort Sam Houston, an Army post. Which is the most important? All of them. Without them, I wouldn't be here with you today. (Applause)

The reason I shared that story is because that same team effort that earned me this award, even though it has my name, has to be a joint venture between many, many individuals, many organizations, and above all, with the support of God. Without my family, without the support of God, the things that I have been able to do would never have happened. It would not have been possible.

Also, whenever I am trying to help someone, whether it's a veteran, whether it's the spouse, whether it's an Air Force personnel, civilian, it does not matter, it has to take the support of some other people. I do not have the expertise. I do not have the knowledge. It is nice to be able to pick up the phone or just call someone and say, "Hey, I have this person, and this is the kind of help I need."

Whether it's making a referral to the DAV organization, whether it's making a referral to a county agency, a state agency, it takes support, support from all these agencies, support from my wife. My family have always been there. My wife always stands behind me, actually beside me in providing the support to all those people that I am able to help.

With that in mind, I also share this award with you, with the entire membership of the DAV. You are the people who make it possible.

Also let us not forget the sacrifices that have been made by those who are unable to be here with us at this convention.

Thank you, each and every one, and thank you to the DAV for bestowing this honor upon me. (Rising applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Bobby. You're an inspiration to all of us.

At this time, I'd ask Auxiliary National Commander Evelynne Dunn to come forth to make a presentation to the Outstanding Member of the Year.

AUXILIARY COMMANDER DUNN: I'm back! It is my pleasure to introduce Past National Commander Dorothy Van Hoy. I'd ask her to come forward for a presentation for a very special Auxiliary lady. (Applause)

PAST AUXILIARY COMMANDER DOROTHY VAN HOY: National Commander McDonald, National Commander Dunn, national officers, past national

commanders, members and guests: The Past National Commander's Award is given each year to recognize the contributions and the dedication of an outstanding member whose efforts have enhanced the goals of the Auxiliary and the parent organization, and one who has been active in the community.

It is indeed a pleasure to give you some outstanding achievements of our recipient today. The member chosen to receive this award is eligible for membership in the Auxiliary through her husband Wilbert, a service-connected disabled veteran and retired U.S. lieutenant-colonel. They have two grown sons and one daughter and one grandson.

Time does not permit me to tell you all the work this member does. However, she has served in nearly all Auxiliary units and state offices. During 1997, she held three successful fund-raising projects to benefit the Auxiliary, attended all her unit meetings, and assisted in the Forget-Me-Not drive. She assisted widows in filing their claims with the DAV. She attended the Annual Convention, Fall Conference and 6th District meeting, always willing to share knowledge and materials from all meetings with all members who could not attend.

She is a licensed lay minister in her church, regularly participates in weekly service. She is assistant treasurer of an international women's lay group of over 1,000 members. Her responsibility here is to maintain all financial records, such as dues and contributions to the Massachusetts-based organization.

She has adopted a neighbor, an elderly neighbor, whom she runs errands with and for and provides transportation to church each Sunday.

She has assisted students with special needs in a special education program at Friendly High School by assisting them in acquiring their community service hours. One student particularly is in a wheelchair.

She is assisted by the high school students in the aluminum can drive to be donated to the Chaplain's Fund. Also helped cutting stamps for Veterans Stamp Program.

She is a mentor to three students, one in middle school and two in high school. She was the first person to initiate community service hours between the school, DAV, DAVA in the State of Maryland.

She is involved in securing clothing, furniture and funds to help the local homeless women and children's facility. Organized a Neighborhood Crime Watch Program.

She continues to call and write the sick and shut-in members of the chapter. She is a great example of our Auxiliary in action at all levels. She is a diligent advocate of recruiting young women into the DAV Auxiliary and mentoring their leadership potential.

In all of the above, she shows her dedication and enthusiasm to the principles of our organization. We are indeed fortunate to have members with outstanding qualities. You can see why she has been selected for the Past National Commander's Award.

This person is Mrs. Barbara Forbes, General Melvin J. Maas Unit Number 77 in the State of Maryland.

Barbara, would you join me? (Rising applause)

Barbara, on behalf of the past national commanders, DAV Auxiliary, it is indeed a pleasure to present this plaque to you for the Outstanding DAV Auxiliary Member of the Year. Congratulations. (Applause)

Congratulations to you, and please keep up the good work.

MRS. BARBARA FORBES: Good afternoon. Past national Auxiliary commanders, National Commanders Evelynne Dunn and Harry McDonald, distinguished and honored guests, National Auxiliary and DAV staff, delegates, members and friends: It is indeed humbling for me to be the recipient of the Past National Commander's Award. I am deeply honored to be this year's Auxiliary Member of the Year.

I would like to encourage others to continue to keep up the constant support of service to our veterans and their dependents in any way that you can.

I thank all of you for your calls, your cards, your letters and your gifts nationally that I have received of congratulations

and encouragement. Especially I give thanks to Past National Commander Dorothy Van Hoy and her committee for selecting me to be the recipient this year.

I also would like to thank my sponsor, Lucy Johnson, our past state commander, who nominated me for such a great and distinguished award.

Last, but not least, I give thanks to my family, Wilbert and my children, for their great support; to the Department of Maryland; to this Auxiliary State Department of Maryland for their support; to the national staff for their many questions that they had to receive and answer for me. And also I give thanks to my God for giving me my talents and my strength and good health to continue to participate in all the many activities and programs successfully.

I thank you again. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: The men and women of World War II were an extraordinary generation of Americans. They won the war, planned for peace, and led the country through the second half of the 20th century. They were children of the Depression, toughened by hardship but filled with ideals of service and sacrifice.

Sixteen million went into uniform. Millions more supported them on the home front. At the end of the war, having seen enough blood and destruction, America's war generation wanted to build rather than destroy.

And build they did: The St. Lawrence Seaway, the interstate highway system, and the modern corporation.

They defeated polio and other dreaded diseases and made revolutionary advances in medicine, technology, education and public policy.

They were successful because they had learned in war the value of teamwork, initiative, self-discipline and national unity. Above all, they learned responsibility.

War forced life-and-death decisions onto young men who became responsible for ships, planes, tanks and, ultimately, one another.

Women excelled at the new roles offered by the war. As America became the arsenal of democracy, the work of women in ammunition factories, shipyards and aircraft and tank assembly lines helped make the final victory possible.

More than 300,000 women also went into uniform to free men for combat. Ferrying aircraft and serving as nurses in field hospitals brought danger, and many women made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Those brave Americans who served during the period of 1941 through 1945 displayed a remarkable dedication to duty, honor and country. In the years that followed, their sacrifices were remembered by a grateful nation.

Unfortunately, the memories of World War II have faded, and with that the gratitude, but something remarkable happened last month that renewed America's respect and reverence for its veterans. Here to tell you about that is National Adjutant Art Wilson.

ADJUTANT WILSON: Thank you, Commander. For most Americans today, the memories of World War II are only a collection of black and white photographs, a film on the History Channel, or perhaps a carefully worded story by a grandfather.

But all that changed last month when the agony of battle was graphically portrayed to millions of Americans. And thanks to a genius in film-making, the horror of battle and the courage of the American citizen was demonstrated to new generations of Americans as never before. Of course, I'm speaking of the film, "Saving Private Ryan."

This film is more than a commercial venture. It is a message for America. That message is simply that this country owes much to those who fought to preserve our freedom. But I have another message, and I'd like to read it to you. And it begins:

Dear Members of the Disabled American Veterans:

I made "Saving Private Ryan" to honor the service of all veterans.

Those of you who were born between 1900 and 1930 bore so much of that burden and personal sacrifice. You and your

comrades saved our country and saved the world.

On this occasion of your National Convention, I want to thank you for what you did for your generation that allowed all other generations to follow.

And it's signed, "With all good wishes, Steven Spielberg."

At this moment, let me ask all ladies and gentlemen in the audience who served during World War II, to please stand and be recognized, including our National Commander Harry McDonald. (Applause)

Thank you for your show of appreciation, and for those of you who are World War II veterans, we thank you for your courage, your honor and your sacrifice for our country.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Today the World War II generation that gave so much to America and to the world is quietly receding into the pages of history. But before the door on the 20th century closes behind us, we as a nation should commemorate the central event of that age.

Though their sacrifices can never be repaid, we need to make one last effort to honor this unique generation of Americans, who served in the Armed Forces and on the home front. We need a national World War II Memorial on the Mall in Washington, D.C. to keep alive the memory and the spirit of their sacrifice, and to remind future generations that the torch of freedom is now theirs to carry.

Joining us today for a special presentation is Major General John Herrling, U.S. Army Retired. General Herrling is the secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission, ABMC, located in Arlington, Virginia.

Established by Congress in 1923, the ABMC administers, operates and maintains 24 permanent U.S. military cemeteries and 27 memorial structures in 15 countries around the world, including five memorials in the United States. The commission is also responsible for the establishment of other memorials in the U.S., such as the future World War II Memorial.

The World War II Memorial will be funded almost entirely by private contributions. The capital campaign goal for donations is $100 million. Now that the design of the memorial has been completed and approved, construction will begin as soon as all necessary funds have been secured.

A National World War II Memorial planned for the Mall in Washington is long overdue. The DAV's National Finance Committee recently authorized a modest donation to help make the memorial a reality.

General Herrling, would you please join me at the podium? On behalf of the 1.1 million members of the Disabled American Veterans, the majority of whom are World War II veterans, it is my pleasure, my honor to present to the World War II Memorial Fund a check in the amount of $500,000. (Applause)

MAJOR GENERAL JOHN HERRLING: Commander McDonald, leadership of the Disabled American Veterans and the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary, ladies and gentlemen: On behalf of our national chairman, Senator Bob Dole, the American Battle Monuments Commission and the World War II Memorial Campaign, thank you for this extremely generous contribution.

This is the single largest cash gift to date that any veterans organization has given to the World War II Memorial, and for that we salute you. (Applause)

We are very proud to have the Disabled American Veterans as a major contribution to the World War II Memorial Campaign. It is somewhat ironic, however, that such an unprecedented gift should come from the veterans to whom this country owes its greatest debt. Your generosity ensures the service and sacrifice of the World War II generation will not be forgotten.

Instead, the World War II Memorial will stand as a reminder for future generations of the great courage and the determination of that generation of Americans who fought and won World War II. Standing on the nation's Mall, it will be a timeless symbol of this nation's greatest achievement in the 20th century.

We very much appreciate this splendid gift. More importantly, we appreciate your personal commitment and your service and the

service to this country. Thank you very much and God bless you all. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, General Herrling. By the way, the DAV will also be encouraging all of its departments and chapters to contribute generously to the Memorial Fund. But let me be the first person to present my personal check to you in the amount of $1,000 to help build this monument. (Applause)

MAJOR GENERAL HERRLING: Commander, thank you very much.

COMMANDER McDONALD: For anyone else who would like to make a donation, see the back of the magazine that's laying on your chairs.

Every year, we recognize the commitment of DAV and Auxiliary volunteers through the George H. Seal Memorial Award. This special tribute is given to one DAV and one DAV Auxiliary member, who best epitomize the volunteer spirit of our organization through their selfless work with hospitalized veterans under the VA Voluntary Service Program.

The award is named after the late George H.Seal, a World War II veteran who was involved with the DAV VAVS Program from 1952 until his death in 1977. George began his career with the DAV as an NSO in 1946 and served in that capacity until 1964, when he joined the National Headquarters staff.

Among his responsibilities, which included leadership of the DAV Membership Department, George served as National VAVS representative for more than 20 years.

Ladies and gentlemen, this year's George H. Seal Award winners are Ardell Shaw of Pine City, New York, and Claire Newman of Delray Beach, Florida.

Ardell Shaw is a life member of DAV Chapter 13, Elmira, New York. He is a retired Army veteran who served in Korea and had three tours of duty in Vietnam.

Mr. Shaw has a severe service-connected disability that would limit the activities of most folks, but he has amassed a solid and enviable record of working long days, weekends, and being on call whenever he is needed at the VA Medical Center in Bath, New York.

This remarkable volunteer averages over 180 hours each month coordinating the DAV Transportation Center that he started in 1995. As DAV Transportation Network coordinator, Ardell's hugely successful network has transported more than 1,900 veterans a total of 44,575 miles since the program began.

As a Recreation Therapy Service volunteer, he has been responsible for coordinating a wide variety of events for veteran patients, from Friday night bingo games to pushing wheelchair patients on trips to the shopping mall.

He was instrumental in setting up the patient clothing room at Bath VA Medical Center and works there many hours each week. Honestly, the clothing room really looks more like a department store, and it is completely supported by donations from area merchants.

Ardell also created an annual Christmas Day hospital visitation program, which has brought in other volunteers to hospital wards to spread a healthy dose of holiday cheer that means a great deal to hospitalized veterans, many of whom are without families and loved ones during this special time of year.

All in all, Ardell Shaw has logged more than 8,238 hours of volunteer services to veterans since he first began volunteering his time in 1988.,

Well, the list of Ardell's accomplishments just goes on and on, so just let me tell you that he has dedicated himself to giving unselfishly to benefit others. His quiet dignity and generosity personify the true meaning of giving, uncompromising dedication and loyal friendship to America's veterans.

I am honored to introduce to you the DAV's 1998 recipient of the George H. Seal Memorial Trophy, Mr. Ardell Shaw. (Rising applause)

"George H. Seal Memorial Award winner 1998, DAV, Ardell W. Shaw, Bath VA Medical Center, New York." Ardell, it's a pleasure for me to present that to you. (Applause)

MR. ARDELL W. SHAW: Right now, I'm having a short bout with angina and some other heart problems. I'd like to thank you for

this wonderful opportunity for being here. This is a once-in-a-lifetime honor. Volunteering to me is doing for others that cannot do for themselves. My only requested payment in return is to see that they enjoy a better life than they had before.

It's an honor to be here and receive this award. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Claire Newman is a member of Auxiliary Unit 152 in Delray Beach, Florida, and has volunteered her services to disabled veterans for 54 years. She is, to say the least, a mainstay at the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center, where she donates more than 25 hours every week and spends another 20 hours preparing for patient activities.

Claire's extraordinary dedication to the needs of hospitalized veterans, heartwarming smile and unreserved compassion truly does touch lives of disabled veterans.

This remarkable lady is well noted for her talent, skills and innovation for creating new programs for hospitalized vets. Working with her own team of volunteers, she directs a creative arts and crafts instructional program that includes painting, leatherwork and sewing.

Claire is a talented fashion designer and recently added a sewing vocational program that teaches homeless veterans a valuable skilled trade.

She also started an innovative program that reunites seriously ill vets with their families who cannot come to the medical center to visit. Using one of the latest technological marvels, veterans are able to hold face-to-face conversations with loved ones using a video-telephone connection, all free of charge.

As you can imagine, this wonderful program has really helped lift the spirits of hospitalized veterans and their families.

In a word, Claire Newman's life has been dedicated to the continued service of veterans. Her dedication, enthusiasm and considerable creativity have indeed had a profound, positive impact on those whose lives she has so warmly touched.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you the 1998 DAV Auxiliary member recipient of the George H. Seal Memorial Trophy, Mrs. Claire Newman. (Rising applause)

"George H. Seal Memorial Award Winner, 1998, DAV Claire Newman, West Palm Beach VA Medical Center, Florida." (Applause)

MRS. CLAIRE NEWMAN: National Commander McDonald, National Commander Dunn, dignitaries on the dais, members, my family and friends: To receive this prestigious award is a very exciting and happy moment in my life. Thank you to the George H. Seal Memorial Award Committee for this great honor.

Thank you, Tim Cobb, chief of Voluntary Service at the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center, for nominating me for this award. Because of Tim's vision of what the VA can do for the veterans, he encouraged me every time I came up with a new program. "Go for it, Claire. Try it. See if it will work."

Because of Tim's leadership, we have a great staff in Voluntary Service. Linda Jackson, one of the staff, is here with me today. We have more volunteers than employees. We all work together. We are a family.

Volunteering in a VA hospital has been a way of life for me since 1944, when my brother was wounded in the Battle of Saint-Lo, France. He was brought back to the States and was cared for in several VA hospitals. My mother and I visited him in every one of those hospitals. When we saw the needs of the other patients, we brought comfort items and goodies for them as well as for my brother.

In 1947, when I married my husband, Milton, a veteran but not disabled, he volunteered and supported all my programs. He raised a lot of money from Lions and East Orange VA Hospitals in New Jersey to help the hospitalized veterans. We retired to Florida in 1977, and we volunteered first at the Miami VA Medical Center, and now at West Palm Beach, Florida, VA.

Thank you, Milton, for all your love and support.

I am also lucky to have a DAV representative who financially supports my programs and is always there when I need him. Thank you, Sal Uccello.

Thank you to my two deputies, Kay Dukas and Emma Preffer. Kay and Emma visit all the patients twice a week, bringing welcome kits and other goods. In addition to their deputy duties, they run the DAV Volunteer Barber Shop twice a week and donate all the shop's income to programs at the hospital. I don't know what I would do without them.

Thank you to all the state department commanders of Florida for appointing me VAVS representative. Thank you to the members of my chapter and unit, the Jessie J. Stein Number 152, Delray Beach, Florida, for their support.

Thank you to the Masons, the Elks, the American Legion Auxiliary, Jewish War Veterans and Disabled American Veterans units for donating machines and supplies for the students in the creative design crafts program.

I am so proud to represent the DAVA at the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Everyone knows how lucky we are to be members of a great organization like the DAV, but there's one DAV member here today who is very, very lucky, $100,000 lucky. Not only that, he got lucky in Kentucky, not Las Vegas. He did it on April Fools' Day.

Allan D. Snyder, a life member of Florida DAV Chapter 108, is the $100,000 Grand Prize winner in the DAV's $250,000 Sweepstakes drawing held at DAV National Headquarters on April the 1st. He was top winner among 104 tickets that shared the $250,000 sweepstakes.

Mr. Snyer is a Korean War veteran and retired real estate market professional, who helped market golf and country club complexes. He was so good at marketing them that now he lives in one he helped market in Grenelefe, Florida.

1998 marks the fourth consecutive year 104 lucky DAV members are sharing in the DAV $250,000 Sweepstakes. But the wealth of this annual sweepstakes benefits far more than our prize money winners. This great fund-raising program ultimately benefits disabled veterans and their families who need our help again and again.

Proceeds from the DAV's $250,000 Sweepstakes helps finance DAV department service programs year after year, and that makes us all winners. I want to personally thank all who participated in this fine program and encourage you to continue your support.

Now, being a Florida 'gator myself, I don't want to say Mr. Snyder was skeptical about winning this on April the 1st, or April Fools' Day, but he had his son to call us to confirm winning the grand prize the morning after we called him to let him know he had won.

In fact, he even kiddingly told us at one point that, "When I see the money, I'll believe it."

Well, Mr. Snyder, please step forward, because seeing is believing. (Applause)

MR. ALLAN D. SNYDER: My thanks to the DAV and the hundred thousand dollars. (Laughter and applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: At this time, I would like for Auxiliary National Commander Evelynne Dunn to come to the podium, please.

Evelynne, here is something that I have for you. It's from me personally for you for all the support and help you gave us during the last year.

AUXILIARY COMMANDER DUNN: He said I may open it. It's like Christmas. My mother always told me to read the card first. It says, "Thank you for a wonderful year. Harry R. McDonald, Jr., DAV National Commander." Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: This says, "DAVA National Commander 1997-98." (Applause)

AUXILIARY COMMANDER DUNN: Harry, what can I say? "Hurry up," he says, "I'm done." Well, I can tell you, I've been "Dunn" for years. (Laughter) Thank you so much. It has been a privilege and an honor to serve alongside of such a gracious commander of the Disabled American Veterans. He has always been there whenever I have asked any questions. He has been there for me.

And I can't say enough good things about Harry McDonald. I was at his testimonial, and it was just a wonderful experience to see the people come out and honor him. And I want him to know how

much I honor him also.

And I thank you for this wonderful, wonderful tribute. Thank you again. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: 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: Thank you, Commander.

Committee advisors: Credentials, Charles D. Luttjohann and Edward G. Galian; General Resolutions and Membership, Rick Surratt; Legislation and Veterans Rights, Joseph A. Violante and Thomas L. Tomlinson; Constitution and Bylaws, Richard L. Sarrazin and Fred R. Bristol; Finance and Dues, Sal R. Tornatore and Richard E. Paterson; Employment, Wayne L. Douglass and Anthony L. Baskerville; Hospital and Voluntary Services, Jerry P. Steelman and Thomas C. Johns; and Nomination of National Officers, Gene A. Murphy and William E. Leach.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Ladies and gentlemen, will you please rise. I will now ask Chaplain Todd to lead us in a closing prayer.

CHAPLAIN TODD: Again, Lord, we come before Your throne of grace. We come at the close of this session, knowing that we have shared and fellowshipped, and somehow we've even cried a little because of happiness of joy. But Lord, more than anything else, we thank You for allowing us to remember those who have given so much, for freedom is not free. In His Holy Name we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER McDONALD: The convention will stand in recess until 10:00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 5:00 o'clock p.m., August 23, 1998.)

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION

August 24, 1998

The First Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans and Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Conrad Ballroom of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, Monday morning, August 24, 1998, and was called to order at 10:00 o'clock a.m. by Commander Harry R. McDonald, Jr.

COMMANDER HARRY R. McDONALD, JR.: The convention will come to order.

In opening the First Business Session of the 77th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans, it is fitting and proper that we render respect due to the flag. Please join me in giving the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

COMMANDER McDONALD: We will now be led in prayer by Chaplain Todd.

CHAPLAIN TODD: Again, Lord, we come before Your throne of grace, knowing that this day is one in which we may share and render ideas and understanding. We pray now that You would give us the wisdom to share, to maintain a peace that surpasses all human understanding, and we pray that You will continue to bless our veterans from coast to coast, throughout this world. In His Holy Name we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Chaplain. Be seated, please.

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

I now call on the chairman of the Credentials Committee for his first report.

MR. SLOAN H. HOOPES: Comrade Commander, delegates: The National Convention Committee on Credentials was called to order for the first business session, August 24th, 1998 by Advisors Charles D. Luttjohann and Edward G. Galian. The first order of business was election of a convention committee chairman. Sloan Hoopes was nominated as chairman. There being no further nominations, Sloan Hoopes was elected chairman.

The next order of business was to elect a secretary. Kandis

Myers was nominated and elected as secretary.

The Credentials Committee met this morning in the Conference Room of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Room 8. Roll call showed 1,551 delegates and 39 alternates present. This is a partial report for information purposes only and reflects the registration at the close of registration on August the 23rd, 1998 at 4:00 p.m.

At the present time, we have 603 chapters, 52 departments, 33 national officers, 12 past national commanders, for a total of 1,551 delegates and 39 alternates, for a total vote of 11,350.

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

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you for that fine report, Sloan.

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

The Rules are on your chairs. Since they are a continuing body of rules governing our conduct, they do not require annual readoption.

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

ADJUTANT WILSON: The National Executive Committee at its most recent meeting approved the following resolution on DAV policy and recommends its adoption by the convention: Resolution.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It therefore follows that we will not take action on any resolution that proposes legislation designed to provide benefits for dependents and survivors which is based upon other than wartime service-connected disability. We shall not oppose legislation beneficial to those veterans not classified as service-connected disabled, except when it is evident that such legislation will jeopardize benefits for service-connected disabled veterans.

While our first duty as an organization is to assist the service-connected disabled, their dependents and survivors, 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 McDONALD: The Chair will entertain a motion for the adoption of the DAV Statement of Policy. Mike 2.

MR. GEORGE R. LE PORTE: Past Department Commander George Le Porte, Chapter 30, New York, moves for the adoption.

COMMANDER McDONALD: We have a motion. Do I hear a second? Mike 2, go ahead.

MR. GERALD H. HARRIS: Gerald Harris, Chapter 39, Lancaster, California. I second that motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: You've heard the motion and the second.

Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried.

Building better lives for our nation's disabled veterans and their families. That is the DAV's mission; it is first, last and always a mission of service.

For more than 30 years, Art Wilson has dedicated himself to serving disabled veterans and their families, first as a DAV National Service Officer -- the first Vietnam veteran to enter the DAV's National Service Officer Program -- moving 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.

Since Art's appointment as national adjutant in 1994, his steadfast leadership and uncompromising commitment to the organization's ideals resulted in a phenomenal rebirth of the DAV.

Not only is he responsible for restoring the organization's financial health, Art has returned the DAV to its rightful position as the nation's foremost veterans service organization.

Ladies and gentlemen, here to give his remarks to the National Convention is my friend and your friend, our National Adjutant Art Wilson. (Rising applause)

ADJUTANT WILSON: Thank you, Harry. Good morning, everyone. I might say at the outset that I thought yesterday's session was just tremendous, and I want you to know how much we appreciate your patience. I know it was a long afternoon. But I think the commander deserves a vote of thanks for conducting such a wonderful session and all the folks that participated. Thank you, Commander. (Applause)

And Harry, I appreciate very much that wonderful, wonderful introduction. You know, you've been so kind over this past year in praising the DAV staff in Cincinnati and Washington, and our offices all across the country. For my part, Harry, I am bound to return that praise, for over the past year you have shown us that seeming opposites unite to create effective leadership.

And while you are every inch a gracious gentleman, you are also a strong leader. And while you are a compassionate humanitarian, you are also a practical man. And while you're a sensitive man, you also express your convictions with passion. And your voice is usually low and quiet, but I can tell you it carries authority. (Applause)

I also want to thank your line officers and Andy Kistler and Mike Dobmeier, Armando Albarran, George Steese, Ed Heath, Ed Galian, and, of course, Reverend Todd. (Applause)

My thanks as well to Auxiliary National Commander Evelynne Dunn, Auxiliary Adjutant Maria Tedrow, our National Executive and Finance Committees, our national interim committees, the leaders of our chapters and our departments and, more specifically, our wonderful HSCs, our department service officers, our chapter service officers, and every one of our VAVS volunteers. Thank you. (Applause)

In addition to all of that, I also offer a word of appreciation to our DAV staffs in Washington and Cincinnati, and, of course, to our National Service Officers across the nation; our Washington Headquarters staff is led ably by Dave Gorman, and my thanks to Dave and his management team, and Ken Wolfe and the staff of the National Service Department; to all of our National Service Offices and their clerical staffs that serve this great land; to Joe Violante and his team at the National Legislative Department; and Jerry Steelman, our new National Director of Voluntary Services, and his staff as well.

But also let me offer a word of gratitude to two gentlemen who served our organization very, very well for many years, and they are Retired National Employment Director Ron Drach and Retired National Director of Voluntary Services Bruce Nitsche. (Applause)

I can tell you folks that those two gentlemen leave a legacy that will be hard to match in this organization. They brought their respective programs and the DAV to heights that it will be a long time before they're surpassed.

You know, we've made great strides in our programs at National Headquarters under the leadership of Rick Patterson and his

management team, and that includes Max Hart and Tom Keller from the Fund-Raising Department and the professionals that they lead; our legal staffs and Bob Gushee and Chris Clay; our comptroller, Anita Blum, and accounting manager, Nick Tholt and all the folks who take care of our financial matters; and, of course, Greg Jackson and all the good folks in our Human Resources Department; and Gary Weaver and his team at the Communications Department; Charlie Luttjohann and everyone in the Membership Department; and, of course, Nancy O'Brien who administers our Charitable Programs.

And then a special thanks to all of our employees, who work so hard every day to keep our organization fully fueled and ready to lead the race. (Applause)

Let me finish up my gratitude this morning by extending my sincere appreciation to everyone in this audience, and to all the DAV and Auxiliary members that you represent. You know, your lives remind me of a line of that poem by Marilyn Hacker, who recently said that, "Social and political change is made up of individual decisions and actions."

No one, no one anywhere could ever overrate the value of your efforts. Your work changes people's lives, changes them in significant and powerful ways. Through your individual decisions and actions, your daily lives create political and social change. (Applause)

Saturday, Rick Patterson, Executive Director at National Headquarters, reported to our National Finance Committee. And this afternoon you'll hear from Dave Gorman, Executive Director of our Washington Headquarters.

And I'm here to tell you that there's good news from both of our headquarters. We're doing well financially, and we're doing very, very well on the services that we provide to disabled veterans and their families.

And while I don't want to steal any thunder from Rick or Dave, there are some thoughts that I want to share with you this morning, thoughts about social and political change, thoughts about individual actions and decisions, and thoughts about the challenges that we face today, and thoughts about those challenges that we'll face in the future.

You know, the steady improvement of the national organization's prospects over the past five years has been a joy to see, and I'll tell personally, that I'm proud to be part of that change. But I feel particularly good about the action we took to ensure a sound financial base for our departments.

Our Department Fund Raising Program has not only kept its pledge by providing each department with $3 per member every year; it's done much, much more.

When we began, we felt sure that National Headquarters would have to supplement the program to meet that $3 pledge, but that didn't happen. It didn't happen thanks to our dedicated membership.

And ever since then, we have generated surpluses and distributed them rightfully to our departments. It's been a real boon to the service work that departments offer to veterans of this country.

Using this money, departments are acting to create social change, and because our members are making individual decisions to support the Department Fund Raising Program, as a result, the Hospital Service Coordinator Program and the Transportation Network have seen remarkable growth, including our recent 147 vans to supplement our nationwide fleet. (Applause)

There's been tremendous growth in a wide variety of state-level DAV services for disabled veterans and their families.

And while I'm on the subject of financing our service initiatives, let me address a subject that's close to my heart: The Colorado Trust, an initiative we established as part of the National Service Foundation two years ago with a generous grant from the DAV Department of Colorado.

As you know, some chapters and departments have more funds than they need for the services that they can provide. Conversely, others lack resources for service programs they want to initiate.

The Colorado Trust is a means through which those excess funds

can assist other chapters and departments who lack the funds that they need for quality service.

I want to tell you that the program is working, and it's working very well for as young as it is. Just a couple months ago, we sent those 147 vans to DAV and Auxiliary volunteers across America at a cost of $3.2 million, and $1.8 million of that came from The Colorado Trust. (Applause)

And that's just the beginning of local service that the Trust is making possible, thanks to the kindness of our wealthier chapters and departments, whose donations, by the way, have been matched dollar-for-dollar by the DAV's national organization.

Altogether, in just two years, some $3 million has been put to great use in the chapter and department service programs thanks to The Colorado Trust, money that might otherwise be sitting in bank accounts achieving nothing for disabled veterans and their families.

As you know, there's a cap on how much an organization like the DAV can hold in excess funds, and that includes chapters and departments. And because it's vital to make sure all elements of the DAV use their funds in accomplishing the organization's service mission, that cap will be vigorously enforced over the coming years, with reasonableness as a guide.

That means now is the perfect time for chapters and departments to step forward with contributions to The Colorado Trust if they have excess funds. It's a perfect time because together, chapters and departments, and the National Service Foundation, can make sure that no disabled veteran, no disabled veteran anywhere, goes lacking for DAV assistance. (Applause)

Recently, I reviewed what our volunteers are doing under the Transportation Network and the VA Voluntary Service Program. And the figures, ladies and gentlemen, are astonishing. DAV and Auxiliary volunteers donated almost two and one-half million hours of their time last year, time that is worth about $32 million to the Federal Government.

In the Transportation Network alone, our volunteers have driven 160 million miles, taking sick and disabled veterans to and from VA medical facilities for needed care.

All these great things happen because of the work of individual people in the DAV and Auxiliary, because one volunteer takes individual action, going into a VA hospital room to visit one lonely veteran, who has no one else with whom he can share his frustrations and his fears. It's because one volunteer makes an individual decision to get up at 5 o'clock in the morning and drive a sick and disabled veteran to a VA clinic for the medical treatment that she needs.

"Social and political change is made up of individual decisions and actions."

DAV and Auxiliary volunteers have deep, deep impact on the lives of individual veterans, very, very deep. And when you multiply the impact on one veteran by the millions that we have helped, you get a tidal wave of genuine social change. (Applause)

So many of the veterans we help would be lost without us. You know, thinking of them, I was reminded of the favorite poem, one of my favorite poems, called "Birches" by Robert Frost. And you've perhaps heard me say over the past few years that I'm moved by a line that Frost speaks of in times when "life is too much like a pathless wood."

So often, that line describes the lives of the veterans that we serve. And who among those veterans are more lost, more pathless, than the homeless veteran?

The DAV has made a commitment that we will not, we will not leave our wounded behind. Across America, our departments and chapters are marching forward to meet that commitment to homeless veterans, and we must march on and on.

We cannot save every homeless veteran in America. I know that, and I know that you know that. But each of us can make our own individual decision to save those that we can, one homeless veteran at a time. And whenever we help one veteran climb up from hopelessness, we accomplish major social change. (Applause)

Our organizational successes, however, are balanced by very,

very serious challenges. Yes, we've had a tough time with this whole issue on smoking-related disabilities, and we have faced bitter, bitter battles on the budget front overall.

And while I'm going to leave the details of our legislative struggles to Dave Gorman, I do want to stress the severity of our problem, the problem that we face in Washington. An anti-veteran virus has infected our whole public policy arena in the United States.

American leaders are all too willing to mouth patriotic slogans about us on Veterans Day, Memorial Day, and the Fourth of July. And we've all seen those sentiments evaporate the moment that a dollar sign shows up in association with the nation's debt to her disabled veterans.

We are going to have to become more activist in our approach. We are going to have to write more letters to our elected leaders. We are going to have to make more phone calls and personal visits to their offices. We are going to have to make our elected leaders accountable, and we are going to have to vote. (Applause)

Local leaders need to write more letters, write letters to the editors of those local newspapers. They need to speak to community groups whenever the opportunity presents itself. In fact, we need to actively seek out those opportunities wherever they might exist.

And here on the legislative front, is a prime example of individual actions and decisions creating social and political change. We must stand up for ourselves.

Listen closely when Dave Gorman talks with you. Take heed. And act.

Before I close this morning, I'd like to take just a second to talk a little bit about our future. And let me be blunt about it. Too often, I have heard our own members describe the DAV as an organization whose mission is dying away. We must not, we must never allow that thinking to happen.

Right now, today, young Americans in this country are facing the daily threat of combat in Bosnia, in the Middle East, in the Korean DMZ, and other places.

A quarter of a century, or even half a century from now, these young men and women will need the DAV every bit as much as every World War II veteran needs us today.

We who have benefited from our organization's services in the past have a debt to pay to those who made sure the DAV was there for us. And we repay that debt by making sure that the DAV is there for our disabled veterans of tomorrow. (Applause)

In this, change is inevitable. Life changes, and the DAV has always changed to meet the changing conditions. But we are not, and cannot be, the organization that we were in the years following World War II, nor can we be that brash, young outfit that we were in 1920.

But we don't need to be either of those organizations. What we need to be is an outfit that is ready to take on the 21st century. And that is exactly what we are becoming. (Applause)

I'm aware, like you, of the number of chapters that have folded up their tents and sent back their charters. And I'm alarmed, just like you. But let me assure you that the national organization is thriving. And those chapters and departments that are poised for the 21st Century are also thriving.

There is much about what we are losing in this organization that I regret. But, as I look to the future, I am convinced that great things will arise to meet the demands of tomorrow.

Yes, we will continue to thrive. We will continue to grow in our mission. And we will continue to serve America's disabled veterans.

Why? Because we're an organization made up of men and women whose strength was tempered in the crisis of disability and the trials of rehabilitation.

You are strong people, people whose individual decisions and actions will create social and political change for years and years and years to come. (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to offer my thanks to you. The DAV has enjoyed a wonderful year, but we couldn't do it without you. This is your organization, and I personally thank you, each

and every one of you, for allowing me to serve such a wonderful organization and a warm and sincere membership. Thank you.

Thank you, Commander. (Rising applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Art, for your keen insight, and for that very appropriate message to the convention.

And I want to make sure that all of you understand the cost of war does not end till the last veteran dies.

At this time, I'll entertain a motion to accept Mr. Wilson's remarks. Mike 3.

MR. FRANK J. FANTANZA: Frank Fantanza, PDC, New York 15, makes a motion to accept this wonderful report.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. Do I hear a second? Mike 2.

MR. NICK LUCIANI: Nick Luciani, Chapter 18, New York, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. You've heard the motion and the second. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed.

I think we again owe Mr Wilson a great debt of gratitude, and we should show it to him now. And Art, I really appreciate your efforts. (Applause)

At this time, I'd like to introduce an individual that probably very few of you know -- Charlie doesn't get around too much -- but Mr. Charles Luttjohann, National Membership Director, for a report and presentation on the Membership Program. (Applause)

MR. CHARLES D. LUTTJOHANN: Thank you. Thank you very much. I notice that when Art was introduced, all of you stood up and applauded. When I was introduced, a number of you stood up in the back and left. (Laughter) That's all right. I understand.

Hey, listen, it's a real pleasure to have the opportunity once a year to stand before this group of people, dedicated members of the organization, to recognize, along with our National Commander McDonald, those individuals that have excelled over the past year in membership recruitment, not only individuals but team members in different departments that have worked very, very hard to sustain a growing membership in our organization, especially after a year like we had last year, where every single department again exceeded their goal.

And what was really interesting about that is that over a fourth of them exceeded their goal before the year was half over with. So when I hear things from certain people that say, "Well, getting membership is just too hard any more," I have to look at these figures and think, well, if it's so darn hard, how are these guys making their goal?

And I'm not going to say it's easy, but I'm going to say that these people that are achieving their goals and building their membership strength are putting out the effort, as many, many of you are, and they're attaining their goals by putting out that effort.

And again, it's my privilege today to bring before you those individuals that have excelled, along with the commander. And at this time, I would like to proceed with that. Commander, would you like to give me a hand?

Okay. What I'm going to do, I'm going to go ahead and initiate the awards for the division winners. And as many of you know, we have five divisions based on membership population, and the first award I'm going to present today, that the commander is going to present, is to our Division V winner, which is the Department of Alaska, who is the mainstay year after year. I think ever since I've been membership director, Alaska has won.

And I'm going to present the award, or the commander is going to present the award to Commander Steve Cox, to the Department of Alaska for going over their goal 103.84 percent, or 66 members over goal. Let's hear it for them. (Applause)

And, of course, we're providing the patented purple jacket this year. (Laughter) Things have been a little tight at National Headquarters this year. You know, we ordered these about six weeks ago, and this guy's been eating like a horse. (Laughter and applause)

Hey, wait a minute. Since I bungled that one so bad, I think

what we'll do is we'll also recognize the fact that each year we present the Marx Award for the department with the highest percentage over goal. At 103.84 percent, the Department of Alaska, the Marx Award. Let's hear it for them. (Applause)

MR. STEVE COX: This award is very important to us in Alaska. We're a small department, new department. Without our department service officers and past service officers like Glad Shaw and Lyndon Warsaw, this would not be possible. We've processed about 1200 claims a year with three service officers. We're real proud of them, and they're the ones who made this possible.

Thank you. (Applause)

MR. LUTTJOHANN: I'm scared to death to present the next one. (Laughter) All right. What we're going to do is we're going to proceed and see what happens here.

For Division IV, our winner this year is the Department of Maine, and receiving that award is Commander Norman Newell, for 103.66 percent over goal, or 225 members over goal. (Applause)

MR. NORMAN NEWELL: I'm really proud to accept this and everything, and we couldn't do it without our service officers, Gary Burns and Bruce Kaplan, and members in our office back at Togus, Maine, and I thank everybody. (Applause)

MR. LUTTJOHANN: All right. Venturing farther down the tubes here, Division III, Colon Busby from the Department of Iowa, 102.15 percent, 175 members over goal. (Applause)

MR. COLON BUSBY: I'd just like to say thanks to the State of Iowa, to Larry Jatho, our NSOs, and all the recruiters that we've got out there who have worked so hard and so diligently in supporting the membership drive.

And I do hope with the new Membership Program that's coming out that you have in your satchel will promote it even more throughout the whole nation, and that our membership will rise by the thousands. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. LUTTJOHANN: Very good. Moving on to Division II, the Department of Minnesota, which really, really did a job this year. I tell you, these guys jumped on this thing right at the first of the year and came up with some very creative programs, kind of carried on the tradition of Delbert Nelson in years past. I'm really, really proud of them.

And picking up that award today will be Ken Smith, Department of Minnesota, with 103.44 over goal, for 524 members over their goal. (Applause)

MR. KEN SMITH: I would like to accept this on behalf of the Department of Minnesota, for without the help of a lot of good people out there, we wouldn't be here today. So thank you much. (Applause)

MR. LUTTJOHANN: All right. Now for the big, big division, for the largest departments in the country. We go to Division I, with all the big dogs. California was right on top again. California led the way. (Applause) One hundred and two point eight two percent over goal, 1,972 life members, full-paid life members over goal. Excellent job! George Morey, department commander, will be picking up the award. (Applause)

MR. GEORGE MOREY: Well, I have to thank the Department of California, the group of people sitting in the audience are the ones responsible for it, but it does take a little bit of driving force to keep them going. Let's go get them again, and I'd like to see all of them stand up and be accounted for out there. California, stand up! (Applause) Thank you.

MR. LUTTJOHANN: Well, since they did such a good job, let's give them another award. How about the Wainwright Award for that 1,972 full-paid life members over goal? (Applause)

I'm sorry. Mike 3.

MR. TONY R. CRAIG: Excuse me, Mr. Luttjohann. The commander from the Department of Indiana is requesting to approach the podium.

MR. LUTTJOHANN: Oh, this is highly irregular. Commander.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Well, if he knows the secret word, I'll let him come up. It's irregular, but do you know the secret word?

MR. CRAIG: What about "check?

COMMANDER McDONALD: You've got it. Come on up.

MR. LUTTJOHANN: Check! Sure, come on down.

MR. FLOYD L. WALTERS: We're a little bit miffed at everybody winning all these awards, and I think Indiana's devoted to membership, so here's a presentation for you, and we'll see you next year.

MR. LUTTJOHANN: All right! I think that was a challenge everybody. Are you taking this into your Membership Program? And you want an award next year? That's pretty gutsy, isn't it? Thanks guys, appreciate it. Hope to see you next year. Good luck.

Here, Commander. How much is it?

COMMANDER McDONALD: Well, I've got one for $700 and another for $15,000. (Applause)

MR. LUTTJOHANN: I think Indiana means business there in their division. I'd kind of keep an eye on those guys.

COMMANDER McDONALD: And I will get rid of these right away.

MR. LUTTJOHANN: All right. Moving right along, we have one more Membership Award that I'd like to present today, and this one I could just about do a recording on this one, because each year I do something real, real similar, but I'm real, real proud to be up here and have the opportunity to do this.

I probably won't even have to mention the person's name. He's the top overall membership recruiter -- I'm just going to give you a few clues, see if you can figure this out -- top overall membership recruiter for the year, sixth year in a row, from New York City, 1,147 members. That's 932 full-paid life, 215 part-life. Anybody know who I'm talking about?

(Response of, "Prospero!")

MR. LUTTJOHANN: Prospero Sodano. Let's bring him up. (Applause)

The only reason we went with purple this year, it was the only color he didn't have. (Laughter)

MR. PROSPERO SODANO: Good morning. I want to thank Charles Luttjohann and the staff at Kentucky Headquarters and National Headquarters, for helping give me all the equipment that I need to recruit new members. And I also want to thank every recruiter. Even though if you have one member, you're still a recruiter.

I want to thank you very much, and I'll see you next year up here again. (Laughter and applause)

MR. LUTTJOHANN: Got to love that guy. He never quits. He never gives up. He just keeps plugging along. And I tell you what: I think he's going to have some competition because this week it's been real interesting to me. We've got a lot of new officers who've been voted into positions over the last couple of months, and I've been stopped more during this convention by individuals saying they've got a new idea, they've got new programs, they want to get in touch with us to get lists.

And I've had more contact with people this year with that positive attitude than I've ever had in the past. So I really look forward to some big numbers this next year from you all.

What I'd like to do at this time is -- we only have a certain amount of seats up here, and we can't really recognize all the top recruiters. But what I do want to do is kind of read a list off to you. And I don't want to stretch this out too long, but I think that these individuals certainly deserve some recognition. And I'm going to read to you those individuals that have at least 100 members or more, because that's a lot of work, a lot of effort, and I certainly think that they need to be recognized.

First of all, obviously, Prospero. Let's hear it for him one more time. It's great. (Applause) The next person I want to recognize is Coy Hennis. Coy's been over a hundred members for the past six years. And if you're in the room, Coy, please stand up. You need to recognize this guy, because he's one of the hardest-working recruiters in the entire country. He pulls them out of the lobby. He pulls them out of the men's room. I'm telling you, the guy will sign them up anywhere. (Applause)

Ralph Gibson, with 285 members; Richard Ladnier, 212; Tom Johns out of Maryland with 208; Bruce Kaplan, one of the Maine connection NSOs that was referred to a while ago, with 205; Bob Sinclair out of Massachusetts with 183; John Parker from California with 138; Barry "Santa Claus" Souders with 138; Paul Pealer, 131;

Vincent Finocchio, 125; Larry Polzin, 122; Bill Gibney, 120. Feel free to yell for these guys, they deserve it. (Applause)

Gary Burns, the other half of the Maine connection, at 117; Bob Lougee, 113; Stan Lore, 111; Paul Wekenmann, 110; Jeanette Genovese, 106, one of the new ones, one of the new gals doing a great job; Mark Van Meter, 106; Daniel Flynn, 105. (Applause)

Kenny Kooymanm, a great story. Kenny's one of the greatest guys in the world, a lot of medical problems this past year. Still won over a hundred members, and had an awful lot of problems. He really worked hard. Really proud of Kenny. Let's hear it for Kenny. Great guy. (Applause)

Edwin Cooke, a hundred; and Stan Hoy, one of the dedicated NSOs who's been working for years and years, still over that hundred mark, and we're really proud of him. (Applause)

And I'm going to throw in James Smith just for the heck of it, because he was 99, and that's pretty darn close. So James, if you're here, stand and be recognized. (Applause)

The only other thing I want to mention is earlier it was mentioned that we do have a new incentive program this year, and it was brought out in the magazine two magazines ago, I believe. And we've had our first drawing for the first prizes, and nobody's really been notified yet. So I just wanted to use this as the location to do that.

And I don't know how many of you understand the program, but what we're doing is we're recognizing a recruiter and whoever that member was that that recruiter recruited both get the same prize in this drawing. So what we did is Brian Bible was our grand prize winner this time, along with the member that he signed up, Russell Hardy out of Texas. Ted Pasnak, the recruiter; James Sears, the member. Tracy Brown, recruiter; Trevor Warton, the member. Elias Tallas, the recruiter; Kelly Ratliffe, also benefited by that as being the member.

And we're going to make official notification of these people when we get back to Headquarters after the convention.

But keep in mind that each of these individuals that won this month will be entered back into the drawings for the rest of the year. So once you sign up a member, you and that member you sign up both have a tremendous opportunity to win one of the prizes throughout this membership year.

Brian Bible and the member both won giant screen televisions. And the rest of them all won the leather bomber jackets, remember, that we had a few years back that everybody's been looking for and we couldn't get any of them? We got some. And we're going to be throwing them into some additional programs on down the way, because they're real popular with people.

So we're going to be getting those out to them right away. And for next month, we have a Bose music system and various Bose radios that we're going to be using for our prizes. They're very, very nice prizes. And the only reason we've very, very nice prizes is because we've got a bunch of very, very nice and hard-working people, and you deserve it.

Thank you all very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: At this time, I'll ask for a motion to accept Mr. Luttjohann's report. Mike 1.

MS. RUTH A. HERMANN: From Chapter 14, Utah so makes the motion, Commander.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Your name?

MS. HERMANN: Ruth Hermann.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. Do I hear a second? Mike 3.

MR. VINCENT BARRESI: Vincent Barresi, Chapter 20, Virginia Beach. Second the motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. You heard the motion and the second. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried.

At this time, I'd like to introduce Sal Tornatore, the National Finance Committee, for his report.

NEC TORNATORE: Good morning, you beautiful people. National Commander McDonald, fellow members, the National Executive Committee, DAV members and guests: Before I begin my report, please allow me to recognize my fellow members of the National

Finance Committee: National Commander Harry R. McDonald, Jr. of Florida; 9th District National Executive Committeeman Wallace E. Tyson of North Carolina; 11th District National Executive Committeeman David A. Goliver of Ohio; and 14th District National Executive Committeeman Harry VandeMore of South Dakota. (Applause)

I would also like to recognize National Senior Vice-Commander Andrew Kistler of Pennsylvania, and Judge Advocate Edward G. Galian of New York, who served the committee in a nonvoting capacity.

The data on the first six months of 1998 paints a portrait of forward movement in the DAV's financial affairs. It's a picture of an organization that's prepared to meet the demands of today and the challenges of the future.

During the first six months of this year, we sent out 34.3 million pieces of fund-raising mail, up three million from the same period last year. The DAV's income at June 30th stood at $43.5 million, and the net income came in at $27.5 million for the first half of 1998. While this is somewhat less than last year, please note it is still $3.1 million more than our experience two years ago. By year's end, we will have dropped over 60.6 million pieces of fund-raising mail, and we expect to generate some $89.6 million in gross revenues.

As for the Department Fund-Raising Program, I am pleased to report in the last year each department received $3.65 per member -- now, that's 65 cents more than expected -- for a total distribution of almost $3.9 million. This represents a growth of five and a half percent over the previous year, and, very importantly, this money went to departments without any cost to them and without any work on their part.

This program is greatly enhancing the service programs offered by the departments. I thank all the departments, the chapters, for their continued support for this program, especially when they're speaking with our members.

In terms of the overall financial picture, our net worth climbed beyond $141 million by June 30th. This represents a growth of 25.8 percent over our June 30th results for 1997.

In addition to the fund-raising factors I've already discussed, the value of our investment portfolio increased by a full one-third to $138 million.

Under the leadership of National Adjutant Art Wilson, we have achieved huge financial success. However, I must also point out that the financial reserves of the national organization are well within the guidelines established for departments and chapters of no more than two times last year's expenses.

Action by the national organization to reduce distribution to itself by a total of $1.50 cents per member, in addition to a favorable investment climate, helped the Life Membership Fund. It grew by $4 million to $94.5 million over the past year. As it stands today, the fund will be depleted by the year 2026. This is an important improvement of a full ten years compared to last year.

This is very encouraging news, but it will still be important to continue monitoring the Life Membership Fund.

Before closing, I would like to thank the other committee members, National Adjutant Wilson and the DAV's professional staff for their prudent and successful management of our organization.

Let me thank you, Mr. McDonald, for the support I received in my role as the Finance Committee chairman. It has been an honor to serve on and chair this important committee as we build the financial strength of the organization, providing for continued service to this nation's disabled veterans.

Commander McDonald, that concludes my report to the National Convention, a report of growth and success, a report, I feel honored to offer to our delegates. I thank you and move for the adoption of this report.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Mike 1.

MR. JIM TANNER: Comrade Commander, Jim Tanner, adjutant, Joseph R. Harold Memorial Chapter 10, Massachusetts, makes a motion to accept the report as read.

COMMANDER McDONALD: We have a motion to accept the report of the Finance Committee. Do I hear a second? Mike 3.

NEC 14TH DISTRICT HARRY VANDEMORE: VandeMore, Chapter 1,

South Dakota, part of the 14th District, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. We have a motion and a second. Do I hear any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed.

Sal, I want to thank you. You've done an outstanding job these past two years, and it's been a pleasure for me to work with you, and that was an outstanding report. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: The motion was carried.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Financial Statements for the Year Ended December 31, 1997 and Independent Auditors' Report

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu International

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

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INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

National Finance Committee
Disabled American Veterans:

We have audited the accompanying statement of financial position of Disabled American Veterans (DAV) as of December 31, 1997, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of DAV's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

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

In our opinion, such financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of DAV at December 31, 1997 and the changes in its net assets and cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

March 6, 1998

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu International

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 1997 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 1996

ASSETS	1997	1996
ASSETS:		
Cash	$ 1,354,164	$ 2,913,643
Accounts receivable	1,841,536	1,794,971
Solicitation materials	2,506,020	2,477,415
Prepaid expenses	2,685,356	3,086,978
Investments (Note 2)	146,510,216	109,138,941
Property & equipment, net (Note 2)	9,740,850	8,696,174
Life Membership:		
Cash	270,452	461,174
Investments (Note 2)	86,465,290	78,874,256
TOTAL	$251,373,884	$207,443,552

LIABILITIES AND UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	1997	1996
LIABILITIES:		
Accounts payable	$ 3,276,762	$ 5,496,510
Accrued expenses:		
Salaries and related taxes and withholdings	1,305,508	1,373,144
Sick leave	5,283,954	6,196,790
Medical	494,204	500,000
Pension (Note 5)	2,918,176	3,094,906
Postretirement benefits (Note 6)	16,535,167	12,998,000
Deferred dues and service fees collected in advance (Note 4)	3,593,836	3,771,489
Other	918,526	629,872
Life Membership:		
Accounts payable	108,456	120,377
Reserve for future distribution of life membership dues (Note 4)	86,627,286	79,215,053
Total liabilities	121,061,875	113,396,141
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS:		
General	129,869,268	93,817,903
Net assets designated by the National Finance Committee (Note 3)	442,741	229,508
Total unrestricted net assets	130,312,009	94,047,411
TOTAL	$251,373,884	$207,443,552

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1997 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 1996

	1997	1996
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:		
Support:		
Contributions received primarily from direct mail solicitations (Note 2)	$ 92,519,360	$ 87,209,915
Contributed services and facilities, primarily services (Note 2)	17,598,337	15,372,914
List royalties	2,908,505	2,451,189
Bequests	1,575,099	797,509
Total support	114,601,301	105,831,527
Revenue:		
Membership dues and fees (Note 4)	7,582,822	7,912,456
Income from investments	5,229,671	3,677,019
Gain on sale of investments	16,676,455	872,138
Miscellaneous	323,116	193,499
Total revenue	29,812,064	12,655,112
Total support and revenue	144,413,365	118,486,639
EXPENSES:		
Program Services:		
National Service Program	30,709,842	30,634,418
Legislative Service	535,729	583,485
Voluntary Service Program	17,462,786	17,491,098
National Employment Program	191,088	190,911
State Services, Relief Programs, and Memorials	4,411,868	3,999,533
Publications and Other Communications	2,353,770	2,501,090
Membership Services	4,457,323	4,422,996
Public Awareness Outreach	12,501,364	13,830,885
Total Program Services	72,623,770	73,654,416
Supporting Services:		
Fund Raising Costs	29,803,752	30,906,762
Administrative and General Expenses	4,214,615	3,593,263
Total Supporting Services	34,018,367	34,500,025
Total Expenses	106,642,137	108,154,441
INCREASE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS BEFORE UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	37,771,228	10,332,198
INCREASE (DECREASE) IN UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS (Note 2)	(1,506,630)	7,062,440
INCREASE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	36,264,598	17,394,638
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS, Beginning of year	94,047,411	76,652,773
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS, End of year	$130,312,009	$ 94,047,411

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1997 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 1996

	National Service Program	Legislative Service	Voluntary Service Program	National Employment Program	State Services, Relief Programs and Memorials	Publications and Other Communications	Membership Services	Public Awareness Outreach	Total Program Services	Fund Raising Costs	Administrative and General Expenses	Total Supporting Services	Total Expenses 1997	Total Expenses 1996
Salaries (Note 2)	$15,961,009	$264,787	$ 323,440	$ 90,421		$ 344,457	$ 965,931		$17,950,045	$ 4,565,697	$ 2,858,365	$ 7,424,062	$ 25,382,107	$ 23,747,518
Employee benefits (Notes 5,6)	6,712,543	124,028	127,503	46,256		175,914	387,856		7,574,100	1,672,781	1,547,377	3,220,158	10,794,258	12,260,314
Payroll taxes	1,139,176	20,356	23,635	5,152		26,413	67,736		1,282,468	304,900	230,881	615,861	1,898,329	2,073,350
DAV transportation network - volunteers			16,015,091						16,015,091				16,015,091	13,700,668
DAV transportation network- grants			50,000						50,000				50,000	2,245,375
Winter sports clinic			155,206						155,206				155,206	164,079
Colorado Trust			500,000						500,000				500,000	550,000
Other grants	33,579		5,000						38,579				38,579	33,874
Disaster relief					$ 356,625				356,625				356,625	17,975
State Service Program					3,850,098				3,850,098				3,850,098	3,640,734
Memorials					100,000				100,000				100,000	130,298
Scholarship					105,145				105,145				105,145	194,546
Expenses of national convention							426,035		426,035				426,035	304,319
Expenses of national commander and committees							462,409		462,409				462,409	367,900
Travel and relocation	1,383,139	21,469	84,126	23,086		15,866	71,531		1,599,219	36,185	165,473	201,658	1,800,877	1,904,454
Facilities	1,585,870								1,585,870				1,585,870	1,583,246
Postage and shipping	240,615	12,277	28,604	1,470		704,382	176,840		1,164,185	6,563,118	27,091	6,590,209	7,834,394	8,173,693
Equipment rental and maintenance	172,428		1,092			221	2,765		177,106	429,518	438,639	868,157	1,045,263	883,785
Supplies	746,620	27,601	90,819	1,778		96,507	312,578		1,275,903	487,536	421,971	909,507	2,185,410	1,921,709
Insurance	82,014	754	29,116	377		558	558		114,177	21,678	132,323	154,001	268,178	248,593
Telephone	75,452		1,836			1,035	4,142		81,465	15,051	61,457	76,508	157,973	159,245
Outside service	188,310	2,054	4,748			10,234	11,579		216,925	611,061	153,194	764,255	981,180	850,147
Project costs	10,200	62,321	12,160			44,348			128,929		50,000	50,000	178,929	217,300
Printing of magazine						835,420			835,420				835,420	764,646
Cost of solicitation mailings - materials										25,797,417		25,797,417	25,797,417	28,511,421
Heat, light, water and power	106,709								106,709	370,680	253	370,942	477,651	443,854
Security service	79,820								79,820	179,199		179,199	259,019	231,592
Depreciation of property and equipment	542,319	82	9,520			8,620	7,996		568,537	294,746	514,890	809,636	1,378,173	1,073,630
Legal fees	37,976						88,365		126,341		429,779	429,779	556,120	481,894
Professional fees	179,204						23,130		202,414	7,477	522,532	530,009	732,423	601,729
Allocations (to) from other departments	1,336,221						1,442,022	$12,501,364	15,280,207	(11,650,340)	(3,629,867)	(15,280,207)		
Other	95,758		1,013	14,548		9,895	5,250		126,462	16,959	290,257	307,216	433,678	471,093
Total, year ended December 31, 1997	$30,709,842	$533,729	$17,462,786	$191,008	$ 4,411,868	$2,353,770	$4,457,323	$12,501,364	$72,623,770	$20,803,752	$ 4,214,615	$34,018,367	$106,642,137	
Total, year ended December 31, 1996	$30,634,418	$583,485	$17,091,098	$190,911	$ 3,999,533	$2,501,098	$4,422,996	$13,030,885	$73,654,416	$20,906,702	$ 3,393,263	$34,300,025		$ 108,154,441

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1997 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 1996

	1997	1996
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Increase in unrestricted net assets	$ 36,264,598	$ 17,394,638
Adjustments to reconcile increase in unrestricted net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation and amortization	1,391,031	1,010,652
Decrease (increase) in unrealized appreciation of investments	1,506,630	(7,062,440)
Loss (gain) on disposal of property and equipment	4,019	(21,321)
Investment gains	(16,676,455)	(872,138)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Accounts and interest/dividends receivable	(679,987)	410,478
Solicitation materials	(28,605)	574,157
Prepaid expenses	401,622	171,111
Accounts payable	(2,231,669)	3,286,832
Accrued expenses	2,374,169	3,464,025
Deferred dues and service fees and other	111,001	363,028
Reserve for future distribution of life membership dues	435,263	(3,844,589)
Net cash provided by operating activities	22,871,617	14,874,433
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Net cost of investment purchases	(21,592,113)	(17,410,269)
Payments for property and equipment	(2,452,907)	(1,262,126)
Proceeds from sales of property and equipment	13,181	302,633
Decrease (increase) in life membership investments	(589,979)	3,716,258
Net cash used in investing activities	(24,621,818)	(14,653,504)
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH	(1,750,201)	220,929
CASH, Beginning of year	3,374,817	3,153,888
CASH, End of year	$ 1,624,616	$ 3,374,817

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1997

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.

The accompanying financial statements include certain prior-year comparative information summarized from DAV's 1996 financial statements. Such information does not include sufficient detail, and is not intended, to consitute a presentation in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

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 are reflected as a separate component of revenue.

The cost and market value of investments in securities and the net unrealized gain at December 31, 1997 are summarized below:

General	Cost	Market Value	Unrealized Net Gain
Cash equivalents	$ 19,742,821	$ 19,742,821	
Corporate bonds	37,644,803	38,021,788	$ 376,985
Treasuries	35,148,671	35,469,366	320,695
Common stocks	25,698,116	35,886,233	10,188,117
Common stock funds	13,604,783	16,256,055	2,651,272
Subtotal	$131,839,194	145,376,263	$13,537,069
Interest and dividends receivable		1,133,953	
Total		$146,510,216	
Life Membership			
Cash equivalents	$ 3,641,268	$ 3,641,268	
Corporate bonds	10,916,232	11,107,232	$ 191,000
Treasuries	18,299,149	18,422,981	123,832
Common stocks	29,228,860	48,418,976	19,190,116
Common stock funds	3,935,516	4,334,978	399,462
Subtotal	$ 66,021,025	85,925,435	$19,904,410
Interest and dividends receivable		539,855	
Total		$ 86,465,290	

Property and Equipment - Property and equipment are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation, and are composed of the following at December 31, 1997:

	Cost	Accumulated Depreciation	Net Book Value
Land and improvements	$ 921,512	$ 355,821	$ 565,691
Buildings and improvements	8,612,077	4,024,946	4,587,131
Machinery and other equipment	11,501,383	6,913,355	4,588,028
Total	$21,034,972	$11,294,122	$9,740,850

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

Contributions - Contributions received are recorded as unrestricted, temporarily restricted or permanently restricted support depending on the existence and nature of any donor restrictions. All contributions are considered available for unrestricted use unless specifically restricted by the donor. Support that is restricted by the donor is reported as an increase in unrestricted net assets if the restriction expires in the reporting period in which the support is recognized.

Contributed Services and Facilities - DAV operates extensive programs through which volunteers contribute many hours of service to veterans; however, only a portion of those hours, those donated to veterans at medical facilities of the VA, are tabulated. Of the 2,375,070 hours accounted for in 1997 – 1,209,599 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 $16,015,091. 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 1,165,471 hours -- valued at $15,430,836 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.

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

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

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

Allocation of Joint Costs - In 1997, DAV incurred joint costs of $39,449,148 for informational materials and activities that included fund-raising appeals. Of those costs, $12,501,364 was allocated to public awareness outreach (program services) and $26,947,784 was allocated to fund raising costs.

3. DESIGNATED NET ASSETS

Certain unrestricted net assets have been designated by DAV's National Finance Committee for scholarships and disaster relief. As of December 31, 1997, $336,527 is designated for assistance to disabled veterans and their families who have suffered losses resulting from natural disasters. Another $106,214 is designated for scholarships to children of disabled veterans who qualify scholastically and are in need of financial aid.

4. LIFE MEMBERSHIP

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

The following summary represents the changes during 1997 in the reserve for future distribution of membership dues:

Balance, January 1, 1997	$79,215,053
Additions:	
Membership dues received	3,614,254
Earnings on invested assets	2,843,364
Gain on sale of investments	6,908,639
Total	13,366,257
Distribution of membership dues:	
National Headquarters	7,407,539
Local Chapters	2,458,645
State Departments	3,064,811
Total	12,930,995
Increase in unrealized appreciation of investments	6,976,971
Balance, December 31, 1997	$86,627,286

5. PENSION PLAN

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

At December 31, 1997 the plan's accumulated benefit obligation, including vested benefits of $58,369,213, was $60,428,978.

The following table sets forth the plan's funded status and amounts recognized in DAV's statement of financial position as of December 31, 1997:

Actuarial present value of projected benefit obligation	$ 76,178,886
Plan assets at fair value, principally immediate participation guarantee contracts and common trust funds	61,447,567
Projected benefit obligation in excess of plan assets	(14,731,319)
Unrecognized prior service cost	2,747,574
Unrecognized transition obligation	53,178
Unrecognized net loss	9,012,391
Pension liability	$ (2,918,176)

Net pension cost for 1997, included in employee benefits expense in the accompanying statement of functional expenses, included the following components:

Service cost	$ 4,290,612
Interest cost	5,827,362
Actual return on plan assets	(8,376,860)
Net amortization and deferral	3,109,834
Net periodic pension cost	$ 4,850,948

The discount rate used in determining the actuarial present value of the benefit obligations for 1997 was 7.25%. The rate of increase in future compensation levels was assumed to be 4.5%. The expected long-term rate of return on assets was assumed to be 8.75%. DAV funds the recommended actuarially determined contribution amount. Contributions to the plan are based on the Projected Unit Credit Actuarial cost method.

DAV made several amendments to the defined benefit plan which are effective January 1, 1998. DAV expects these amendments to reduce the net pension cost.

DAV also maintains a defined contribution Salary Savings and Investment Plan for its employees. For qualified employees electing to participate in the Plan, DAV contributes a percentage of the employees' base salary. DAV's contributions in 1997 were $521,500 and are included in employee benefits expense in the accompanying statement of functional expenses.

6. POSTRETIREMENT BENEFITS

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

As of December 31, 1997, DAV has $371,000 set aside in a reserve established for the sole purpose of meeting the cost of postretirement group term life insurance. DAV does not intend to set aside additional funds to satisfy the postretirement benefit obligation. These benefits will continue to be funded as incurred.

The following table sets forth the components of the net periodic postretirement benefit cost for 1997, which is included in employee benefits expense in the accompanying statement of functional expenses:

Service cost	$1,184,000
Interest cost	2,604,000
Actual return on plan assets	(32,000)
Net amortization and deferral	1,419,000
Net periodic postretirement benefit cost	$5,175,000

The following table sets forth the reconciliation of the funded status of the postretirement benefits to amounts recognized in the accompanying statement of financial position:

Actuarial present value of accumulated postretirement benefit obligation:	
Retirees	$ 21,031,000
Fully eligible active plan participants	1,005,000
Other active plan participants	17,170,000
Total	39,206,000
Fair value of plan assets	371,000
Accumulated postretirement benefit obligation in excess of plan assets	(38,835,000)
Unrecognized prior service cost	4,602,000
Unrecognized transition obligation, amortized over 20 years	14,384,000
Unrecognized net loss	3,313,833
Accrued postretirement benefit obligation	$(16,535,167)

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 9.0% in 1997 to 5.5% in 2018, after which the trend rate is expected to stabilize. The effect of a one percentage point increase in the assumed health care cost trend rate for each future year would increase the benefit obligation by $6,497,000 and the current year benefit expense by $698,000. Other actuarial assumptions include an expected long term rate of return on plan assets of 7.5% and a discount rate of 7.25%.

7. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Disabled American Veterans National Service Foundation - The accompanying financial statements do not include the net assets (or changes therein) of the Disabled American Veterans National Service Foundation ("Foundation") which are held by the Foundation and available to DAV only through appropriation by the Foundation's Board of Directors. The National Service Foundation is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. Based upon audited financial statements at December 31, 1997, net assets of the Foundation were $19,519,779. During 1997, DAV provided the Foundation with the use of DAV personnel, facilities and equipment. For the personnel services, DAV charged the Foundation $92,555. Facilities and equipment are provided by DAV at no charge. Additionally, in 1997, DAV contributed $500,000 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, 1997, the Foundation owed $42,578 to DAV which is recorded as accounts receivable in the accompanying statement of financial position.

DAV Vietnam Veterans National Memorial, Inc. - The DAV Vietnam Veterans National Memorial, Inc. ("Memorial") was organized to maintain a national memorial to veterans of the Vietnam war. The Memorial is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. In 1997, DAV contributed $100,000 to the Memorial. DAV also provided the Memorial with certain personnel and administrative services and the use of its facilities and equipment for which no compensation was received.

Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust - Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust ("Trust") was established in 1986. The Trust is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt entity which receives most of its contributions from the Combined Federal Campaign. The Trust is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. During 1997, DAV provided the Trust with the use of DAV personnel, facilities and equipment. For the personnel services, DAV charged the Trust $28,914. Facilities and equipment are provided by DAV at no charge.

* * * * * *

Deloitte & Touche LLP

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Financial Statements for the Year Ended December 31, 1997 and Independent Auditors' Report

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu International

Deloitte & Touche LLP

250 East Fifth Street
P.O. Box 5340
Cincinnati, Ohio 45201-5340
Telephone: (513) 784-7100

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

National Finance Committee,
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary National Headquarters:

We have audited the accompanying statement of financial position of Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary National Headquarters (the Auxiliary) as of December 31, 1997 and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Auxiliary's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

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

In our opinion, such financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Auxiliary as of December 31, 1997 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

March 23, 1998

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu International

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 1997 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 1996

ASSETS	1997	1996
GENERAL ASSETS:		
Cash and cash equivalents (Note 2)	$ 3,202,453	$ 3,681,053
Investments at fair market value (Note 2)	895,558	
Accrued interest receivable	7,790	
Materials and supplies	111,202	140,293
Prepaid expenses	17,985	28,444
Other assets	19,995	14,713
DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAM ASSETS - Cash and cash equivalents (Notes 2,5)	8,383	
SERVICE PROGRAM ASSETS - Cash and cash equivalents (Notes 2,5)	162,625	137,337
EDUCATION LOAN PROGRAM ASSETS:		
Cash and cash equivalents (Notes 2,5)	819,072	743,564
Notes receivable (less allowance of $6,600 in 1997 and 1996) (Note 5)	176,574	180,374
LIFE MEMBERSHIP ASSETS:		
Cash and cash equivalents (Notes 2,4)	3,340	499,752
Accrued interest receivable	105,239	119,418
Investments at fair market value (Notes 2,4)	8,514,701	7,933,933
TOTAL	$14,044,917	$13,478,881

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	1997	1996
LIABILITIES:		
Accounts payable - DAV National Headquarters	$ 183,912	$ 240,119
Contributions distributable to state departments	197,829	139,397
Accrued vacation and sick leave pay	117,811	117,811
Deferred membership fees (Note 2)	592,240	605,159
Other	9,489	6,734
Reserve for future distribution of Life Membership dues (Note 4)	8,623,280	8,553,103
Total liabilities	9,724,561	9,662,323
NET ASSETS:		
Unrestricted - General (Note 3)	3,153,702	2,755,283
Temporarily restricted - Service Program (Note 5)	162,625	137,337
Temporarily restricted - Disaster Relief Program (Note 5)	8,383	
Permanently restricted - Education Loan Program (Note 5)	995,646	923,938
Total net assets	4,320,356	3,816,558
TOTAL	$14,044,917	$13,478,881

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1997 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 1996

	1997					
	Unrestricted General	Temporarily Restricted - Service Program	Temporarily Restricted - Disaster Relief Program	Permanently Restricted - Education Loan Program	Total	1996 Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:						
Membership fees and mandates	$ 485,260	$ 8,152		$ 9,045	$ 502,457	$ 509,255
Life Membership dues (Note 4)	705,732				705,732	666,216
Contributions (Note 2)	276,056	20,239	$15,115	40,093	351,503	290,372
Contributed facilities (Notes 2,7)	25,300				25,300	25,300
Sale of membership items, less related direct costs of $53,093	(4,515)				(4,515)	(977)
Conference and meetings	12,491				12,491	13,100
National convention	24,260				24,260	17,805
Interest income	173,852	5,458		22,570	201,880	208,063
Reserve for uncollectible loans						(3,750)
Net assets released from restriction	15,046	(8,314)	(6,732)			
Other	13,099	(247)			12,852	11,693
Total revenues	1,726,581	25,288	8,383	71,708	1,831,960	1,737,077
EXPENSES:						
Salaries and wages	381,135				381,135	372,383
Employee benefits (Note 6)	134,631				134,631	131,624
Distributions to state departments	159,462				159,462	169,097
Fundraising expenses	116,594				116,594	90,463
Membership drive expenses	136,959				136,959	150,393
Payroll taxes	31,005				31,005	30,821
Conferences and meetings	55,767				55,767	51,682
Expenses of National Convention	57,777				57,777	65,024
Printing, stationery and office supplies	41,777				41,777	39,064
Expenses of National Commander and officers	15,354				15,354	18,447
Contributed facilities (Notes 2,7)	25,300				25,300	25,300
Postage	59,254				59,254	53,350
Travel	28,072				28,072	27,484
Professional fees	12,350				12,350	14,200
Service program benefits	8,314				8,314	9,711
Disaster relief program benefits	6,732				6,732	
VAVS, memberships and other awards	18,324				18,324	15,031
Other	39,355				39,355	45,122
Total expenses	1,328,162				1,328,162	1,309,196
CHANGES IN NET ASSETS	398,419	25,288	8,383	71,708	503,798	427,881
NET ASSETS, Beginning of year	2,755,283	137,337		923,938	3,816,558	3,388,677
NET ASSETS, End of year	$3,153,702	$162,625	$ 8,383	$995,646	$4,320,356	$3,816,558

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1997 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 1996

	1997	1996
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Change in net assets	$ 503,798	$ 427,881
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to cash provided by operating activities:		
Permanently restricted contributions and interest income	(71,708)	(39,006)
Change in assets and liabilities:		
Accrued interest receivable	6,389	14,885
Prepaid expenses and other assets	5,177	(5,640)
Materials and supplies	29,091	(32,100)
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	(56,207)	101,051
Deferred membership fees	(12,919)	44,877
Reserve for life membership dues	108,076	60,922
Contributions distributable to state departments	58,432	52,684
Other liabilities	2,755	2,131
Total adjustments	69,086	199,804
Net cash provided by operations	572,884	627,685
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Increase in general fund investments	(895,558)	
Increase in Life Membership investments	(618,667)	(543,952)
Education loans	(32,300)	(26,520)
Collections from repayment of education loans	36,100	37,741
Net cash used in investing activities	(1,510,425)	(532,731)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES -		
Permanently restricted education fund contributions and interest income	71,708	39,006
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	(865,833)	133,960
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS:		
Beginning of year	5,061,706	4,927,746
End of year	$ 4,195,873	$5,061,706

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1997

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 1996 financial statements. Such information does not include sufficient detail, and is not intended, to constitute a presentation in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

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 or market value. The fair value of the DAV Auxiliary's investments is determined based on the quoted market price of the related securities. Gains and losses resulting from the sale of securities are recognized at the time of disposition and are computed using the specific identification method.

The cost and market value of investments in securities and the net unrealized gain (loss) at December 31, 1997 are summarized below:

	Cost	Market Value	Unrealized Net Gain
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 777,948	$ 777,948	
Corporate bonds	2,656,573	2,677,694	$21,121
Treasuries	5,919,960	5,954,617	34,657
Total	$9,354,481	$9,410,259	$55,778

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

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

3. FREEDOM FOUNDATION

The DAV Auxiliary has designated $5,351 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 1997 in the reserve for future distribution of dues:

Balance, January 1, 1997	$8,553,103
Additions:	
Membership dues received	414,271
Earnings on invested fund assets	612,519
Unrealized depreciation of investments	(37,899)
Total	988,891
Distributions of dues:	
National Headquarters	705,732
Local units	80,731
State Departments	111,542
Investment fee	20,709
Total	918,714
Balance, December 31, 1997	$8,623,280

5. DONOR RESTRICTED NET ASSETS

Education Loan Program - Donations from individuals and amounts received from each unit (local chapters) as a mandate for educational loans are recorded in permanently restricted assets from which loans are made to students in accordance with the by-laws of the DAV Auxiliary. The maximum amount of an education loan is $1,000 per year for a maximum of four years per student; the loan bears no interest and is to be repaid in seven years beginning 90 days after the student's graduation or withdrawal from school.

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

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

6. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

All employees of the DAV Auxiliary are covered by Disabled American Veterans Retirement Plan, a defined benefit pension plan. The benefits are based on years of service and the employee's compensation during the last three years of service. Contributions are intended to provide not only for benefits attributed to service to date, but also for those expected in the future. In 1997, DAV charged the DAV Auxiliary $87,585 for its share of the retirement plan cost.

DAV provides certain health care and life insurance benefits for its retired employees and their spouses. All employees of the DAV Auxiliary may become eligible for these benefits if they reach normal retirement age while working for the DAV Auxiliary. In 1997, DAV did not charge the DAV Auxiliary for these benefits.

7. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The DAV Auxiliary occupies space in the DAV National Headquarter's building and also uses certain office equipment owned by the DAV. No fees are charged for such usage. The value of these contributed facilities is estimated to be $25,300 in 1997 and is included as revenue and expense on the accompanying statement of activities.

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

* * * * * *

COMMANDER McDONALD: At this time, I would like to entertain a motion that the list of delegates and alternates selected by the 21 national districts and the National Blind Veterans Chapter to serve on convention committees be admitted into the record of the proceedings of this convention. Mike 3.

MR. DAVID L. TANNENBAUM: Dave Tannenbaum, Prince William County Chapter 15, Virginia, so moves.

COMMANDER McDONALD: We have a motion. Do I hear a second? Mike 1.

MS. HERMANN: Hermann, Chapter 14, Utah, so seconds.

COMMANDER McDONALD: We have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried.

(Whereupon, the following are DAV National Convention Committees:)

1998 NATIONAL CONVENTION, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
	COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS	
01.....	Thomas J. Daley.....	Massachusetts 049
(Alt)....	Timothy E. Voner.....	Massachusetts 114
02.....	Nicola L. Luciani.....	New York 118
(Alt)....	Joel A.Lopez-Perez.....	New York 144
03.....	Kenneth J. Kooyman.....	Rhode Island 012
(Alt)....	Thomas Conners.....	Rhode Island 017
04.....	Robert A. Dick.....	Delaware 001
(Alt)....	Edward F. Norman.....	Connecticut 006
05.....	Calvin R. Hall.....	Pennsylvania 064
(Alt)....	Albert Lockhart El.....	Pennsylvania 014
06.....	David L. Tannenbaum.....	Virginia 015
(Alt)....	Eddie Walker.....	Virginia 015
07.....	Jimmy B. Meeks.....	Florida 028
(Alt)....	Roger H. Sullivan.....	Florida 087
08.....	Lee R. Richard.....	Louisiana 017
(Alt)....	William J. Lane.....	Louisiana 030
09.....	Alexe M. Baker.....	Georgia 010
(Alt)....	Elbert T. Townsend.....	North Carolina 011
10.....	Morris Penermon.....	Michigan 001
(Alt)....	Roy A. Redmond.....	Michigan 002
11.....	Shannon Ray Clyburn.....	Ohio 108
(Alt)....	Raymond H. Hutchinson.....	Ohio 063
12.....	Thomas W. Rymer.....	Wisconsin 045
(Alt)....	Harold Blechman.....	Illinois 047
13.....	Paul F. Wiggins.....	Kentucky 019
(Alt)....	William A. Reinhart.....	Kentucky 019
14.....	Donald S. Skillings.....	Minnesota 022
(Alt)....	James V. Hamann.....	Minnesota 002
15.....	Dennis L. Young.....	Kansas 001
(Alt)....	Clarence L. Borders.....	Missouri 001
16.....	Kenneth Musselmann.....	California 019
(Alt)....	Robert Salisbury.....	California 023
17.....	Kenneth E. Camell.....	Colorado 010
(Alt)....	Silverio Joe Armijo.....	New Mexico 003
18.....	Byron C. Canaan.....	Arizona 008
(Alt)....	Robert E. McCallum.....	Arizona 020
19.....	Anne M. Ruppert.....	Alaska 002
(Alt)....	Sarah J. Royse.....	Washington 046
20.....	Richard L. Sarrazin.....	Texas 005
(Alt)....	Glenda G. Simon.....	Texas 027
21.....	Kevin R. Grantier.....	Oklahoma 007
(Alt)....	Stephen Painter, Jr.....	Oklahoma 029
Blind Vets		
	Robert L. Williams.....	Blind Veterans 001
(Alt)	Norman Jones, Jr.....	Blind Veterans 001

Advisors: Richard L. Sarrazin and Fred R. Bristol

1998 NATIONAL CONVENTION, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA - Continued

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State

COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

01.....	Alan W. Bowers.....	Massachusetts 046
(Alt)....	John P. Rogers.....	Massachusetts 115
02.....	David H. Wilson.....	New York 082
(Alt)....	Abraham Wolkofsky.....	New York 023
03.....	Gregory S. Holmes.....	Maine 015
(Alt)....	Stanley J. Hoy.....	New Hampshire 001
04.....	Richard E. Manners.....	New Jersey 014
(Alt)....	Michael Bizon.....	New Jersey 026
05.....	Neil J. Appleby	Pennsylvania 050
(Alt)....	John J. Lorenz.....	Pennsylvania 096
06.....	Sloan H. Hoopes.....	Virginia 003
(Alt)....	Cornell B. Fleming.....	Maryland 001
07.....	Marshall E. Voelz.....	Florida 092
(Alt)....	Irving P. Unger.....	Florida 040
08.....	Ellen Carter.....	Mississippi 005
(Alt)....	John A. Bell.....	Mississippi 011
09.....	Frances C. Milam.....	Georgia 001
(Alt)....	William L. Coward, Sr.....	Georgia 040
10.....	Russell Spalding.....	Michigan 129
(Alt)....	Harold E. De Forest.....	Michigan 011
11.....	Joseph R. Lenhart.....	Ohio 073
(Alt)....	Harry E. Duffalo.....	Ohio 116
12.....	Charles E. Bille.....	Wisconsin 040
(Alt)....	James J. Ferrara.....	Illinois 055
13.....	Josephine B. Althaus.....	Kentucky 155
(Alt)....	Stephen C. Combs.....	Kentucky 006
14.....	Rex Kiser.....	Minnesota 001
(Alt)....	Victor C. Hass.....	North Dakota 004
15.....	Dale R. Akeman.....	Missouri 010
(Alt)....	Colon J. Busby.....	Iowa 060
16.....	George E. Morey.....	California 059
(Alt)....	Delphine Metcalf.....	California 021
17.....	Richard M. Rambes.....	New Mexico 003
(Alt)....	Thomas G. Daubert.....	New Mexico 003
18.....	Harvey L. Jacobsen.....	Nevada 004
(Alt)....	Kenneth Ginnery.....	Arizona 020
19.....	Raymond E. Guise, Jr.....	Oregon 011
(Alt)....	Philip E. Caldwell.....	Oregon 020
20.....	Kandis A. Myers.....	Texas 017
(Alt)....	Derrell G. Neal.....	Texas 175
21.....	Larry B. Frazier.....	Arkansas 005
(Alt)....	Thomas J. Davis, Jr.....	Arkansas 056
Blind Vets		
	Robert G. Morrison.....	Blind Veterans 001
(Alt)....	Floyd O. Britting.....	Blind Veterans 001

Advisors: Charles D. Luttjohann and Edward G. Galian

COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT

01.....	James H. Tanner.....	Massachusetts 010
(Alt)....	David C. Lee.....	Massachusetts 013
02.....	Claude A. Nelson.....	New York 047
(Alt)....	Alvin Lee Burks.....	New York 076
03.....	H. C. Littlefield.....	New Hampshire 004
(Alt)....	Bruce E. Kaplan.....	Maine 006
04.....	Salvatore Lo Sauro.....	New Jersey 015
(Alt)....	Herbert G. Henn.....	New Jersey 032
05.....	M. Rae White.....	Pennsylvania 050
(Alt)....	Vincent P. Darcangelo.....	Pennsylvania 055
06.....	Phillip W. Turpin.....	Virginia 003
(Alt)....	Michael J. Piper.....	Maryland 021
07.....	Albert M. Sorrentino.....	Florida 030
(Alt)....	Charles C. Perkins.....	Florida 040

1998 NATIONAL CONVENTION, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA - Continued

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
08.....	Neal R. Schultz.....	Alabama 012
(Alt)....	Thomas Tucker.....	Alabama 012
09.....	Barry I. Souders.....	North Carolina 005
(Alt)....	James E. Gilmer.....	Georgia 017
10.....	John F. McComb.....	Michigan 013
(Alt)....	Robert P. Pegenau, Sr.....	Michigan 0220
11.....	Connie S. Brown.....	Ohio 131
(Alt)....	Rodney A. McKenney.....	Ohio 050
12.....	T. L. Snyder-Starich.....	Wisconsin 019
(Alt)....	James R. Harris.....	Illinois 047
13.....	James S. Powers.....	Indiana 003
(Alt)....	William T. Caywood.....	Indiana 060
14.....	Richard W. Turpen.....	Minnesota 001
(Alt)....	Lawrence Walker.....	Minnesota 002
15.....	Everett F. Wilson.....	Nebraska 047
(Alt)....	Edward W. Hollenbeck.....	Missouri 002
16.....	Glen M. Halsey.....	California 006
(Alt)....	Gordon W. Clark.....	California 091
17.....	Veda M. Jones.....	Utah 014
(Alt)....	John L. Richard.....	New Mexico 003
18.....	Joseph J. McDowell.....	Arizona 020
(Alt)....	William H. Clark.....	Nevada 013
19.....	Fay A. Lyon.....	Washington 046
(Alt)....	Lorenzo E. Jordan.....	Alaska 007
20.....	Jose T. Garcia.....	Texas 014
(Alt)....	Mario Melchor, Sr.....	Texas 128
21.....	Wayne L. Douglass, Sr.....	Arkansas 005
(Alt)....	Bobby W. Hines.....	Oklahoma 032

Advisors: Wayne L. Douglass and Anthony L. Baskerville

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND DUES

01.....	Arthur S. Cushing.....	Massachusetts 017
(Alt)....	Everett J. Nygard, Jr.....	Massachusetts 030
02.....	Anthony L. Mirando.....	New York 145
(Alt)....	Frank J. Fantanza.....	New York 015
03.....	Jeanette M. Genovese.....	Rhode Island 001
(Alt)....	Paul R. Bisson.....	Maine 004
04.....	Albert E. Church, II.....	Connecticut 005
(Alt)....	Maurice E. Ames.....	Connecticut 008
05.....	Alfred Battitori.....	Pennsylvania 065
(Alt)....	Carmen A. De Santi.....	Pennsylvania 021
06.....	German Bravo-Perez.....	Puerto Rico 001
(Alt)....	Angel J. Velazquez.....	Puerto Rico 004
07.....	Charles E. Heiney.....	Florida 125
(Alt)....	Larry O. Kyser.....	Florida 023
08.....	Joseph D. Weatherford.....	Tennessee 095
(Alt)....	King Daniel.....	Alabama 084
09.....	John Q. Cosby.....	Georgia 021
(Alt)....	James O. Stewart.....	South Carolina 067
10.....	Carl W. Post.....	Michigan 014
(Alt)....	Alfred L. Hindes.....	Michigan 003
11.....	Thomas K. Keller.....	Ohio 103
(Alt)....	David C. Uetterling.....	Ohio 036
12.....	Robert Jansky.....	Illinois 022
(Alt)....	Richard E. Marbes.....	Wisconsin 003
13.....	James T. Ashby.....	Kentucky 003
(Alt)....	Fred A. Sutton.....	Indiana 009
14.....	William L. Shelton, Jr.....	Minnesota 017
(Alt)....	Jerome G. Krejci.....	North Dakota 002
15.....	Aaron A. Bura.....	Kansas 036
(Alt)....	William R. Davidson.....	Nebraska 007
16.....	Joel C. Devenish.....	California 043
(Alt)....	Matthew Lyn Petri.....	California 036
17.....	Stanley L. Miller.....	New Mexico 030

1998 NATIONAL CONVENTION, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA - Continued

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
(Alt)....	Toribio T. Padilla.....	New Mexico 003
18.....	W. D. Brzezinski.....	Nevada 011
(Alt)....	John Diaz-Rubin, Jr.....	Arizona 011
19.....	Irene L. Martin.....	Washington 046
(Alt)....	Shane V. Slade.....	Washington 035
20.....	William A. Bone.....	Texas 003
(Alt)....	Raymond A. Rapisand.....	Texas 010
21.....	Frank E. Nye.....	Oklahoma 049
(Alt)....	Chesley Rutledge, Jr.....	Oklahoma 029

Advisors: Sal R. Tornatore and Richard E. Patterson

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

01.....	Daniel P. Stack.....	Massachusetts 004
(Alt)....	George F. Fincel.....	Massachusetts 074
02.....	John J. Skyler.....	New York 113
(Alt)....	Chaney L. Tupis.....	New York 082
03.....	Michael Venezia.....	Vermont 022
(Alt)....	Roger A. Bourgery.....	Vermont 003
04.....	Evelyn E. Harrison.....	Delaware 001
(Alt)....	Joseph E. Piotrowski.....	Connecticut 005
05.....	Constance Manocha.....	Pennsylvania 057
(Alt)....	William F. Coley.....	Pennsylvania 014
06.....	Carol A. Jackson.....	Virginia 006
(Alt)....	Charles M. Weatherman.....	Virginia 003
07.....	James E. Sursely.....	Florida 016
(Alt)....	D. Jean Van Trump.....	Florida 042
08.....	Kenneth R. Veach.....	Tennessee 026
(Alt)....	John W. Kessinger.....	Tennessee 008
09.....	Gerald Jones.....	North Carolina 018
(Alt)....	Coy W. Hennis.....	North Carolina 020
10.....	Richard Straub, III.....	Michigan 002
(Alt)....	Ben Benzing.....	Michigan 018
11.....	Brenda L. Davis.....	Ohio 068
(Alt)....	Richard L. Healy.....	Ohio 125
12.....	Joseph R. Curtis.....	Illinois 024
(Alt)....	Clyde E. Dartey.....	Wisconsin 019
13.....	Floyd L. Walters.....	Indiana 019
(Alt)....	Carl E. Althaus.....	Kentucky 155
14.....	Wayne W. Blue.....	Minnesota 001
(Alt)....	Richard McLaughlin.....	Montana 003
15.....	Mickey Joe Jones.....	Missouri 017
(Alt)....	T. C. Yates.....	Kansas 011
16.....	Astro A. Tortolano.....	California 011
(Alt)....	Roberta L. Robles.....	California 005
17.....	Carlo L. Ramirez.....	Colorado 021
(Alt)....	Joseph G. Lucero.....	New Mexico 003
18.....	Anthony D. Mangine.....	Arizona 011
(Alt)....	Ralph G. Boling.....	Arizona 002
19.....	Shirley M. Scofield.....	Idaho 028
(Alt)....	Marlin J. Lewis.....	Idaho 022
20.....	Scott A. Deckard.....	Texas 220
(Alt)....	Donald D. Warren.....	Texas 147
21.....	Edgar C. Garner.....	Oklahoma 064
(Alt)....	Jack S. Browne.....	Arkansas 001
Blind Vets		
	Robert H. Dawson.....	Blind Veterans 001

Advisors: Rick Surratt

COMMITTEE ON HOSPITAL AND VOLUNTARY SERVICES

01.....	Richard W. Martin.....	Massachusetts 068
(Alt)....	Robert Fluet.....	Massachusetts 019
02.....	Joseph C. Barone.....	New York 030

1998 NATIONAL CONVENTION, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA - Continued

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
(Alt)....	Victor Azzoto.....	New York 030
03.....	Raymond S. Sanchas.....	Rhode Island 013
(Alt)....	Timothy C. Seavey.....	Maine 015
04.....	Alfred Faticoni.....	Connecticut 008
(Alt)....	Timothy J. Kelly.....	Connecticut 019
05.....	William J. Zwick.....	Pennsylvania 001
(Alt)....	William N. Wall.....	Pennsylvania 031
06.....	Raymond A. Chatary.....	Maryland 007
(Alt)....	Philip J. Campagna.....	Maryland 018
07.....	Robert F. Melville.....	Florida 085
(Alt)....	Herbert A. Lewis, Jr.....	Florida 013
08.....	James M. Cox.....	Louisiana 030
(Alt)....	Alexander Giles.....	Louisiana 015
09.....	James E. Phagan.....	Georgia 001
(Alt)....	Richard D. Mann.....	North Carolina 089
10.....	Joseph Parys.....	Michigan 051
11.....	Martin P. Roberts.....	Ohio 134
(Alt)....	Clifton W. Lewis.....	Ohio 100
12.....	Edward W. Olson.....	Illinois 033
(Alt)....	Vernon E. Schilling.....	Wisconsin 001
13.....	Daniel R. Parker.....	Kentucky 089
(Alt)....	Richard A. Reed.....	Indiana 003
14.....	James N. Olson.....	Minnesota 002
(Alt)....	Norbert Scapanski.....	Minnesota 002
15.....	Carl Vleck.....	Nebraska 002
(Alt)....	Isaac H. Jones.....	Iowa 020
16.....	Gordon A. Thompson.....	California 117
(Alt)....	John M. Parker.....	California 154
17.....	Paul W. Jackson.....	Colorado 007
(Alt)....	George L. Chapman.....	Colorado 021
18.....	Ralph D. Ingle.....	Nevada 013
(Alt)....	Edward W. Johnson.....	Nevada 007
19.....	Emelda Henson.....	Idaho 002
(Alt)....	Norman Minor.....	Washington 004
20.....	Rex A. Lloyd.....	Texas 009
(Alt)....	Willie J. Lewis.....	Texas 009
21.....	Loretta J. Rethard.....	Oklahoma 072
(Alt)....	Robert E. Lougee.....	Oklahoma 007

Advisors: Jerry P. Steelman and Thomas C. Johns

COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION AND VETERANS RIGHTS

01.....	Frank J. Drogo.....	Massachusetts 029
(Alt)....	Matthew J. Carpenter.....	Massachusetts 004
02.....	Brian E. Austin.....	New York 001
(Alt)....	Harold E. Schultz.....	New York 030
03.....	Paul L. Monahan.....	Rhode Island 017
(Alt)....	Gary P. Burns.....	Maine 001
04.....	Elwood A. Lechausse.....	Connecticut 011
(Alt)....	Justus Kehne, Jr.....	Delaware 008
05.....	George I. Ford, Sr.....	Pennsylvania 014
(Alt)....	James E. Uckele.....	Pennsylvania 092
06.....	Richard F. Schultz.....	Maryland 003
(Alt)....	James K. Clem.....	Virginia 003
07.....	Richard E. Giese.....	Florida 028
(Alt)....	Frank C. Tracy.....	Florida 087
08.....	Gerard D. Shuster.....	Mississippi 017
(Alt)....	John A. Bell.....	Mississippi 011
09.....	Wesley D. McKelvey.....	North Carolina 046
(Alt)....	Phillip A. Hoffman.....	Georgia 007
10.....	Howard W. Beebee.....	Michigan 008
(Alt)....	Edward L. Page.....	Michigan 002
11.....	Theodore Karageorge.....	Ohio 116
(Alt)....	Robert L. Lucas.....	Ohio 119
12.....	Sidney Bick.....	Illinois 052

1998 NATIONAL CONVENTION, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA - Continued

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
(Alt)....	Gene J. Haase.....	Wisconsin 053
13.....	Joseph S. Carroll.....	Indiana 052
(Alt)....	Eric D. McGinnis.....	Indiana 003
14.....	Thomas E. Volden.....	Minnesota 025
(Alt)....	Robert E. Camp.....	South Dakota 022
15.....	Prezell Frazier.....	Iowa 020
(Alt)....	Frederick F. Herman.....	Nebraska 002
16.....	Don J. Pouliot.....	California 002
17.....	Donald C. Lougee.....	Colorado 007
(Alt)....	Ian E. Briggs.....	Utah 006
18.....	Henry A. Redding, III.....	Nevada 034
(Alt)....	Kenneth S. Jones.....	Nevada 001
19.....	Charles W. Chapin.....	Idaho 022
(Alt)....	Shawn D. Colpaert.....	Washington 005
20.....	Vincent C. Morrison.....	Texas 009
(Alt)....	Claude J. Boggs, Sr.....	Texas 128
21.....	David Reeves.....	Oklahoma 007
(Alt)....	Wadley A. Deere.....	Oklahoma 032

Advisors: Joseph A. Violante and Thomas L. Tomlinson

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATION OF NATIONAL OFFICERS

01.....	Russell T. Henderson.....	Massachusetts 004
(Alt)....	Thomas J. Daley.....	Massachusetts 049
02.....	Frank J. Randazzo.....	New York 110
(Alt)....	Sidney Siller.....	New York 023
03.....	Norman L. Newell.....	Maine 001
(Alt)....	Louis T. Folcarelli.....	Rhode Island 001
04.....	Michael A. Christie.....	New Jersey 025
(Alt)....	Frank Albanese.....	New Jersey 009
05.....	Jim Wyatt.....	Pennsylvania 115
(Alt)....	William J. Stockell.....	Pennsylvania 057
06.....	Joseph Reeves.....	Virginia 041
(Alt)....	Robert T. Reynolds.....	Virginia 010
07.....	Dennis A. Joyner.....	Florida 104
(Alt)....	Andy Marshall.....	Florida 004
08.....	William Blankenship.....	Alabama 011
(Alt)....	James E. Durham.....	Tennessee 003
09.....	Richard Williams.....	Georgia 010
(Alt)....	James R. Murray.....	North Carolina 012
10.....	Thomas A. McMasters, III.....	Michigan 129
(Alt)....	David E. Smith.....	Michigan 003
11.....	Verne Nygaard.....	Ohio 020
(Alt)....	Samuel E. Lanza.....	Ohio 011
12.....	Raymond E. Dempsey.....	Illinois 042
(Alt)....	Bryan J. Held.....	Wisconsin 001
13.....	Michael A. Whelihan.....	Indiana 052
(Alt)....	James V. Thurau.....	Indiana 052
14.....	Gene A. Murphy.....	South Dakota 001
(Alt)....	Joseph M. Litzinger.....	North Dakota 002
15.....	Francis E. McLaskey.....	Iowa 010
(Alt)....	Franklin C. Bergquist.....	Kansas 004
16.....	Michael W. Tempesta.....	California 001
(Alt)....	Larry A. Polzin.....	California 073
17.....	John J. Garcia.....	Colorado 039
(Alt)....	Herman Martinez, Sr.....	New Mexico 003
18.....	Hermon T. Harrison.....	Arizona 008
(Alt)....	Donald F. Schmitt.....	Arizona 016
19.....	Jack B. Corson.....	Oregon 001
(Alt)....	Jimmey W. Mayo.....	Alaska 006
20.....	Bruce W. Burgess.....	Texas 005
(Alt)....	Jay E. Johnson.....	Texas 128
21.....	Irvin D. Eddy.....	Oklahoma 057
(Alt)....	Virgil C. Ahnberg.....	Arkansas 010

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
Blind Vets		
	Rubin Martinez.....	Blind Veterans 001

Advisors: Gene A. Murphy and William E. Leach

COMMANDER McDONALD: We'll now have the report of Finance and Dues, Bill Brzezinski, chairman.

MR. W.D. BRZEZINSKI: Comrade Commander and delegates: The National Convention Committee on Finance and Dues was called to order for its first business session on August 24th, 1998 at 8:00 a.m. by the committee advisors National Finance Committee Chairman Sal Tornatore and Executive Director of National Headquarters Richard E. Patterson.

The first order of business was the election of a committee chairman. William Brzezinski and Arthur Cushing were nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed, and William Brzezinski was elected chairman.

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

There were two resolutions: Resolution Number 41 to amend NEC Regulation 10 regarding contracts for fund-raising, and Resolution 179 in support of a DAV parade service ribbon. Both resolutions were unanimously rejected.

The committee reviewed the proposed 1999 budget recommended for approval by the National Finance Committee. Following completion of the committee's review, the committee voted unanimously to recommend to the National Convention adoption of the proposed 1999 budget.

The committee then expressed its thanks to Committee Advisors Sal Tornatore and Richard E. Patterson, who were aided by Comptroller Anita F. Blum, for their assistance in performing the work of this important committee.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Finance and Dues, and I hereby move for the adoption of the report and ask that the committee be discharged with the thanks of the National Convention.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Bill. Mike 2.

MR. LE PORTE: George D. Le Porte, PDC, 30, New York, moves for the adoption of that report.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. Mike 1.

MR. JAMES E. BIXBY: Jim Bixby, Massachusetts, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. We have a motion and a second. Do I hear any discussion? All those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried.

At this time, we'll hear the report of the Hospital and Voluntary Services Committee, Paul Jackson, chairman.

MR. PAUL W. JACKSON: Comrade Commander and delegates: The National Convention Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services was called to order for its first business session on August the 24th, 1998 by the committee advisors, Tom Johns, Jerry Steelman and Dick Wannemacher.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. Paul Jackson, District 17, was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, the nominations were closed, and Paul Jackson, District 17, was elected chairman.

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

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

Resolution Number 215.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the national commander and the national director of legislation of the Disabled American Veterans oppose any legislation or administrative regulations that would implement user fees or co-payments for medical services, x-rays or medications for the disabled retired military veterans currently entitled to benefits at DoD medical hospitals, clinics or pharmacies.

Resolution Number 098.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 22 through 27, 1998, vigorously support legislation that would require stricter adherence by the Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities to stated policies providing separate and distinct female in-patient rooms, bathroom facilities, adequate and gender-appropriate treatment room equipment, and in-patient/outpatient female attendants during examining procedures to assure privacy and dignity to female veteran patients.

Resolution Number 107.

BE IT RESOLVED that privacy in gender care and counseling at clinics and hospitals be instituted when it does not exist.

Resolution Number 208.

BE IT RESOLVED that the discharging of patients inappropriately attired from the Department of Veterans Affairs medical center is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Resolution Number 100.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans Department of Michigan call for and support a congressional or administrative action to allow volunteers working on behalf of a recognizable charitable endeavor to use a tax deduction of 16 cents a mile for use of their private automobile.

Resolution Number 244.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23 to 27, 1998 supports the enactment of legislation that would promote a broader and greater degree of sharing between the health care systems of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

Resolution Number 245.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23 to 27, 1998 opposes any legislation that would require the VA to recover third-party payments for the care and treatment of a veteran's service-connected disabilities.

Resolution Number 246.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23 to 27, 1998 supports legislation following the concepts and principles embodied above, establishing an entitlement to VA health care services for clearly defined veterans.

Resolution Number 247.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23 through 27, 1998 seeks enactment of legislation mandating the provisions of health care services inclusive of gender-specific services by VA to eligible women veterans to the same degree and extent that services are provided to eligible male veterans, inclusive of counseling and/or psychological service incident to such sexual violence; and

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

The last is extend appreciation to the VA Medical Center here in Las Vegas for the success of the 77th National Convention.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23 through 27, 1998 expresses its sincere appreciation to the VA Medical Center, Las Vegas, Nevada for the professional and skillful medical care delivered to the delegates to this 77th National Convention and for making this convention a memorable one.

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

(The above-mentioned resolutions follow:)

RESOLUTION NO. 098—LEGISLATIVE

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

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

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

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

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, vigorously supports legislation that would require stricter adherence by VA medical facilities to stated policies providing separate and distinct female inpatient rooms, bathroom facilities, equipment, and inpatient/outpatient female attendants during examining procedures to assure privacy and dignity to female veteran patients.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 100—LEGISLATIVE

LEGISLATION TO CHANGE IRS MILEAGE RATE ALLOWANCE FOR VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

WHEREAS, the current rate allowed is 12 cents for veterans and other citizens using their automobiles for travel while doing volunteer work for charitable organizations; and

WHEREAS, many veterans have traveled annually up to 15,000 miles using their own vehicles; and

WHEREAS government and business employees are paid or allowed about 32 cents; and

WHEREAS, the cost for volunteer drivers is equal to all traveling people. We believe that volunteer drivers should be allowed at least one-half the business mileage allowance (16 cents); and

WHEREAS, it is well known that volunteers save the government and its agencies millions of dollars in operating costs each year, with the VAVS program serving as a great example; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports Congressional or administrative action to allow volunteers working on behalf of a recognized charitable endeavor to use a tax deduction of 16 cents a mile for use of their private automobile.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 208—LEGISLATIVE

THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ENFORCE THE PROVISIONS OF TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 1723, IN PROVIDING CLOTHING TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT HEALTH AND SANITATION OF VETERANS UPON DISCHARGE FROM VA MEDICAL FACILITIES

WHEREAS, veterans have been discharged from Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Centers in the winter months in wheelchairs dressed only in pajamas, covered with blankets; and

WHEREAS, this issue was voted and agreed upon that no veteran should be officially discharged improperly attired (clothing appropriate for street wear, including shoes, socks/stockings or pantyhose, under and outer garments, to include coats if being discharged during fall, winter or spring months); and

WHEREAS, future discharge of all veteran patients will be carefully observed; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, believes that the discharging of patients inappropriately attired from VA Medical Centers is unacceptable and will not be tolerated; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the VA universally enforce the provisions of title 38, United States Code, Section 1723 in providing clothing to preserve and protect the health and sanitation of veterans upon discharge from VA medical facilities.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 215—LEGISLATIVE

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

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

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

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

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, opposes any proposal that will require military retirees, or their dependents, to be charged a user's fee in order to obtain outpatient medical services at military medical facilities.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 244—LEGISLATIVE

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

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

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

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

and improvement in the delivery of care; and

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

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

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports the enactment of legislation that would promote a broader and greater degree of sharing between the health care systems of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 245—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE THIRD-PARTY PAYMENTS FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY

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

WHEREAS, the VA has the right to recover or collect the cost of care from a third-party health insurer when insured veterans receive health care from the 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 the VA's and Federal Government's responsibility to provide such care and may result in increased premium payments to veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, opposes any legislation that would require the VA to recover third-party payments for the care and treatment of a veteran's service-connected disability(ies).

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 246—LEGISLATIVE

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, there is a continuing and critical need to clearly define eligibility for VA care, insure necessary services THAT will be provided and the system will be sufficiently funded; and

WHEREAS, The VA health delivery system must encompass, as a minimum, the following:

Which promotes and assures health care quality and value, and protects veterans in the health care system;

Entitlement to guaranteed access to a full continuum of care

from preventive through hospice;

Guaranteed funding through adequate appropriations, third party reimbursements and Medicare subvention;

Fair and equitable distribution of resources in treating the greatest number of veterans having priority to VA health care;

Provision for the use of all medications, supplies, prosthetic devices and other over-the-counter medications necessary for the proper treatment of service-connected disabled veterans;

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

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

Maintaining an adequate workforce of highly skilled and trained health care providers who are adequately compensated;

Maintaining a strong and veteran-focused research program; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation following the concepts and principles embodied above—establishing an entitlement to VA health care services for clearly-defined veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 247—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING ADEQUATE MEDICAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS FOR WOMEN VETERANS

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

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

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

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

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, seeks enactment of legislation mandating the provision of health care services, inclusive of gender-specific services, by VA to eligible women veterans to the same degree and extent that services are provided to eligible male veterans, inclusive of counseling and/or psychological services incident to sexual violence, AND

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

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 263—ADMINISTRATIVE
EXTEND APPRECIATION TO THE VA MEDICAL CENTER

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, FOR THE SUCCESS OF
THE 77TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the cooperation and professionalism extended to the delegates and guests of the 77th 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 VA Medical Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, staffed and maintained a compassionate and high quality outpatient clinic and prosthetic service within the Las Vegas Hilton hotel; and

WHEREAS, the medical care and prosthetic services rendered to the delegates to this 77th National Convention have been extended in a highly compassionate and professional manner; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, expresses its sincere appreciation to the VA Medical Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, for the professional and skillful medical care delivered to the delegates to this 77th National Convention and for making this Convention a memorable one.

* * * *

COMMANDER McDONALD: We have a motion. Do I hear a second? Mike 1.

MR. ANTHONY D. MANGINE: Tony Mangine, Chapter 11, great State of Arizona, second.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. We have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? All those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried.

Ladies and gentlemen, please rise, and I will ask Chaplain Todd to lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN TODD: Again, Lord, we come to the close of another session. We pray that You will continue to keep us in peace and harmony. In His Precious Name we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER McDONALD: The convention stands in recess until 1:30.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 11:20 o'clock a.m., August 24, 1998.)

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION

August 24, 1998

The Second Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans convened in the Conrad Ballroom of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, Monday afternoon, August 24, 1998, and was called to order at 1:30 o'clock p.m. by Commander Harry R. McDonald, Jr.

COMMANDER HARRY R. McDONALD, JR.: The convention will come to order, please.

Please join me in the salute to the flag. (Hand salute)

Chaplain Todd.

CHAPLAIN TODD: Again, Lord, we come before Your throne of grace. We thank You for another day of life, peace of mind and reasonable health and strength. As we meet today, we pray that You will continue to bless us with wisdom and understanding. In His Holy Name we pray. Amen.

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

Dave has been with the DAV for more than a quarter of a century, making worthy contributions to our mission while gaining valuable experience in both our National Service and Legislative Departments before assuming his duties as executive director of the DAV Washington Headquarters in 1995.

Truly a man for all seasons, Dave Gorman is responsible for the day-to-day performance of our Service, Legislative and

Volunteer operations.

And now, here's Dave Gorman to present his report to the convention. (Applause)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAVID W. GORMAN: Thank you, Mr. Commander. National Commander McDonald, distinguished guests, and delegates to this, the 77th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans: It is truly my honor and privilege to be able to present this annual report to the 77th National Convention of the DAV. First, however, I want thank National Commander Harry McDonald for his inspiring leadership and unwavering commitment to the DAV and our mission of service and hope to disabled veterans and their families.

I would also want to express my deep respect and sincere gratitude to National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. I cannot say enough about how vital Art's resolute guidance, wise counsel, and his steadfast support have been for me personally and for the rest of us in our efforts to best serve you and your families.

Art's commitment to the DAV's mission and purpose is absolute and total. His passion for service is the result of a 31-plus-year career as a National Service Officer, a staunch advocate and a champion for veterans' rights and benefits. That passion burns bright. We all see it, we feel it, and we share it. Art personifies the adage, "Leadership by example," and we are so very grateful for it.

Of course, none of what we have been able to accomplish in Washington would be possible without the outstanding work carried out by Rick Patterson and his great staff at National Headquarters in Cold Spring, Kentucky.

And to Auxiliary National Commander Evelynne Dunn and National Adjutant Maria Tedrow, my sincere thanks. For without the Auxiliary and all the effort they put forth, we could not possibly be as successful as we are.

As we gather here in Las Vegas and we reflect on the DAV's activities during the past year, I continually find myself in awe of the legacy handed down to us by a small group, but totally dedicated group and committed group of World War I veterans who created this wondrous organization we now call the DAV. Their vision and their sense of purpose live on today in the hearts of every one of us in this great organization.

Yet, in reflecting on the truly extraordinary achievements of our past, we know the future holds tremendous promise and presents us with a great many challenges as well.

As you all know, our National Service Program, under the committed and the steady direction of Ken Wolfe, is the backbone of the DAV's advocacy role. It is without doubt the finest and the most professional veterans' advocacy program in the nation and in the entire world. And for that matter, it is also the envy of many other, if not all, other service organizations.

The National Service Program is truly what our reputation of service and excellence is built on, and it is what continues to sustain us. Make no mistake about it, your National Service Program and your National Service Officers who are in there working to make sure that you aren't wrongly denied your rightful benefits, play a most important role in helping us live up to our potential and meet the challenges we face now and for the years to come. In several important ways, what Ken and his staff have accomplished will have a profound impact on our future.

National Adjutant Wilson's commitment to service and excellence was the single driving force that gave birth to the DAV National Service Officer Academy in Denver, Colorado. As you know, the academy provides the foundation of our NSOs' unmatched training, so the DAV can continue to provide today's veterans, and tomorrow's, an unequaled in quality representation.

Since the very first group of 23 NSO trainees entered the academy in July 1994, 140 new NSO trainees have been assigned to work in DAV National Service Offices across the country. Class VII of the academy commenced on July 6th of this year, with 25 new trainees now preparing to take their place as advocates for our nation's veterans and their dependents.

And through Art Wilson's vision and under National Service

Director Wolfe's direction, the DAV has successfully completed our own computer automation project that has afforded every National Service Officer in the country a desk-top computer system that provides near instantaneous access to veterans benefits administration information, technology and resources, a key to providing quality service to this nation's veterans.

This $2 million project means that DAV will be in the forefront and will continue our role as the leading advocate for this nation's disabled veterans long into the future.

And while we're talking about the National Service Program, I would be remiss if I did not recognize and extend a very special thank you to the National Service Foundation and the Charitable Service Trust, whose commitment and contributions to our National Service Program have made the job of taking care of veterans just that much easier.

Later on during this convention, you'll be hearing a lot more about our legislative battles, but I do want to say a word now about Joe Violante and your DAV national legislative team. We all owe these gentlemen a world of thanks for their efforts to protect our rights.

During the past year, it seemed like every time we turned around, we were fighting some of the most devastating attacks on veterans benefits that any of us could remember. You all know what I'm talking about. Stripping the VA's authority to compensate veterans for tobacco use and subsequent disability.

I just can't say enough about all of you, each and every one of who rallied to the cause. Your phone calls, your letters, your postcards, and your telegrams really put Congress on notice this year that we won't take these vicious attacks on our rights lying down. As Commander McDonald says, veterans won't be pushed around any longer. (Applause)

And believe me, ladies and gentlemen, your voices, our voices, they're definitely being heard on Capitol Hill. Now, that is grassroots' efforts at its very, very best from the DAV. We know how to do it, and we do it, and you should all be proud of that.

This is a congressional election year, and it is absolutely critical that we exercise our right to vote so we can protect our rights as veterans and the rights our families enjoy now and well into the future.

As National Adjutant Wilson has said, "Democracy is not a spectator sport." We've got to get off the sidelines and vote this year. Your right to vote is the single, most important tool that makes our democracy work.

Let's face it, the farther we get away from a war, our elected officials and our policy makers in Washington, they tend to forget the sacrifices made by veterans and the ongoing obligation our nation has to them. After all, we live in a dangerous world, one that is even more dangerous for the men and the women of our armed forces who serve in hot spots and far-flung outposts all across this world.

As if there could be any doubt of that, the reality of that danger was horribly confirmed by the recent terrorist bombings of our embassies in East Africa, in which 12 Americans, including members of our nation's armed forces, were killed.

But there are some very powerful folks in Washington who think veterans' programs have outlived their usefulness; that veterans somehow are no longer worthy. We must not let them turn our VA compensation system into some kind of a welfare system, or a disability insurance program run by a private insurance company, or ration veterans health care, and shut the doors on our VA hospitals.

We've worked too hard to get long-overdue eligibility reform to allow the quality of veterans health care to be degraded by further staff cuts and funding shortfalls.

We simply cannot let those anti-veteran elements enact policies to means test survivors benefits like dependency and indemnity compensation. And believe me, there are those who would do exactly that. (Applause)

But with your help, the DAV has been fighting to protect the rights of disabled veterans and their families for 78 years now.

And with your continued help, we'll continue to do just that for a long time to come.

As you know, Togo D. West was sworn in as Secretary of Veterans Affairs on May 8th of this year, but he had been Acting Secretary for some months prior to that. The DAV remains hopeful, we remain hopeful that Secretary West will provide the necessary leadership and the advocacy on behalf of this nation's disabled veterans that is worthy of the position he holds.

We are cautiously, we are cautiously optimistic the VA will move swiftly to reinvigorate veterans programs and restore them to their rightful place of prominence on the national agenda.

We have told the Secretary that as an advocate for disabled veterans, the DAV will be the VA's biggest and staunchest supporter whenever possible, but we will also be its harshest critic when it becomes necessary, and history has proven that true.

Obviously, the Veterans Benefits Administration is absolutely key to improving veterans benefits and services. We are optimistic that the new team at the VBA, headed by Under Secretary for Benefits Joe Thompson, will bring a fresh outlook and innovative approaches to improved service delivery.

As a matter of fact, one of Joe Thompson's first official acts when he was confirmed was to meet with the DAV's most seasoned supervisory NSOs to outline his vision for change in the VBA. By actively seeking and getting the DAV's counsel and advice, Joe Thompson has demonstrated a refreshing spirit of cooperation that can only benefit those who both the VA and the DAV are committed to serving.

The DAV will accept nothing less than the very best for the men and women who have preserved and defended this great nation of ours.

The DAV's commitment to service has always included making sure disabled veterans get a fair shake when it comes to employment opportunities and the right to reemployment when they return to civilian life.

For several years now, the DAV has operated a separate National Employment Department, that until recently was headed by Ron Drach, who retired on July 1st. DAV employment programs have always been an integral part of our overall mission of service to veterans. Accordingly, your National Service Department has now assumed responsibility for those programs.

And Deputy National Service Director for Employment Tony Baskerville is responsible for the day-to-day activities, with a special and a very strong focus on vocational rehabilitation and the employment and the reemployment rights of the nation's service-connected disabled veterans.

Also, Tony will be the lead person on ensuring that our programs and services geared toward assisting America's homeless veterans remains strong and viable.

As for the DAV's already outstanding volunteer programs, what can I say but that they just keep getting better and better. You can rest assured that the wonderful job that Bruce Nitsche did over the years, until his retirement on June 1st, that elevated our volunteer services to new heights of excellence will be carried on and enhanced under the guiding hand of recently appointed National Director of Voluntary Services Jerry Steelman.

Our VA Voluntary Service Program, our Hospital Service Coordinator Program, and the DAV Transportation Network continue to be the envy of many others across the country. That's so for one and one reason only: Each and every one of you and the thousands and thousands of DAV volunteers all across this country who continue to give unselfishly so that their fellow veterans' lives will be a little better and a little brighter.

During the past year, the DAV Transportation Network volunteer drivers logged almost 21 million miles, taking nearly half a million veterans to and from VA medical facilities for much-needed medical care.

As you saw in yesterday's very inspiring film about the Capitol DriveAway in June, your DAV Transportation Network put 147 brand new vans, valued at $3.2 million, on the road to help make sure veterans across the country get the VA health care they need.

With this year's largest-ever donation, that makes 755 vans, with a total value of nearly $14 million, that we've donated to VA medical centers since 1987.

The absolutely vital VAVS program, which involves so many of you, brings hope and brings light into the lives of hospitalized veterans and their families every day, oftentimes when there is no light or hope.

In the past year alone, more than 8,000 regularly scheduled DAV and Auxiliary volunteers generously donated more than two million hours of their time and talents to this program. That's the yearly equivalent of the VA having an additional 1100 full-time employees with an estimated value of $32 million in wages alone.

And our National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic just keeps getting better and better and bigger and bigger every year. What we think of as the "Miracle on the Mountainside" continues to create profound changes in the lives of literally hundreds of severely disabled veterans.

And, like the DAV's founders of yesterday, we who have inherited their legacy know that by working as a team we can accomplish much more than we ever could by going it alone. Yes, the DAV is teamwork, teamwork among our membership, our chapters and departments, and the national organization.

At Washington Headquarters, we truly do work as a team: Service, Legislation, Voluntary Services, Communications; professional and support staffs together with the same ultimate goal of building better lives for all of America's disabled veterans: You and your families.

I would like to offer a very special word of appreciation to Deputy National Director of Communications Dave Autry and the most recent addition to our staff, Associate National Director of Communications Thom Wilborn. Their presence and their day-to-day involvement in the goings-on in Washington make them very special and very valuable assets to our staff.

Another valued member of our very fine team in Washington Headquarters is Executive Secretary Polly Yesuras. I don't know how she does it, but somehow she manages to keep things running smoothly even when it all seems like just so much confusion. My heartfelt thanks to Polly and the entire support staff for the tremendous job they do and their commitment to our mission.

As I have tried to convey to you, this year has been a tough one in the veterans affairs arena, ladies and gentlemen. And no one expects 1999 to be a cakewalk. But you can rest a little easier knowing that the DAV is still the very best in advocacy for veterans and is well recognized as such by members of Congress, the VA, and other influential policy-makers in Washington. When the DAV speaks, they listen. They don't always agree or do what we want them to do, but they do listen, and that's important.

That's because your Washington staff has earned its reputation as highly trained and committed professionals, unquestionably committed to excellence when it comes to advocacy for our fellow disabled veterans.

And it doesn't hurt one lick to know that each of your program directors carries a little bit more credibility than others who represent other groups. That's because they are all service-connected disabled veterans themselves. They have all spent years as NSOs representing veterans on a daily basis. And each relies on the system and uses VA services. They are, in effect, products of our own system.

To be sure, the folks at National Service and Legislative Headquarters have done an outstanding job of providing first-rate programs and services to you and your families. But you know what? We in Washington couldn't do a blessed thing without you, our members. And that is a hard and fast fact.

On behalf of the entire Washington Headquarters staff, I want to thank you, thank you very much for making it all possible. We couldn't do it without every one of you and the faith and support you have put in us to carry on the DAV's proud and distinguished mission of service and hope for America's disabled veterans and their families.

Thank you very much.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Dave, for that outstanding report.

The Chair will entertain a motion to accept Mr. Gorman's report. Mike 3.

NEC TORNATORE: Comrade Commander, Sal Tornatore, Brooklyn Chapter Number 28, New York. We shall accept this beautiful and eloquent report from our National Executive Director, Washington Headquarters. We thank him for that wonderful report.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. Do I hear a second? Mike 2.

MR. ANTHONY N. RICCIARDI: Department Commander of New York Anthony Ricciardi seconds that motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. You've heard the motion and the second. Is there any discussion? All those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried.

(The following written annual report was submitted by Mr. Kenneth D. Wolfe, National Service Director:)

As National Service Director, it is my privilege to report on the achievements of the National Service Department. Over the past several years, we have seen a transition in our organization; a transition that has had a kaleidoscopic effect at almost every level of the DAV. Examine the DAV chronicles and reflect back, if you will, to the year 1993: a year remembered for a reduction that carved more then 100 employees from our DAV National Service Offices, a year that was typified by uncertainty and financial uneasiness. Today, as we chronicle the year 1998 and list our achievements, we see an organization that is financially sound, modernized, attaining growth, and one that is looked upon by others as the most respected veterans service organization in the country. Many factors come to mind when cataloging the record of our success: the stature and courage of our membership, the wisdom of our leaders and the dedication of our service corps. We have all had a hand in the rebuilding of our organization, a rebuilding we can call a success and one of which we all can be extremely proud.

In my annual report last year, I referenced the Business Process Reengineering Project the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) had undertaken in October of 1995. This project has now come to fruition, now known as the VA Road Map to Excellence. This is a plan for changing the VA organizational structure, work-flow, job designs, and its relationship with veterans. The ultimate goal is to focus on streamlining the claims adjudication process through the use of automated technology.

The DAV has successfully completed its own automation project that has afforded every National Service Officer (NSO) in the country a computer system that provides access to Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) information technology and resources. This $2 million modernization project would not have been possible without the foresight of National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. His introspective examination of where the DAV has excelled and where change was needed propelled his identification of our need to perpetuate professional representation as leading advocates for this nation's disabled veterans and their dependents long into the future.

The VBA programs are assessed continuously but perhaps the biggest change to VBA operations during fiscal year 1998 and beyond will be the result of internal management initiatives. A new Under Secretary for Benefits Joseph Thompson and a new team of top managers, including Deputy Under Secretary for Management Nora Egan and Deputy Under Secretary for Operations Patrick (Rick) Nappi, are reviewing all aspects of VBA's operations. These new innovations are in conjunction with the establishment of a full partnership between VBA and the veterans service organizations. The DAV is at the forefront of this partnership, as we have been looked to for our superior training program and continuing education program.

The National Service Department continues to monitor activity within the VA and other government agencies. Changes to the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities have been ongoing to keep abreast of medical advancements. The VA extended the eligibility period for compensation for Gulf War veterans with undiagnosed illnesses, provided benefits to Vietnam veterans' children with spina bifida,

awarded compensation to Vietnam veterans for additional diseases presumed to be linked to Agent Orange exposure, and, on November 21, 1997, the President signed H.R. 1090, which gave VA claimants the right to have Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) decisions reviewed on the grounds of clear and unmistakable error. Enactment of this legislation has been of great concern to the DAV service program. We are proud of our legislative staff's efforts and persistence on these important veterans' benefits issues.

DAV TRAINING ACADEMY

On November 4, 1994 our first class of NSO trainees graduated from the DAV training academy located at Denver. This past year, NSOs who graduated from class VI at the NSO Training Academy are now hard at work in National Service Offices nationwide assisting veterans and their families.

The 34 graduates of class VI became part of the DAV professional NSO corps that provides free services to veterans and their families on May 8th, following the successful completion of their 16-month on-the-job training program. With this graduating class, the DAV continues to exceed our goal of maintaining a corps of 260 NSOs.

The DAV is committed to the highest level of quality representation available to disabled veterans and their families. The DAV NSO Training Academy is one of our finest examples of that commitment. We are all proud of the fact that we've added 140 dedicated service-connected disabled veterans to our NSO corps since the DAV created its NSO Training Academy in 1994.

To continue on with that fine tradition, class VII will commence on July 6, 1998, with 25 new trainees preparing to take their place as advocates for our nation's veterans and their dependents. When their training is completed on October 30th, these newly skilled advocates will join our elite corps of NSOs helping this country's disabled veterans, survivors, and dependents.

In this ever-changing world of high technology, the way our NSOs conduct training has also changed. Thanks to donations made by the Commanders and Adjutants Association, our instructors are using state-of-the-art computer-based imaging training programs. This innovative training allows DAV's instructors to maximize the amount of information they teach during each training module.

If you will, reflect back to July 11, 1994. This day marked the start of the DAV's NSO Training Academy located in Denver, Colorado when our first 23 trainees began their initial 16 weeks of training in conjunction with the University of Colorado at Denver. University of Colorado at Denver professors provided college credit courses in medical terminology, anatomy, physiology, theories of persuasion and argumentation, and a course in public speaking. In conjunction with the University, seasoned DAV NSOs provide intense instruction on assisting veterans and their families in applying for benefits, conducting hearings, appeal cases, and the full spectrum of other issues faced by practicing NSOs.

To date, six classes have graduated from the Training Academy in Denver, and with class VII, scheduled to begin in July, this will bring the total to 140 new NSOs and trainees. We have now seen the DAV academy-trained NSOs, with their youthful vigor, innovation, and exceptional education, surpass in number the existing corps of dedicated and expert pre-academy-era NSOs. In just five years, we have succeeded in refueling our depleted ranks in an important endeavor to uphold our tradition of providing the very best representation to all veterans and their dependents. Imagine, if you can, where the DAV would be today, had the DAV Training Academy investment not been explored and undertaken.

As we prepare to enter the next millennium, the torch is being passed from the Vietnam era veterans to those of the Persian Gulf War, Panama, Grenada, Somalia, and Bosnia. Just as the World War I founders of the DAV passed the torch to the World War II veterans in the mid-and-late 1940s and the World War II and Korean veterans did in the late-1960s and 70s to the Vietnam era veterans.

RETIREES

In a time of rapid and sometimes troubling change, we continue to ask our NSOs to adapt to these ever-changing conditions. Every generation of DAV NSOs inherit the complex job of maintaining the respect and admiration we have obtained from a grateful nation. We must not forget those NSOs who have helped maintain the fine tradition that we enjoy today.

With that in mind, I ask you all to remember those NSOs that have chosen to retire. I would like to recognize and thank all of them for the unselfish dedication and service they have provided to this organization and the veteran population they so proudly represented. Louis A. Morales, Chicago, Illinois; James E. Milton and James C. Jenkins, Los Angeles, California; Ronald E. Sulcer, San Antonio, Texas; John A. Archer, Montgomery, Alabama; Larry J. Bowden, Washington, D.C.; Stephen L. Edmiston and Kenneth A. Grunewald, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; John E. Gogan, Lincoln, Nebraska; Gail I. Hudson, San Diego, California; James K. Clem and Charles N. Tonn, Roanoke, Virginia; Marion D. Nesbitt, Columbia, South Carolina; Patrick R. Young, Phoenix, Arizona; Benny F. Dunakoskie, Jr., Portland, Oregon; Donald R. Cox, North Little Rock, Arkansas; Larry J. Jatho, Des Moines, Iowa; William B. Taylor, Denver, Colorado; Marion E. Shoemake, Winston-Salem, North Carolina; John F. Regan, Boston Massachusetts; Craig W. Fisher, Ft. Snelling, Minnesota; Louis B. Washington, Newark, New Jersey; and Bruce G. Nitsche, National Service and Legislative Headquarters. Speaking on behalf of all of those claimants they have represented, and on behalf of the DAV, we wish them well and hope their retirement is as rewarding as their careers were with the DAV.

DEATHS

On a sadder note, I am reminded of those NSOs who have given so much to so many and are no longer with us.

NSO Charles H. Kelly passed away on December 17, 1997. Charles began his employment with the DAV on October 27, 1971 and was assigned to our Winston-Salem, North Carolina office. On November 19, 1973, Charles was transferred from the Winston-Salem office, to our National Service Office in St. Petersburg, Florida until his retirement on November 1, 1977.

NSO Terry W. Phillips passed away on June 7, 1998. Terry joined our professional staff on October 5, 1987, and was assigned to our Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania office, until being transferred to our office in Huntington, West Virginia effective July 5, 1988. He remained in Huntington, assisting veterans and their dependents until April 3, 1989.

NSO Robert Valaski passed away on December 30, 1997. Bob retired on July 1, 1986, after serving many years as Supervisor of our Chicago, Illinois office. Upon Bob's retirement, he took with him many years of experience and wisdom as well as the respect and admiration of many fellow NSOs. Most of all, Bob left behind countless veterans and their families who have benefited from his tireless efforts.

NSO Gary A. Kleven passed away on June 24, 1998. Gary began his employment with the DAV on February 2, 1981 and was assigned to our Chicago Illinois office. Gary remained in the Chicago VARO assisting veterans and their dependents until his retirement on February 28, 1987.

Robert T. Polcari, after many years of valued and enriching employment with the VA, joined the staff of the DAV as legal assistant to the National Service Department in March 1987 and was primarily responsible for coordinating the DAV's Structured and Continuing Training Program. Bob brought a wealth of knowledge and a reputation of untouchable expertise in the area of disability evaluations to this organization. Bob passed away on June 8, 1997.

DAV STRUCTURED AND CONTINUING TRAINING PROGRAM

DAV NSOs are vital in fulfilling our mission. The DAV has

always claimed the significance and worth of an ongoing program to ensure our NSOs are well-equipped to represent all veterans and their dependents. The VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities was initially the focus for training. DAV's Structured and Continuing Training Program is designed for use by rehabilitated NSOs who have completed a 16-month training program. It is a very comprehensive course developed for the purpose of enhancing such job-related skills as paralegal and medical principles needed to represent veterans in the preparation of claims presented to the VA.

Although the DAV's chartered purpose has never changed, the job of an NSO has drastically changed as a result of medical advancements, the advent of the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals, and the implementation of high technology computer systems in use today. Earlier, I made mention of the DAV's commitment to NSOs by referencing the computerization project the organization has just completed. This project will afford all NSOs the ability to keep pace with the ever-changing world of high technology. The DAV NSOs are characterized by their ongoing commitment to excel in their work, an objective we fully understand requires continual updating of their skills through training.

INSURANCE

All VA insurance claims activity has been consolidated at the Philadelphia Regional Office and Insurance Center. The consolidation process has been an ongoing transitional procedure. Approximately two-thirds of the files from St. Paul, Minnesota have been transferred to the Philadelphia office for incorporation in the Insurance Center.

With this insurance consolidation, our NSOs at the Philadelphia Regional Office have increased their efforts on our claimants' behalf. They have successfully represented 1,023 veterans who have sought to have their insurance premiums waived due to total disability, which represents over $9 million worth of life insurance. Our NSOs have reviewed 129 insurance files and appeared before the VA on 351 occasions to represent our claimants in all aspects of insurance representation.

BOARD OF VETERANS APPEALS

The DAV's Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) staff continues to do an outstanding job on behalf of the claimants we represent. I continue to be both pleased and proud of the accomplishments by the expert staff of National Appeals Officers located at the BVA. These individuals are recognized at the highest level within the VA, as the finest claims technicians available to our nation's veterans and dependents.

The BVA continues to improve on the processing time taken to resolve appeals. Reflecting back to fiscal years (FY) 1991 - 1995, appeals processing time exceeded 500 days. Beginning in 1996, we began to see a downward trend with current processing time hovering around 120 days. During this same period, the BVA was able to increase the number of decisions rendered from 22,045 in FY 1994 to 43,347 in FY 1997. However, remand decisions by the BVA to the regional offices requiring additional development are having to wait years, in far too many cases, before their appeals are returned for final appellate review. Reflecting on this issue, we have expressed our concerns citing the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 1994, Public Law 103-446, mandating, "expeditious handling" of both the BVA and Court of Veterans Appeals remand decisions.

We have recently received data from Acting Chairman of the Board of Veterans Appeals, that there are approximately 31,000 remand cases pending return to the board. We also know that nearly 14,000 of those cases have DAV representation. Based on this knowledge, we have asked each of our National Service Office Supervisors, to track individual remands to determine the cause for delay in returning each appeal to the board. Their findings are to be shared with the VA Regional Office Director, and the Adjudication Officer/Service Center Manager in order to improve

this deplorable situation.

BVA hearings conducted in the field also have increased from 553 in FY 1995 to 4,564 in FY 1997. The BVA has also been testing a new type of field hearing (video conference) with nearly 20 regional offices. In 1997, 233 video conference hearings were conducted and 344 have been completed for the first two quarters of FY 1998.

Over the preceding 12 months, DAV National Appeal Officers presented 13,494 cases many of which contained multiple issues to the BVA for appellate consideration. The DAV, which represents a majority of cases at the appellate level with, has an allowance rate nearing 19 percent. During this same period, 1,050 issues of service connection were favorably resolved with 1,568 issues of increased rating allowed. In addition, 575 miscellaneous issues were favorably resolved and 10,382 issues remanded to the regional office for further development prior to final appellate review. These figures reflect the DAV's continuing commitment to provide only the very best representation to our nation's wartime disabled veterans, their dependents, and survivors.

UNITED STATES COURT OF VETERANS APPEALS

The DAV Court of Veterans Appeals Office continued to be the largest single practitioner before the Court during this past year. Approximately 210 new appeals were filed during this period, representing an increase of more than 37 percent over the prior year. The DAV provides representation to more than one-third of all appellants with representation at the Court.

DAV has been extraordinarily successful in its practice before the Court. The COVA office obtained favorable dispositions from the Court in approximately 80 percent of all cases decided during the past 12 months. That process also allows DAV to preserve the claimant's right to appeal in all cases where the Board of Veterans' Appeals commits reversible error.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PROGRAM

The DAV's Administrative Review Program continues to be a showcase for the technical expertise of our NSOs. Administrative reviews, which are not part of the VA's appeals process, are requested upon a finding of a clear and unmistakable error in a rating decision.

When an NSO during an examination of a veteran's claim folder encounters a rating decision which he or she believes to be in error, administrative review may be in order. NSOs refer these cases to the National Service Director. Following a review by the National Service Director, appropriate cases reflecting clear and unmistakable error are referred to VA Central Office. During this past year, 18 cases have been submitted for Administrative Review, with 13 (72 percent) of those cases receiving a favorable determination. We are optimistically awaiting responses on 24 pending cases that have yet to be decided. The Administrative Review Program continues to be a very effective method of resolving complex cases involving matters of clear and unmistakable errors.

HOMELESS VETERANS

The VA has a Homeless Grant and Per Diem Program that has recently awarded $3.3 million to 17 community-based providers in 14 states. During the past four years, this program has awarded $21.3 million to 101 grantees in 36 states and the District of Columbia to provide transitional housing, mobile medical vehicles, and vans for transportation.

The VA has also participated in all Interagency Council meetings on the homeless. The VA is presently awaiting information from a survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau of Homeless Service Providers and clients, which will hopefully provide additional information to further assist these veterans.

It is estimated that 280,000 veterans are homeless, representing 35 percent of the total homeless population. Reasons

for homelessness vary and include substance abuse, psychiatric or other mental problems, economic problems, and sometimes separation or divorce. There is no single cause of homelessness nor is there any single cure for it.

No person deserves the fate of being without food and shelter, but it is particularly difficult to understand why anyone who served this nation in the armed forces should remain in those circumstances.

NSOs across the country have continued to participate in "Stand Downs" that provide homeless veterans with basic medical care, meals, hygiene opportunities, shelter, clothing, and claims assistance. During a "Stand Down," the VA and the community organizations come together to work in unison to aid homeless veterans. Our NSOs also are playing an increasingly important role in the DAV's effort to end the tragic cycle of homelessness that affects far too many of this nation's veterans. National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson has called upon our Departments and Chapters to become actively involved in programs to aid homeless veterans in their communities. The DAV has produced a videotape documentary, "We Don't Leave Our Wounded Behind," as part of a new initiative to strengthen our ability to assist homeless veterans. The video depicts the annual Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner sponsored by the DAV Department of Indiana and other service organizations that have volunteered to help homeless veterans and their families. Indiana's program, and a variety of others elsewhere, can and should be replicated as part of the DAV's continuing commitment to building better lives for America's disabled veterans. To repeat National Adjutant Wilson's poignant message, "Just as we don't leave our wounded behind on the battlefield, we must not leave them homeless and starving on the streets of America."

The DAV has a long history of outstanding service to all of America's veterans and is a key leader in helping to obtain legislative authority for many of the programs the VA administers on behalf of veterans and their families who are homeless.

WOMEN VETERANS' ISSUES

This past year, the DAV has been involved in numerous forums regarding women veterans' issues. The highlight was the Women in Military Service for America Memorial dedication which took place in Washington, D.C. in October 1997 at Arlington National Cemetery. Thanks to the tireless efforts and determination of volunteers across the nation, all functions associated with the dedication were a great success. The magnificent structure at the entrance to Arlington National Cemetery containing a living memorial that includes a registry of the individual military histories of hundreds of thousands of women, provides a memorial which honors all of America's women veterans.

The DAV has always been actively involved in the VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, and is represented by Joy J. Ilem, a DAV National Appeals Officer at the Board of Veterans' Appeals. The objective of the Committee is to advise the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the needs of women veterans with respect to health care, rehabilitation benefits, compensation, outreach programs, and other programs administered by the VA.

The Advisory Committee has played an important role in shaping programs and policies of the federal government. Advisory Committee members are chosen from around the country to obtain a variety of viewpoints on women veterans' issues in order to provide a foundation for developing recommendations and advice that are comprehensive. In addition to this committee, the DAV has its own Women's Advisory Committee which provides us counsel regarding benefits and services for women veterans. This past year the DAV also participated in a hearing before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee in April 1998, which involved discussion in support of VA's sexual trauma counseling program.

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE BENEFITS

DAV NSOs have been recognized for the excellent representation

they provide before Administrative Law Judges of the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals in the Social Security Administration. NSOs have represented 58 claimants successfully obtaining over $1 million in retroactive and annual benefits. The DAV has also represented cases to the Social Security Administrative Appeals Council.

PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARD

The Physical Evaluation Boards (PEB) are part of the Military's Evaluation System (MES) and are responsible for retiring or separating service members from the military because of physical or mental disability. For several decades now, the DAV has provided professional representation for active duty personnel and retirees appearing before the PEB.

During the past 12 months, our NSOs have interviewed 702 service members, reviewed 515 medical records, and conducted 218 formal hearings resulting in over $6 million in retroactive and annual benefits.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND DISABLED TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

As the military continues to downsize, more demands have been placed on NSOs involved in the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and the Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP). Although some veterans learned technical skills in the military, they need assistance in determining where those skills fit into the civilian job market. These factors led the DAV to deeper involvement in programs aimed at easing the transition of military personnel into civilian life.

Many of our offices (27) participated in TAP/DTAP briefings at various military installations. Our National Service Officers had contact with over 133,076 separating military personnel over the period January 1, 1997 to December 31, 1997. Of those 120,056 were male and 13,020 were female. The DAV assisted in filing 9,408 claims for VA disability compensation benefits.

Several years ago, we established offices specifically for this purpose in Norfolk, Virginia and throughout California where large military installations are located. In other parts of the country, DAV NSOs regularly visit military bases, participating in pre-separation programs conducted by the U.S Departments of Labor and Defense. When requested, they conduct service medical record reviews and assist in the filing of claims for VA disability compensation and other benefits. The VA's latest plans will require us to adapt and consider NSOs involvement at various military separation centers.

DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARDS AND BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

The Discharge Review Board (DRB) and Board for Correction of Military Records (BCMR) are the final link in the administrative channels through which former military personnel may appeal promotion failure, involuntary retirements, separations, or other changes in their status resulting from errors or injustice. These Boards are empowered to recommend corrective actions to the particular Military Department Secretary. The Secretary may then correct the error and authorize payment of claims for amounts due the claimant based on the facts of the individual's corrected record.

Over the past 12 months, the DAV has assisted 596 such individuals with claims for relief by the DRB and BCMR of the Army, Coast Guard, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force.

PERSIAN GULF EXPERT SCIENTIFIC PANEL

The objective of the VA Persian Gulf Expert Scientific Panel is to advise the Chief Public Health and Environmental Hazards Officer, and subsequently the Under Secretary for Health, about

medical findings affecting Persian Gulf era veterans. Committee members review all aspects of patient care and medical diagnoses and provide professional consultation as needed. The Committee may advise on other areas involving research and development and veterans' benefits and/or training aspects for patients and staff.

Assistant Supervisor of the DAV's Washington, D.C. National Service Office, Ed Hartman, a Persian Gulf War (PGW) veteran himself, serves on this scientific panel. Currently, the DAV continues to monitor the progress of the VA, Department of Defense (DoD) and other governmental agencies researching PGW illnesses. This is very pertinent to our organization as we are able to relay the concerns of our membership to this Committee, which in turn reports directly to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. One of the recent issues that we presented to the Committee for review pertained to the adequacy of protocol examinations. This issue was reviewed and subsequently amended due to several shortcomings discovered in the process. This undoubtedly will prove to be a vital step in providing necessary medical care for these veterans.

Another concern dealt with the need for continued examinations for spouses and dependent children of PGW veterans as the program was nearing an end. The VA allocated an additional $2 million for the continuance of this program and extended the examination period until December 31, 1998, in accordance with Public Law 103-446. These examinations are necessary to determine any causal relationship between PGW illnesses and birth defects. In addition, it may provide information regarding symptoms now suffered by spouses of PGW veterans. The DAV continues to monitor government research dealing with issues such as the effects of depleted uranium, neurological, cognitive and respiratory functioning; as well as epidemiological research.

The DAV was also represented at approximately six briefings held by the Office of the Special Assistant for Gulf War Illnesses, headed by Dr. Bernard Rostker. These meetings are intended to inform veterans service organizations of the progress made by the Pentagon in uncovering the reason why so many PGW veterans are falling ill. Probably the most important issue discussed this year was the "Khamisiyah Plume Analysis" which indicated that approximately 99,000 troops were exposed to low levels of sarin, a nerve agent. Although the Pentagon maintains that U.S troops were not close enough to experience any initial health effects and that the exposure level was very low, they continue to research the long-term effects of low level chemical exposure.

DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAM

It is hard for many of us to imagine what effects a natural disaster could have on our lives. Floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, and fires shatter the lives of many disabled veterans. With the assistance of NSOs, our Disaster Relief Fund often provides immediate financial aid to help veterans and their families begin the recovery process.

DAV NSOs go to the area, often working with DAV Departments and Chapters to search out disabled veterans who need help and provide on-the-spot grants from our Disaster Relief Fund. Grants totaling $41,900 were disbursed to help disabled veterans secure temporary lodging, food, and other necessities during 1997-1998. Flood victims eligible for DAV assistance in Alabama, California, Minnesota, North Carolina, and recent fire victims in Florida have expressed their sincere appreciation of the DAV's efforts.

INFORMATION SEMINARS

DAV NSOs provide outreach services by conducting information seminars at local Chapters throughout the country. These seminars provide local access to NSOs' expertise in the area of veterans' benefits. These very informative meetings are a way to increase public awareness, strengthen membership, and, most importantly, provide information and claims assistance to veterans in the community. If the veteran cannot get to the VA Regional Office where the NSO is stationed, then we do what we can to get to them.

From July 1, 1997, through June 30, 1998, NSOs conducted 115

information seminars, provided assistance to 7,583 veterans and their families, and obtained 170 new life members. We continue to direct our NSOs to expand their efforts in urging Chapters and Departments to take advantage of the information seminar program.

CONCLUSION

The accomplishments reflected by this report were made possible through the combined efforts of all DAV and DAV Auxiliary members. Each member's efforts, whether at the Chapter or Department level or at a VA medical center, help the DAV to fulfill its mission.

Reflecting back to remarks made at the 72nd National Convention in San Francisco, California, in August 1993 by then National Service Director Arthur H. Wilson, he had stated that "the real impact of the National Service Program's work is not calculated in numbers. It can only be found in the new light and hope that our NSOs annually bring into the lives of disabled veterans and their families."

We've accomplished a lot since August of 1993, as is reflected throughout my report. Our mandated responsibilities are still vividly clear. Because we all remain focused on our purpose of caring for this nation's wartime disabled veterans and their families, our mission has been successful, and I have to say more successful than our founding members could have ever dreamed. They provided a great foundation to build on.

As the DAV continues to build for the future, it is a sure bet that we will confront adversity and challenge head on. Merely focusing on the past, what lies behind, will prevent us from effectively pursuing the future. We must now focus on what lies ahead, by setting meaningful and specific goals—yet goals deeply rooted in a strong and rich heritage. A steady dedication will help steer us in that direction and concentrate our energies on what lies ahead, while not forgetting where we've been and who made us great.

I want to thank National Commander Harry R. McDonald, Jr. and the other elected officers, the National Executive Committee, National Finance Committee, National Service Foundation, and the Charitable Service Trust for supporting your National Service Program.

All of this great effort is brought together through the guidance, wise counsel, vision, and relentless drive of our National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. His introspective examination of where the DAV excels and where change is needed has propelled this organization to new heights, envied in the veterans' community.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman and Executive Director of National Headquarters, Richard E. Patterson for their continued guidance, leadership, and solid support, which has been invaluable to the success we have achieved. Their vision and commitment to purpose have earned them the respect and admiration of all who know them.

I want to extend my personal thanks and congratulations on their new appointments to both former Deputy National Service Director Jerry P. Steelman, now National Director of Voluntary Services, and newly appointed Deputy National Service Director for Employment Anthony L. Baskerville. I also thank Assistant National Service Directors Michael J. Walsh and Samuel D. Sabino. I have seen first-hand the compassion, devotion, and unselfish service they display on a daily basis.

At National Service and Legislative Headquarters, networking with all of the DAV's program directors and their staffs is vitally important in the daily activity of your National Service staff. I would like to thank all of the directors and their dedicated staffs at both Washington Headquarters and National Headquarters for the continued support displayed this past year.

I would be remiss if I didn't personally thank the support staff at National Service and Legislative Headquarters for their very efficient assistance during this year of change.

All of the success achieved by our NSOs begins with the dedicated Chapter and Department Service Officers and Hospital Service Coordinators. All DAV members can take pride in our accomplishments recorded during 1997-1998, individually we are all contributors. Collectively, I believe we truly make a difference in fulfilling the purpose of this organization, which is to ensure that our country's wartime disabled veterans, their widows, and their dependents have been adequately cared for. I pledge to each of you the continuing support of the National Service Department to further this mission.

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES

JULY 1, 1997 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1998

OFFICE: MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	182
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	395
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	709
4.	PENSION	69
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	54
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	272
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	29
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	18
10.	DEATH PENSION	21
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	84
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,833
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,013,941.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$16,115,059.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$17,129,000.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,353
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	670
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,994
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,679
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	2
24.	NEW CLAIMS	758
25.	MEMBERSHIP	61

JULY 1, 1997 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1998

OFFICE: PHOENIX, ARIZONA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	684
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,490
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,461
4.	PENSION	220
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	105
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	623
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	95
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	78
10.	DEATH PENSION	16
11.	INSURANCE	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	318
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,091
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,823,253.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$42,701,804.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$45,525,057.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	5,493
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,478
20.	INTERVIEWS	3,304
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,405
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	442
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	3,173
25.	MEMBERSHIP	208

OFFICE: LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	521
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,219
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,443
4.	PENSION	432
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	81
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	4
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	752
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	40
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	139
10.	DEATH PENSION	120
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	300
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,051
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,694,108.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$36,413,730.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$39,107,838.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	12,341
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	3,847
20.	INTERVIEWS	5,164
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	11,171
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	369
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	50
24.	NEW CLAIMS	5,291
25.	MEMBERSHIP	123

OFFICE: W. LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	818
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,133
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,508
4.	PENSION	251
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	144
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	2
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	733
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	174
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	128
10.	DEATH PENSION	84
11.	INSURANCE	79
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	362
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,416
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,347,273.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$39,828,897.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$42,176,170.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	10,469
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	4,151
20.	INTERVIEWS	3,456
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,102
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	820
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	3,811
25.	MEMBERSHIP	99

OFFICE: SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,163
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,071
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,876
4.	PENSION	201
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	1,907
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	3
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	392
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	129
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	144
10.	DEATH PENSION	13
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	330
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	8,229
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$5,127,477.00

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS..	$76,861,379.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$81,988,856.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	1,415
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	1,982
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	3,313
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	5,092
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	144
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	31
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	3,715
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	222

OFFICE: DENVER, COLORADO

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS.....	755
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED.....	978
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED.....	1,172
4.	PENSION.....	346
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED.....	39
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY.....	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS.....	1,084
8.	MISCELLANEOUS.....	172
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION.....	88
10.	DEATH PENSION.....	93
11.	INSURANCE.....	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES.....	246
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS.....	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS.....	4,974
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES.....	$2,685,421.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS..	$40,426,375.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$43,111,796.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	4,801
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	1,357
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	1,535
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	3,256
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	2,172
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	91

OFFICE: HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS.....	97
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED.....	312
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED.....	560
4.	PENSION.....	48
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED.....	32
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY.....	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS.....	135
8.	MISCELLANEOUS.....	3
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION.....	29
10.	DEATH PENSION.....	0
11.	INSURANCE.....	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES.....	123
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS.....	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS.....	1,340
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES.....	$778,743.91
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS..	$10,847,694.51
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$11,626,438.42
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	893
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	253
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	660
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	1,119
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	5
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	392
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	13

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

OFFICE: WASHINGTON, D.C.

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	289
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	388
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	327
4.	PENSION	85
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	43
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	287
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	31
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	24
10.	DEATH PENSION	3
11.	INSURANCE	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	127
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	34
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,639
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$863,040.50
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$19,461,411.46
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$20,324,451.96
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,931
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,374
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,487
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,042
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	774
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	3
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,344
25.	MEMBERSHIP	81

OFFICE: ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,903
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	4,565
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	5,116
4.	PENSION	839
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	213
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	2,478
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	178
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	566
10.	DEATH PENSION	117
11.	INSURANCE	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	1,005
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	16,981
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$9,132,140.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$138,683,006.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$147,815,146.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	26,050
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	4,362
20.	INTERVIEWS	7,472
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	13,231
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	10,685
25.	MEMBERSHIP	413

OFFICE: ATLANTA, GEORGIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	388
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,129
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,150
4.	PENSION	191
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	63
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	547
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	12
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	110
10.	DEATH PENSION	46
11.	INSURANCE	0

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	200
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	3,836
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,435,090.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$33,469,980.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$35,905,070.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,743
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	456
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,407
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,788
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	4
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,658
25.	MEMBERSHIP	80

OFFICE: HONOLULU, HAWAII

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	113
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	163
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	269
4.	PENSION	4
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	6
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	67
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	46
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	19
10.	DEATH PENSION	3
11.	INSURANCE	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	73
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	764
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$398,289.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$7,156,800.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$7,555,089.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	715
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	298
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,130
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	675
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	340
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	846
25.	MEMBERSHIP	57

OFFICE: BOISE, IDAHO

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	177
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	436
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	281
4.	PENSION	132
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	54
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	225
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	2
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	25
10.	DEATH PENSION	3
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	36
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,372
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$638,539.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$9,777,781.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$10,416,320.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,324
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	627
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,922
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	978
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	471
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	33

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,456
25.	MEMBERSHIP	37

OFFICE: CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	442
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	987
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	858
4.	PENSION	566
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	1,460
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	3
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	463
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	120
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	61
10.	DEATH PENSION	12
11.	INSURANCE	40
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	335
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,347
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,537,942.24
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$39,612,231.26
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$42,150,173.50
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	5,849
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,168
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,683
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,752
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	6
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,267
25.	MEMBERSHIP	129

OFFICE: INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	422
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,169
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	663
4.	PENSION	318
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	197
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	327
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	157
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	80
10.	DEATH PENSION	82
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	167
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	3,582
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,254,190.98
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$30,347,164.46
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$32,601,355.44
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	4,811
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	686
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,074
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,042
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	26
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	25
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,329
25.	MEMBERSHIP	65

OFFICE: DES MOINES, IOWA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	231
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	500
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	923
4.	PENSION	241
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	617
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	200
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	206

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	54
10.	DEATH PENSION	190
11.	INSURANCE	34
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	193
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	3,389
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,840,675.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$25,835,580.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$27,676,255.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,703
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	533
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,749
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,693
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,789
25.	MEMBERSHIP	239

OFFICE: WICHITA, KANSAS

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	359
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	747
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,032
4.	PENSION	61
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	445
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	221
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	29
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	54
10.	DEATH PENSION	82
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	185
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	3,216
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,483,998.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$21,138,028.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$22,622,026.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,058
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	796
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,146
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,588
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,431
25.	MEMBERSHIP	106

OFFICE: LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	591
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,273
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,407
4.	PENSION	662
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	441
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	4
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	84
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	96
10.	DEATH PENSION	265
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	425
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,248
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,846,345.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$50,123,000.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$52,969,345.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	5,524
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,766
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,023

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,237
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	13
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	6
24.	NEW CLAIMS	3,651
25.	MEMBERSHIP	94

OFFICE: NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	215
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	698
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	681
4.	PENSION	263
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	97
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	487
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	62
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	25
10.	DEATH PENSION	24
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	26
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,579
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,309,866.58
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$23,043,110.34
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$24,352,976.92
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,683
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	556
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,950
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,432
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	8
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	25
24.	NEW CLAIMS	3,400
25.	MEMBERSHIP	48

OFFICE: TOGUS, MAINE

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	186
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	660
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	508
4.	PENSION	55
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	59
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	213
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	7
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	17
10.	DEATH PENSION	1
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	86
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,792
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,188,582.85
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$16,700,111.44
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$17,888,694.29
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,672
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	322
20.	INTERVIEWS	3,024
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,949
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	595
25.	MEMBERSHIP	262

OFFICE: BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	205
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	565
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	652
4.	PENSION	57
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	120

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	271
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	43
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	39
10.	DEATH PENSION	1
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	65
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,018
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,177,057.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$15,703,253.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$16,880,310.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,364
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	598
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,485
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,644
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	3
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,076
25.	MEMBERSHIP	78

OFFICE: BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	488
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,743
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,166
4.	PENSION	100
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	18
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	300
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	34
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	80
10.	DEATH PENSION	16
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	371
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,317
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,847,042.70
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$46,695,502.40
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$49,542,545.10
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	8,660
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,221
20.	INTERVIEWS	4,874
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,788
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	3,895
25.	MEMBERSHIP	307

OFFICE: DETROIT, MICHIGAN

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	211
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	923
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	955
4.	PENSION	562
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	350
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	313
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	126
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	136
10.	DEATH PENSION	211
11.	INSURANCE	3
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	484
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,275
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,986,530.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$28,773,505.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$30,760,035.00

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	8,754
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,448
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,354
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,984
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	7
24.	NEW CLAIMS	4,517
25.	MEMBERSHIP	63

OFFICE: ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	608
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,114
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,059
4.	PENSION	253
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	105
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	257
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	239
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	66
10.	DEATH PENSION	66
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	255
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,022
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,315,177.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$33,893,929.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$36,209,106.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	7,340
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,177
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,662
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,760
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	5,289
25.	MEMBERSHIP	90

OFFICE: JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	160
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	537
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	632
4.	PENSION	260
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	39
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	150
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	15
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	47
10.	DEATH PENSION	39
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	98
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,977
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,045,823.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$15,639,464.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$16,685,287.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,711
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	332
20.	INTERVIEWS	905
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,465
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,016
25.	MEMBERSHIP	30

OFFICE: ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	898
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,548

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,618
4.	PENSION	359
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	465
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	4
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	1,971
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	127
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	81
10.	DEATH PENSION	44
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	323
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	8,438
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,876,784.84
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$54,104,064.12
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$57,980,848.96
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	6,170
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,206
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,361
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,508
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	36
24.	NEW CLAIMS	5,744
25.	MEMBERSHIP	181

OFFICE: FORT HARRISON, MONTANA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	86
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	424
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	193
4.	PENSION	40
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	14
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	76
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	6
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	17
10.	DEATH PENSION	3
11.	INSURANCE	5
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	95
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	959
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$485,885.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$8,902,641.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$9,388,526.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	461
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	325
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,090
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	616
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	4
24.	NEW CLAIMS	257
25.	MEMBERSHIP	64

OFFICE: LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	270
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	468
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	424
4.	PENSION	103
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	48
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	3
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	288
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	22
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	37
10.	DEATH PENSION	10
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	99
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,772

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES.....	$974,622.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS..	$14,180,964.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$15,155,586.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	1,279
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	400
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	513
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	1,144
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	18
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	637
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	5

OFFICE: MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS.....	340
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED.....	695
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED.....	1,252
4.	PENSION.....	56
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED.....	76
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY.....	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS.....	123
8.	MISCELLANEOUS.....	31
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION.....	10
10.	DEATH PENSION.....	3
11.	INSURANCE.....	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES.....	5
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS.....	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS.....	2,592
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES.....	$2,129,313.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS...	$27,913,391.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$30,042,704.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	4,053
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	457
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	1,979
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	3,045
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	21
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	861
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	109

OFFICE: NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS.....	378
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED.....	885
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED.....	1,023
4.	PENSION.....	38
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED.....	78
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY.....	2
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS.....	184
8.	MISCELLANEOUS.....	79
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION.....	34
10.	DEATH PENSION.....	14
11.	INSURANCE.....	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES.....	311
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS.....	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS.....	3,027
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES.....	$1,706,602.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS..	$24,882,595.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$26,589,197.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	4,547
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	1,222
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	3,053
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	2,853
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	4
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	1,671
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	137

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

OFFICE: ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	350
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	897
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	628
4.	PENSION	136
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	238
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	342
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	24
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	57
10.	DEATH PENSION	53
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	228
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,953
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,820,388.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$28,433,638.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$30,254,026.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,083
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	739
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,578
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,886
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	4
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,566
25.	MEMBERSHIP	222

OFFICE: NEW YORK, NEW YORK

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	624
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,434
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,876
4.	PENSION	105
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	175
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	41
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	33
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	84
10.	DEATH PENSION	10
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	370
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,752
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,491,868.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$44,300,372.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$46,792,240.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	8,574
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,609
20.	INTERVIEWS	3,894
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,733
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	5
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	4
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,423
25.	MEMBERSHIP	217

OFFICE: ALBANY, NEW YORK

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	0
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	0
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	0
4.	PENSION	0
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	0
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	0
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	0
10.	DEATH PENSION	0
11.	INSURANCE	0

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$753.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$25,206.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$25,959.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	42
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	253
20.	INTERVIEWS	900
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	25
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	3
24.	NEW CLAIMS	536
25.	MEMBERSHIP	131

OFFICE: BUFFALO, NEW YORK

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	233
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	645
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,068
4.	PENSION	70
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	268
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	1,671
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	35
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	66
10.	DEATH PENSION	24
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	239
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,319
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,222,191.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$30,815,315.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$33,037,506.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	7,477
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	528
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,463
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,539
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,234
25.	MEMBERSHIP	89

OFFICE: SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	0
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	0
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	0
4.	PENSION	0
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	0
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	7
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	0
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	0
10.	DEATH PENSION	0
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	7
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$6,829.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$148,352.70
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$155,181.70
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	330
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	311
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,746
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	0
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	7
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	30

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,780
25.	MEMBERSHIP	84

OFFICE: WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	544
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,641
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,217
4.	PENSION	75
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	984
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	522
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	56
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	54
10.	DEATH PENSION	8
11.	INSURANCE	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	264
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,366
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,998,482.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$39,833,900.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$42,832,382.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	6,188
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,891
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,853
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,087
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	36
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	6
24.	NEW CLAIMS	3,575
25.	MEMBERSHIP	46

OFFICE: FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	184
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	368
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	431
4.	PENSION	122
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	104
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	301
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	21
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	21
10.	DEATH PENSION	62
11.	INSURANCE	2
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	21
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,637
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$892,365.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$10,617,271.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$11,509,636.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,137
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	575
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,169
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,110
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,291
25.	MEMBERSHIP	81

OFFICE: CLEVELAND, OHIO

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	745
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,012
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	3,220
4.	PENSION	466
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	574
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	601
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	114

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	178
10.	DEATH PENSION	225
11.	INSURANCE	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	642
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	8,778
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,528,603.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$62,405,040.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$66,933,643.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	12,727
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,309
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,337
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	10,977
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	43
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	6,841
25.	MEMBERSHIP	193

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.	DEATH PENSION	0
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	0
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$0.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$0.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$0.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	226
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	801
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,053
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	174
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	126
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	36
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,905
25.	MEMBERSHIP	28

OFFICE: MUSKOGEE, OKLAHOMA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	391
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,020
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,445
4.	PENSION	439
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	239
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	164
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	171
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	62
10.	DEATH PENSION	122
11.	INSURANCE	42
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	208
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,303
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,359,568.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$32,742,890.21
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$35,102,458.21
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	4,107
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	9,184
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,699

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,849
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	4,864
25.	MEMBERSHIP	86

OFFICE: PORTLAND, OREGON

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	380
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	981
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	995
4.	PENSION	192
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	249
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	353
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	35
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	55
10.	DEATH PENSION	31
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	222
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	3,493
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,113,470.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$29,456,895.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$31,570,365.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,183
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	697
20.	INTERVIEWS	933
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,657
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,027
25.	MEMBERSHIP	77

OFFICE: PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	586
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,693
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,244
4.	PENSION	354
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	749
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	496
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	111
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	87
10.	DEATH PENSION	165
11.	INSURANCE	103
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	419
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	6,007
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,660,334.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$47,024,814.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$49,685,148.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	4,597
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,868
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,727
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,173
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,747
25.	MEMBERSHIP	178

OFFICE: WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	0
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	0
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	0
4.	PENSION	0
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	0

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	0
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	0
10.	DEATH PENSION	0
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	0
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$0.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$0.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$0.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	47
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	51
20.	INTERVIEWS	213
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	24
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	171
25.	MEMBERSHIP	0

OFFICE: PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	383
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,211
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,924
4.	PENSION	301
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	433
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	8
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	334
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	158
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	100
10.	DEATH PENSION	143
11.	INSURANCE	5
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	464
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,464
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,812,348.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$45,291,707.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$48,104,055.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	4,884
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,282
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,476
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,672
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	12
24.	NEW CLAIMS	3,889
25.	MEMBERSHIP	290

OFFICE: PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	201
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	607
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	510
4.	PENSION	77
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	62
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	133
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	8
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	29
10.	DEATH PENSION	13
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	91
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,731
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$902,592.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$16,760,182.00

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

17.	FULL AMOUNT	$17,662,774.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,514
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	767
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,571
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,674
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,110
25.	MEMBERSHIP	259

OFFICE: COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	496
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	808
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,350
4.	PENSION	290
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	105
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	484
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	84
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	93
10.	DEATH PENSION	86
11.	INSURANCE	41
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	191
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,028
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,076,011.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$31,035,706.13
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$33,111,717.13
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	5,064
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	928
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,373
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,919
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	20
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,458
25.	MEMBERSHIP	264

OFFICE: SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	177
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	409
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	420
4.	PENSION	61
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	60
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	443
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	48
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	27
10.	DEATH PENSION	26
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	73
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,744
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$885,336.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$10,851,106.93
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$11,736,442.93
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,948
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	405
20.	INTERVIEWS	782
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,300
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,474
25.	MEMBERSHIP	57

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

OFFICE: NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	674
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,141
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,274
4.	PENSION	379
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	123
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	372
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	43
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	52
10.	DEATH PENSION	71
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	81
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,210
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,483,766.53
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$38,418,414.93
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$40,902,181.46
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,037
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,473
20.	INTERVIEWS	863
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,051
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,597
25.	MEMBERSHIP	75

OFFICE: WACO, TEXAS

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,003
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,776
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,483
4.	PENSION	837
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	135
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	948
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	216
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	275
10.	DEATH PENSION	241
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	843
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	9,757
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,343,692.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$74,314,573.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$78,658,265.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	9,661
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	3,984
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,392
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	6,929
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	4,476
25.	MEMBERSHIP	182

OFFICE: HOUSTON, TEXAS

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	727
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,603
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,485
4.	PENSION	434
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	234
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	305
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	103
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	111
10.	DEATH PENSION	113
11.	INSURANCE	1

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	253
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,369
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,991,245.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$48,171,551.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$51,162,796.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	7,439
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,326
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,728
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,664
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	2
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,847
25.	MEMBERSHIP	225

OFFICE: SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	15
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	10
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1
4.	PENSION	0
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	0
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	3
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	0
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	0
10.	DEATH PENSION	0
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	170
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	199
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$332,543.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$4,126,252.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$4,458,795.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	491
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,452
20.	INTERVIEWS	4,614
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	158
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	1,257
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	8
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,273
25.	MEMBERSHIP	146

OFFICE: SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	208
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	349
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	548
4.	PENSION	50
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	7
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	157
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	13
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	21
10.	DEATH PENSION	14
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	123
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,490
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$963,964.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$13,193,251.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$14,157,215.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,209
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	149
20.	INTERVIEWS	577
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,596
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	34
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

24.	NEW CLAIMS	252
25.	MEMBERSHIP	63

OFFICE: WHITE RIVER JUNCTION, VERMONT

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	72
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	229
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	228
4.	PENSION	52
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	15
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	47
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	3
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	12
10.	DEATH PENSION	1
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	24
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	683
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$395,615.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$5,725,377.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$6,120,992.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,572
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	267
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,456
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,011
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	534
25.	MEMBERSHIP	72

OFFICE: ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	589
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,124
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,688
4.	PENSION	245
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	71
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	3
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	937
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	97
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	57
10.	DEATH PENSION	33
11.	INSURANCE	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	283
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,128
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,700,776.29
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$37,506,559.42
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$40,207,335.71
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	4,151
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,385
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,450
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,870
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	11
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	19
24.	NEW CLAIMS	4,049
25.	MEMBERSHIP	105

OFFICE: SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,312
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,918
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,800
4.	PENSION	199
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	72
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	3
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	802
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	28

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	143
10.	DEATH PENSION	28
11.	INSURANCE	2
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	210
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	6,517
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$6,692,171.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$63,708,406.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$70,400,577.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	4,791
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,273
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,000
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,576
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	18
24.	NEW CLAIMS	3,627
25.	MEMBERSHIP	259

OFFICE: HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	191
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	486
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	462
4.	PENSION	289
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	20
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	183
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	54
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	29
10.	DEATH PENSION	39
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	146
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,899
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,193,028.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$19,171,382.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$20,364,410.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,444
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	456
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,459
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,818
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,355
25.	MEMBERSHIP	16

OFFICE: MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	420
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,205
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,485
4.	PENSION	344
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	166
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	5
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	766
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	112
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	62
10.	DEATH PENSION	60
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	263
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,888
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,859,952.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$38,574,544.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$41,434,496.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	6,671
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,230
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,831

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,952
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	8
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,550
25.	MEMBERSHIP	169

OFFICE: CHEYENNE, WYOMING

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	63
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	89
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	153
4.	PENSION	114
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	0
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	127
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	13
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	4
10.	DEATH PENSION	14
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	5
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	582
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$279,856.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$3,333,392.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$3,613,248.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	527
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	109
20.	INTERVIEWS	427
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	414
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	4
24.	NEW CLAIMS	238
25.	MEMBERSHIP	7

OFFICE: WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	65
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	145
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	122
4.	PENSION	22
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	15
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	70
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	7
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	14
10.	DEATH PENSION	1
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	49
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	510
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$262,582.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$3,639,092.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$3,901,674.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,290
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	121
20.	INTERVIEWS	596
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	654
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	553
25.	MEMBERSHIP	8

OFFICE: DALLAS, TEXAS

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	0
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	0
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	0
4.	PENSION	0
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	0

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	0
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	0
10.	DEATH PENSION	0
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	0
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$0.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$0.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$0.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	28
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	376
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,447
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	618
25.	MEMBERSHIP	33

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.	DEATH PENSION	0
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	0
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$0.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$0.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$0.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	0
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	306
20.	INTERVIEWS	4,337
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	0
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	437
25.	MEMBERSHIP	42

OFFICE: SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,104
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	817
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	786
4.	PENSION	60
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	45
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	1,432
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	74
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	89
10.	DEATH PENSION	7
11.	INSURANCE	120
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	200
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	14
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,748
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,987,736.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$46,368,777.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$49,356,513.00

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,991
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,239
20.	INTERVIEWS	4,415
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,897
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	1,238
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	3,255
25.	MEMBERSHIP	172

OFFICE: RENO, NEVADA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	224
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	586
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	622
4.	PENSION	101
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	50
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	377
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	26
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	31
10.	DEATH PENSION	12
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	121
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,150
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,015,897.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$16,145,702.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$17,161,599.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,642
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	808
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,175
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,384
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,152
25.	MEMBERSHIP	38

OFFICE: SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	79
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	434
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	566
4.	PENSION	166
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	254
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	614
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	48
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	67
10.	DEATH PENSION	30
11.	INSURANCE	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	52
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,311
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,363,401.25
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$16,371,884.25
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$17,735,285.50
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,458
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	832
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,479
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,699
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	2
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,482
25.	MEMBERSHIP	57

OFFICE: NORFOLK, VA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	0
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	0

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED.....	0
4.	PENSION.....	0
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED.....	0
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY.....	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS.....	0
8.	MISCELLANEOUS.....	0
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION.....	0
10.	DEATH PENSION.....	0
11.	INSURANCE.....	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES.....	0
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS.....	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS.....	0
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES.....	$0.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS..	$0.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$0.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	0
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	931
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	0
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	0
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	7,017
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	1,475
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	28

OFFICE: NAS MIRAMAR, SAN DIEGO, CA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS.....	0
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED.....	0
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED.....	0
4.	PENSION.....	0
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED.....	0
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY.....	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS.....	0
8.	MISCELLANEOUS.....	0
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION.....	0
10.	DEATH PENSION.....	0
11.	INSURANCE.....	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES.....	0
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS.....	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS.....	0
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES.....	$0.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS..	$0.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$0.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	139
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	139
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	139
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	0
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	61,419
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	0
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	0

OFFICE: TOTAL NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICE REPORT

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS.....	25,220
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED.....	55,853
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED.....	61,949
4.	PENSION.....	12,792
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED.....	12,817
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY.....	58
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS.....	26,465
8.	MISCELLANEOUS.....	4,033
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION.....	4,182
10.	DEATH PENSION.....	3,214
11.	INSURANCE.....	487
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES.....	12,812
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS.....	218
14.	TOTAL AWARDS.....	220,100

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JUNE 1, 1997 THROUGH JULY 1, 1998

15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES.....	$122,581,115.67
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS..	$1,807,744,004.56
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$1,930,325,120.23
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	261,836
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	80,122
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	131,921
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	192,512
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	74,628
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	432
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	150,387
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	7,491

(The following written annual report was submitted by Mr. Jerry P. Steelman, National Director of Voluntary Services.)

Ours is an organization that will always remember the sacrifices of disabled veterans and for 53 years now we have demonstrated this through the DAV and Auxiliary VAVS programs. Today I would like to take a moment to salute all of those DAV and DAV Auxiliary members who have made our organization and its programs the envy of the veterans' community. Although this report focuses on the past year's successes, let's also focus on the future. While we can and should be proud of our past achievements, we must also look ahead. Let us focus on innovation in volunteerism. Let us focus on where the DAV and Auxiliary will find new volunteers to meet the growing needs of veterans, particularly those who are aging. If you're not already in the ranks of our volunteers, we need you. We need your time, your sensitivities, your ideas, and your help in making certain that America's veterans get the care they deserve.

But let me first pay tribute to my predecessor for his selfless dedication to the DAV's mission of service and hope for disabled veterans. Bruce Nitsche, who retired June 1, established an outstanding record of continuing success with the DAV's volunteer-based programs. Our volunteer initiatives are flourishing, particularly the Transportation Network and the DAV VAVS program, like never before. And no one could ever say enough about Bruce's contribution to the success of the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic and the many other special rehabilitative sports programs over the years.

Our volunteer programs have withstood the test of time and will continue to soar to new heights in the years to come.

As you consider your own possible future role in our volunteer effort, please remember that there are more than enough opportunities to go around -- not only at VA medical centers but in the communities where veterans live. Think of the unused skills and talents in our membership ranks! Think of the services we could offer veterans if more of us became involved!

The following program descriptions present statistics totaling the money spent, the hours donated, and the number of people who participate in our volunteer effort. But these figures can never fully represent the leadership and unselfish assistance provided by State VAVS Chairmen, Hospital Representatives, Deputies, and individual volunteers. No one can put a price on programs like transportation to medical treatment, direct patient care, entertainment, and recreational and sporting activities. No one can place a monetary value on doing for older veterans what they can no longer do for themselves. Nor could we place a dollar sign in front of the friendship one veteran extends to another...or the love an Auxiliary member holds out to a family much like her own. The statistics in this report merely measure what DAV members, DAV families, and DAV friends have done in accomplishing our organization's purpose. They cannot measure the gift our volunteers offer or the reward they receive in their own hearts.

DAV DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VOLUNTARY SERVICES PROGRAM

The DAV VAVS program is the largest of the DAV's volunteer initiatives. Through it, DAV volunteers provide a broad array of services to veterans in our nation's VA medical facilities. Under this program, 8,243 DAV VAVS volunteers donated 2,012,446 hours in the 12 months ending March 31, 1998.

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 33 State Chairmen, 182 VAVS Representatives, 29 Associate Representatives, 304 Deputy Representatives, and seven Associate Deputy Representatives.

The DAV volunteer effort is enhanced by a very active corps of 2,471 Auxiliary volunteers who donated 351,552 hours last year. Together, DAV and Auxiliary volunteers provided 2,363,998 hours of VAVS service over the past year -- more than any other service organization. This is equivalent to the VA having an additional 1,100 full-time employees with an estimated value of $32,457,692.54 in hourly wages alone.

DAV HOSPITAL SERVICE COORDINATOR TRANSPORTATION NETWORK PROGRAM

Because so many sick and disabled veterans lack transportation to and from VA medical facilities for needed treatment, the DAV operates a nationwide Transportation Network. This program continues to show tremendous growth as an indispensable resource for veterans. Across the nation, DAV Hospital Service Coordinators (HSCs) operate 195 active programs. They've recruited 5,454 volunteer drivers who logged 21,804,578 miles last year, taking 610,194 veterans to and from VA medical facilities. Many of these veterans rode in vans the DAV donated to VA medical facilities for use in the Transportation Network. DAV Departments and Chapters, together with the National Organization, have now donated 755 vans to VA medical centers nationwide at a cost of $13,965,959.19.

At DAV's 76th National Convention, Ford Motor Company loaned 12 vans to VA medical centers to be used in the DAV Transportation Network. We are very pleased that after having evaluated the usefulness of the loan of these vans, Ford Motor Company has permanently donated the previously loaned vehicles to the following VA medical centers: Tuskegee, Alabama; Phoenix, Arizona; Long Beach, California; Denver, Colorado; West Palm Beach, Florida; Atlanta, Georgia; Hines, Illinois; Louisville, Kentucky; East Orange, New Jersey; Northport, New York; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

This most generous gift from Ford was the result of several months of meetings and planning with Ford representatives. From the start, they showed 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.

As a further demonstration of their commitment to the DAV Transportation Network, Ford is donating the use of 12 additional 1998 Ford vans, 10 Super Club Wagon XL, 15-passenger vans, and two Windstar, 7-passenger vans, for one year. This will take place during the Opening Session, at this National Convention here in Las Vegas. The VAMCs receiving these vans are: San Diego, California; Denver, Colorado; Bay Pines, Florida (outstationed in Naples); West Palm Beach, Florida; Iowa City, Iowa; Baltimore, Maryland; Boston, Massachusetts; El Paso, Texas; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Altoona, Pennsylvania; White River Junction, Vermont; and Martinsburg, West Virginia.

DAV HSCs do more than coordinate transportation; they also help veterans file claims for VA benefits. During the past year HSCs have completed 82,149 VA claim forms, referring 20,718 veterans to DAV National Service Officers for professional benefits assistance. They've also conducted 244,422 telephone and personal interviews. DAV HSCs and VAVS volunteers form a hospital-based service program that thousands of veterans have come to know and

trust for help whenever it's needed.

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 21 years since its inception, this award has become one of the most esteemed honors presented at the DAV's annual national convention. VA Medical Center Chiefs of Voluntary Services throughout the nation are each allowed to submit nominations for one DAV and one DAVA volunteer. These nominations submitted by VA medical centers throughout the nation are then thoroughly evaluated by an independent committee of well-known authorities in the field of voluntary service. The two volunteers selected by the committee receive an expense-paid trip to the DAV National Convention for the award presentation. After reviewing the nominations of 83 DAV volunteers and 40 Auxiliary volunteers, the committee chose as this year's winners:

Ardell W. Shaw:

Ardell W. Shaw of Pine City, New York, a member of DAV Chapter 13, Elmira, New York, averages more than 180 hours each month coordinating the DAV transportation center that he started in 1995. Volunteering five days a week as the DAV Transportation Coordinator, Ardell's hugely successful network has transported more than 1,900 veterans a distance of 44,575 miles since the program began. He also has been instrumental in recruiting and retaining volunteer drivers. Mr. Shaw serves as an outstanding representative for the DAV at all major functions at the Bath VAMC. Serving as a Recreation Therapy Service volunteer, he has been responsible for coordinating many events, from Friday night Bingo games to pushing wheelchair patients on trips to the shopping mall. He was instrumental in developing the patient clothing room at the Bath VAMC and works in the room many hours each week helping boost the morale of thousands of veteran patients each year. Through Mr. Shaw's efforts, the clothing room resembles a department store and is completely supported by donations from area merchants.

Mr. Shaw is a highly visible, inspirational volunteer who is concerned with the needs of other veterans, but never seeks recognition for himself. He is a credit to the DAV - a man who leads by example and validates the extraordinary volunteerism demonstrated by previous George H. Seal award winners.

A retired Army veteran who served in Korea and three tours of duty in Vietnam, Mr. Shaw has a severe service-connected disability that would limit the activities of most volunteers, but he has a solid record of working long days, weekends, and being on call. He created an annual Christmas Day hospital visitation program, which has brought in other volunteers to hospital wards to spread holiday cheer. Since February 1988, when Mr. Shaw first volunteered his time, he has logged 8,238 hours of service.

Mr. Shaw overcomes his own physical disabilities to give unselfishly to benefit others. His quiet dignity personifies the true meaning of giving, uncompromising dedication, and friendship to veterans.

Claire Newman:

Claire Newman, a member of Auxiliary Unit 152, Delray Beach, Florida, has volunteered her services to disabled veterans for 54 years. She donates more than 25 hours per week at the West Palm Beach VAMC, with an additional 20 hours per week spent preparing for patient activities.

Mrs. Newman's extraordinary dedication to the needs of hospitalized veterans best represents the outstanding work of the DAV Auxiliary. Her infectious smile, selfless dedication, and unreserved compassion warmly touch the disabled veteran.

Noted for her talent, skill and innovation, Mrs. Newman has

initiated many new veterans' programs at the medical center. Working with her own team of volunteers, she directs a creative arts and crafts instructional program that includes painting, leatherwork, and sewing.

Mrs. Newman, a talented fashion designer, added a sewing vocational program that teaches homeless and needy veterans the skilled trade of operating a sewing machine.

She also initiated a videophone program that reunites seriously ill veterans with family members who cannot come to the VA medical center. The program allows veterans, without charge, to conduct face-to-face conversations with loved ones using a video phone connection. The program has been credited with lifting the spirits of hospitalized veterans and their families.

Mrs. Newman's life has been devoted to the continuous service of veterans. Her dedication, enthusiasm, sincerity, and creativity are responsible for increasing the esteem and pride of veterans. Few touch the disabled veteran more warmly and with such unreserved compassion than does Claire Newman.

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 only two individuals. Each nominee has been awarded a certificate of merit for outstanding volunteer performance in meeting the needs of hospitalized veterans.

SPORTS FOR THE DISABLED

Athletic programs for handicapped veterans have always been important to the DAV. We have a long, proud history of leadership in efforts that encourage athletic activity among disabled veterans of all ages. Working together with the VA, DAV leaders are committed to providing these men and women with opportunities to participate in sports which many thought would not be possible with their disabilities.

The Veterans' Advisory Committee on Rehabilitation previously cited a study in which Kathy Stokes, Ph.D., reported that "the health care needs of those not involved in sports activities were three times higher than those involved in some type of sporting program." *Modern Healthcare Magazine* states that sports offer a better quality of life, improved self-confidence and self-esteem, and a way for many newly disabled people to adjust to their handicaps. Athletic activity provides a new and very necessary social outlet, while improving physical endurance and maintaining physical fitness.

More and more, doctors recognize it's not enough to stabilize patients medically and send them home. Without an introduction to sports or recreation, the hospital will see that person again and again. Disabled people involved in sports generally encounter fewer medical problems than those who aren't, therapists say. Athletics maintain cardiovascular conditioning, increase circulation to the extremities, and help avert skin breakdowns. Another advantage is that sports are community-based rather than hospital-based undertakings. The DAV believes disabled veterans should have the same opportunity to participate in these activities as those who aren't handicapped.

The DAV National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic -- In March 1998, 315 disabled veterans from 38 states took part in the 12th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic at Crested Butte, Colorado. With more than 400 volunteers -- including 190 ski instructors, most of whom are certified in teaching the disabled -- it was the largest and best Winter Sports Clinic ever conducted. An annual event sponsored jointly by the DAV and VA, the clinic is open to veterans with visual impairments, spinal-cord injuries, certain neurological conditions, orthopedic amputations, or other severe disabilities. Veterans disabled in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf War, and Bosnia were represented. Our sponsors this year were:

Host: Ford Motor Company; Hughes Electronics.

National: Bayer Corporation; Johnson & Johnson; Prince Bandar bin Sultan; Sprint; The Coca-Cola Company.

Gold: American Country Countdown with Bob Kingsley; Baxter

Healthcare Corporation; DAV California Rehabilitation Foundation, Inc.; DAV Department of Colorado; Eli Lilly and Company; PaineWebber; 3M; Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., Chapter 57.
Silver: Advanced Prosthetics & Orthotics, Inc.; Astra Merck, Inc.; Fifth Third Bank; GE Medical Systems; B. Braun Medical, Inc./McGaw; Milbank Memorial Fund; Pfizer, Inc.; DAV Prescott, Arizona Chapter 16, Inc.; ROHO, Inc. & Crown Therapeutics, Inc.; Schiff; Kreidler-Shell, Inc.; Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC); Sequent Computer Systems, Inc.; Veterans Canteen Burger King Express; Wallace; Zeneca Pharmaceuticals.
Bronze: AMSUS Sustaining Members; BVL Fund; Bristol-Myers Squibb Company; R. Bard, Inc.; CANON U.S.A., Inc. *(Government Marketing Division)*; Dickstein Shapiro Morin & Oshinsky, LLP; Eastman Kodak Company; The Fischer Family; Genentech, Inc.; Great Brands of Europe, Inc./Evian; Hoechst Marion Roussel, Inc.; Mary E. Moore Family Foundation; Oakley; The Orthotics & Prosthetics National Office; Pharmacia & Upjohn, Inc.; Radventures, Inc.; Sterling Diagnostic Imaging; 10th Mountain Division Foundation, Inc.; Mary C. Thomas.
Contributor: Alpina Sports Corporation; Bill Belz; Roy E. Bernardi; Marjorie M. Brennan; Douglas T. Cleveland; Richard J. Gibbs; Janice Hanley; John F. Heilman, Jr.; Gail T. Murphy; National Order of Alley Cats; Martin F. Niehof; Nordic Gear, Inc.; Rolls-Royce, Inc.; Schoffel North America; SmithKline Beachum Pharmaceuticals; Stretching, Inc.; Robert C. Thomas; James and Marty Trisler; United Voluntary Services.
Contributor/Supplier: Blistex, Inc.; Chuck Roast; Columbia Sportswear Company; Delta Airlines, Inc.; FILA Sports, Inc.; Gargoyles Performance Eyewear; Gene Taylor's Sporting Goods; Gerry Sportswear Company; Guiltless Gourmet, Inc.; Mad Bomber; Nils, Inc.; Raichle Molitor USA, Inc.; Two-A-Degree, Inc.; Uptime Sports/Nutrition.

Using the theme "Miracles on a Mountainside," the clinic promotes rehabilitation by helping physically disabled veterans develop sports skills through a wide variety of adaptive workshops. With assistance from hundreds of volunteers, the clinic breaks down physical and emotional barriers that could otherwise block participation in these sports. It allows the veterans to regain lost self-confidence and find their own limits. The workshops focus on such sports skills as downhill and cross-country skiing, wheelchair basketball, scuba diving, wheelchair self-defense and snowmobiling.

The 13th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic promises to be better and bigger and is scheduled to be held March 21-26, 1999, at Crested Butte, Colorado.

DAV Freedom Award -- In 1992 we instituted the DAV Freedom Award at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. It is given each year to the veteran who makes the most progress during the week, showing outstanding courage and accomplishments in taking a giant step forward in his or her rehabilitation process. This annual award is sponsored by His Royal Highness Prince Bandar bin Sultan, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia. The award's inscription reads: "Your accomplishments during the...DAV National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic have proved to the world that physical disability does not bar the doors to freedom. We salute your desire to excel so that others may follow." The 1998 recipient is Butch Cooke.

Butch Cooke, a combat-wounded Army veteran of Vietnam is a life member of DAV Chapter 90 in Boone, North Carolina, where he helps others with disabilities learn to be more independent. He also is a tennis instructor and seeks to integrate the disabled community with able-bodied people through shared recreation and other activities.

Although he is a paraplegic and must use a wheelchair, Butch really burned up the mountain with his bi-ski and inspired others to give it their best and get the best in return. Throughout the week, Butch could be seen wheeling around with an infectious smile and tapping folks on the left shoulder while zipping past on their right side. He was always quick with a word of encouragement and a hearty "way to go" to the other athletes. Butch says he looks

forward to the clinic every year and that it rejuvenates his spirit for the rest of the year.

Being determined not to let disability define his limits is one reason why Butch Cooke was selected to receive the DAV's Freedom Award. He is a wonderful example of what we're trying to accomplish through the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. It just shows what determination and an indomitable spirit can do.

Golf for the Disabled -- Golf is one of the fastest growing and most popular sports in America, perhaps in the world. Recognizing this fact, the DAV and DAV Charitable Service Trust support two golf programs that promote rehabilitation and a more active lifestyle for disabled veterans:

National Amputee Golf Open Championships -- The DAV National Commander's Trophy honors the disabled veteran who puts in the best overall performance at the National Amputee Golf Association (NAGA) championship tournament. Additionally, it recognizes the contributions the winner has made in his or her own community in furthering the opportunities of disabled individuals. Last year's 49th annual tournament at the Marshfield Country Club, Marshfield, Massachusetts, August 3-7, 1997, drew 112 entries, 47 of them veterans. The winner of the DAV National Commander's trophy was Walter E. Morris of Martinsville, Indiana.

Walter Morris is a below-the-knee amputee who lost his leg in Vietnam. He was on a rescue mission when his helicopter was shot down. In the ensuing crash and fire, only he and the pilot survived.

Walt is currently an adjudicator with the Department of Veterans Affairs in Indianapolis, Indiana assisting veterans on a daily basis. He is a member of the DAV and a life member of the National Amputee Golf Association. He is also a member of the local Elks Club 1349 and the American Legion. He is active in his church, the First Baptist Church in Martinsville.

Walt is an avid golfer, placing in the top three of his flight in amputee tournaments on many occasions.

First Swing Golf -- This is the DAV's ninth year of involvement with the "First Swing" instructional golf program for the disabled. With support from the DAV Charitable Service Trust, this program provides therapists throughout the country with instruction on the rehabilitation benefits of golf. Use of golf therapy at hospitals and rehabilitation centers has brought the game back into the lives of many who played prior to becoming disabled. It has also introduced the sport to countless handicapped people who never dreamed golf would be part of their lives. During 1997, 33 First Swing seminars and Learn to Golf Clinics were conducted. Participants included 428 therapists; 765 physically challenged people, 199 of whom were disabled veterans; 102 professional golfers; and 301 others.

DAV CELEBRITY ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAM

Continuing to provide a morale boost to hospitalized veterans, the DAV Celebrity Entertainment Program assures these patients that they're not forgotten...that the American people still appreciate what they've done for all of us.

We're truly fortunate to sponsor some very talented people with a great deal of compassion for 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 television/film actor Dennis Franz; Major League Baseball Umpires Larry Barnett and Jerry Layne; and NASCAR driver Dale Jarrett who races for the Ford Motor Company in the NASCAR Winston Cup Series. The DAV is indeed honored that such outstanding celebrities want to be a part of the DAV Voluntary Service Program. We recognize the enormous demands they face, and we appreciate the gift of their valuable time. They've demonstrated that they care very deeply about the needs of disabled veterans.

IN CLOSING

It's been a tremendous year for DAV volunteer programs, and many deserve our thanks. If it were not for their support, the many programs mentioned in this report would not be possible.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jim Delgado, who heads up the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Program, his staff, and the VAVS leadership teams across the nation for their leadership and devotion to volunteerism.

The Voluntary Services Department during this past year has been very fortunate to have the support of the DAV and Auxiliary National Commanders Harry R. McDonald, Jr., and Evelynne Dunn, and staff of the DAV and its Auxiliary; the National Line Officers, National Executive Committee, National Finance Committee, National Service Foundation, and the Charitable Service Trust. Their assistance and support was an essential ingredient of our 1997 success story. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank 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 Linda DeMartino and Linda Chester, National Service and Legislative Headquarters Support Staff, for their invaluable assistance. We've experienced outstanding support from DAV's corps of National Service Officers. Hospital Service Coordinators 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 heroes; those people who care enough to make a difference in the lives of so many, the volunteer corps of the DAV and Auxiliary. On behalf of the DAV, I would like to thank all of you for your devotion, compassion and commitment to DAV's mission of caring for this nation's disabled veterans.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
VA VOLUNTARY SERVICE (VAVS)
April 1, 1997 through March 31, 1998

NUMBER OF REGULARLY SCHEDULED VAVS VOLUNTEERS	8,243
NUMBER OF HOURS BY REGULARLY SCHEDULED VOLUNTEERS	2,012,446
NUMBER OF ASSIGNMENTS BY REGULARLY SCHEDULED VOLUNTEERS	9,877
NUMBER OF VISITS BY REGULARLY SCHEDULED VOLUNTEERS	318,446
NUMBER OF HOURS BY OCCASIONAL VOLUNTEERS	51,284
NUMBER OF VISITS BY OCCASIONAL VOLUNTEERS	9,881
NUMBER OF HOURS BY ALL VAVS VOLUNTEERS	2,012,446
NUMBER OF VISITS BY ALL VAVS VOLUNTEERS	328,327
VAVS APPOINTED POSITIONS	
NUMBER OF STATE CHAIRMEN	16
NUMBER OF STATE CHAIRMEN ALSO SERVING AS REPRESENTATIVES	17
NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES	182
NUMBER OF DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVES	304
NUMBER OF ASSOCIATE REPRESENTATIVES	29
NUMBER OF ASSOCIATE DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVES	7

NUMBER OF HONORARY REPRESENTATIVES	3
NUMBER OF APPOINTED POSITIONS	558
ANNUAL JOINT REVIEWS RECEIVED FOR THE YEAR	82

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

(These DAV Transportation Statistics reflect the data gathered from January 1, 1997 through December 31, 1997)

TOTAL NUMBER OF HOSPITAL SERVICE COORDINATORS (HSCs)	193
NUMBER OF VETERANS TRANSPORTED	610,194
TRANSPORTATION HOURS	1,154,457
TRANSPORTATION MILES	21,804,578
HSC PERSONAL INTERVIEWS	174,175
HSC TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS	244,422
HSC NSO REFERRALS	20,718
HSC VA FORMS COMPLETED	82,149

1997 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK GRANTS

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK HSC PROGRAM GRANTS	$409,204.23
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK VAN GRANTS (52 vans purchased and delivered in 1997)	$381,781.25
1997 Total National Grant Expenditures	$790,985.00

(The following written annual report was submitted by Mr. Ronald W. Drach, National Employment Director.)

This is my final annual report as your National Employment Director. Working with the greatest service organization in the world for the past 28 years and especially as your National Employment Director for the past 23 years, has been a highlight in my life. I have had an opportunity to work with you in accomplishing something extraordinary in the lives of America's disabled veterans. I have enjoyed working with, and for you as we together help build better lives for all our nation's disabled veterans and their families.

Serving as your Employment Director for more than two decades would not have been possible if it were not for a group of very special people who had faith in my ability to bring this program to the threshold of the next millennium. First and foremost, I thank Past National Adjutant Dale Adams for appointing me as National Employment Director in 1975. I was fortunate to be the first Vietnam era veteran to receive such an opportunity and I will always be grateful to Dale for his support throughout the years. My thanks to Norman B. "Gabby" Hartnett as well, whose support for me was invaluable. As my mentor Gabby taught me the ropes in many ways and was always there to provide sage advice.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to National Commander Harry R. McDonald, Jr., and his line officers for their support and cooperation. Commander McDonald's leadership has been extremely valuable. Additionally, National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson has been a strong supporter of the employment programs, and I thank him for his support. I would also like the take this opportunity to thank David W. Gorman, Executive Director, Washington Headquarters, for his support and leadership.

Anthony L. "Tony" Baskerville has been appointed as Deputy National Service Director for Employment. I've known Tony throughout his career and know that he is committed to the mission

of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and our employment program. I am confident in Tony's abilities and know that he will make you proud. Please give him the level of support I enjoyed for many years.

I am extremely honored to submit to the delegates assembled at this 77th National Convention my annual report as your National Employment Director and provide you with a summary of the various activities of this department during the past year.

The DAV has the reputation as a leader in service to this nations more than 2.2 million veterans and their families. This is in large part due to the excellent representation provided by our corps of National Service Officers. The NSO's hard work and dedication helps ensure that our nation's disabled veterans and their dependents receive all of their employment rights and benefits. Those rights and benefits include veterans' preference, affirmative action laws for service-connected disabled veterans and regulations and employment-related programs serving homeless veterans.

The National Employment Department works very closely with National Service Director Kenneth D. Wolfe, National Director of Voluntary Services Jerry P. Steelman, National Legislative Director Joseph A. Violante, and Director of Communications Gary Weaver and their respective staffs.

I would be remiss if I did not thank National Auxiliary Commander Evelynne Dunn and National Auxiliary Adjutant Maria Tedrow. Both have provided strong leadership and always respond to our requests for help.

A special thanks is in order to all workers and volunteers at the department and chapter level and individual DAV members who work so hard to make all of our programs work.

The National Employment Department handles employment-related legislative and oversight issues with particular emphasis on service-connected disabled veterans. As Director, I am responsible for monitoring several agencies and pending legislation and working with the Executive branch and the Congress in program development and oversight.

As a registered lobbyist I appeared before Congress 11 times since our last National Convention and worked closely with the National Legislative staff as they appeared before Congress on issues affecting veterans' benefits and programs.

This year testimony was presented before committees of Congress on issues relating to consolidation of employment and training programs; vocational rehabilitation; small business initiatives; programs for homeless veterans; reemployment rights; transition assistance; and several times on veterans' preference. I have been working closely with the members and staffs of the Subcommittee on Education, Employment, and Training of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Subcommittee on Civil Service of the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight to develop a meaningful complaint/appeal mechanism for veterans who believe veterans' preference and affirmative action been violated.

We oversee various employment issues with the Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the U.S. Postal Service, the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (PCEPD), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

DAV PROGRAMS

During the past 12 months the National Employment Department has worked closely with National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson, Executive Director David W. Gorman, National Service Director Kenneth D. Wolfe and the entire National Service Department as we participated, to the fullest extent possible, in the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and the Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP).

TAP and DTAP are joint cooperative efforts among the DOL, Department of Defense (DOD) and the VA to provide information and services to active duty military personnel who are within 180 days

of discharge to ensure a smooth transition from military to civilian life. Services include employment information as well as assistance in developing job-finding skills, including interviewing techniques and resume preparation.

Many of our National Service Offices (27) participated in TAP/DTAP briefings at various military installations. Our National Service Officers had contact with over 133,076 separating military personnel over the period January 1, 1997 to December 31, 1997. Of those 120,056 were male and 13,020 were female. DAV assisted in filing 9,408 claims for VA disability compensation benefits. Of major concern is how close to discharge these individuals are when they attend a TAP session. The law requires separating service members to attend these sessions 180 days prior to discharge. According to our reports:

- 49,550 were within one month of being discharged:
- 34,991 were within two to three months of being discharged:
- 29,269 were within four to six months of being discharged: and
- 19,575 were six months or more from discharge.

During the waning days of the 104th Congress, Public Law 104-275 was enacted. Among other things, this law established the Commission on Servicemembers and Veterans Transition. The purpose of this Commission is to review the adequacy and effectiveness of the transition programs for separating servicemembers.

I was honored to be appointed to serve on the Commission. Throughout the year the Commission has held a number of site visits and on occasion DAV has appeared before the Commission and presented written comment. We have had, and will continue to work with the Commission until the final report is submitted to Congress in late October. We have had considerable input from individuals around the country, and a highlight of the Commission's work was the "town meeting" conducted during our National Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada last year. The Commissioners in attendance were impressed with the input they received from many of our National Service Officers. Their input led us to pursue the issue of licensing and certification of military skills for recognition by civilian employers.

DOL PROGRAMS

DOL programs for veterans are administered by the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS).

Heading VETS is Assistant Secretary of Labor Espiridion (Al) Borrego, who was appointed by President Clinton and confirmed by the Senate. The DAV has enjoyed a positive, open communication with his office.

Programs under VETS include Veterans' Reemployment Rights (VRR) and Title IV (c) of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). VETS also provides grants to states to employ Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) and operates the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP). They also provide, on a contract basis, funding for the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI).

The Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment and Training (ACVET) continues to meet and make recommendations to the Secretary of Labor. President Clinton appointed Alexis Herman as Secretary of Labor to succeed Robert Reich. Secretary Herman has been supportive of our programs. Prior to her appointment at DOL, she worked on the Domestic Policy staff at the White House. She was accessible and worked closely with us on several issues. Also, Ms. Kitty Higgins has been appointed and confirmed as Deputy Secretary. Ms. Higgins has been very supportive of DAV initiatives and is one of the major architects of the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program which she helped establish in 1977.

VA PROGRAMS

Your Employment Department is involved in several VA

activities—the agency's personnel policies as they relate to employment of disabled veterans, the vocational rehabilitation program and medical rehabilitation issues. I chaired the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Rehabilitation, which was established by law in 1980 to advise the Secretary on issues affecting all VA rehabilitation programs.

In May 1995, the Subcommittee on Education, Employment and Training held an oversight hearing to discuss how well DOL's DVOPs were working with VA's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to assure quality job placement was occurring for those service-connected disabled veterans completing training under vocational rehabilitation. The results of the hearing revealed that little cooperation between the two agencies, which then were put on notice to work closer together to improve employment services.

The Director of the VA's office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling has taken many positive steps to correct the deficiencies identified by Congress, General Accounting Office and the veterans service organizations. VA is working closely with the DOL and the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) to develop meaningful training to assure that disabled veterans enrolled in vocational rehabilitation programs receive needed employment assistance.

The DOL has established a new "employment specialist" position who will work closely with the disabled veteran client. There are currently 10 of these positions.

OPM PROGRAMS

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is responsible for enforcing the veterans' preference provisions of Title 5, U.S.C. They are also responsible for administering affirmative action mandated by Section 4214, Title 38, U.S.C., and the Veterans' Readjustment Appointment (VRA) authority.

OPM has delegated most hiring authority to individual federal agencies. Consequently, each agency hiring site has the flexibility to circumvent, intentionally or unintentionally, veterans' preference. In response, we have been working closely with OPM staff and meet with them at least quarterly regarding this and other issues of concern to veterans.

We have had ongoing problems with various federal agencies violating the veterans' preference rights. We started working with the 104th Congress to have meaningful legislation enacted to provide additional protections to veterans who believed their rights have been violated. The House of Representatives passed its version in the 104th Congress, but the Senate never took action.

Early in the 105th Congress the House passed similar legislation but it languishes before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee in the form of S. 1021. We wish to thank Senators Max Cleland (D-GA) and Charles Hagel (R-NE) for their support in introducing S. 1021. We will continue to work with and urge the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to take action on this important legislation.

We routinely receive inquiries for service-connected disabled veterans who are seeking federal employment. Many veterans inquire about employment opportunities, veterans' preference and VRA authority. They also want to know their rights and remedies under federal employment laws. We answer inquiries regarding dual compensation, retirement and health issues, federal employee's compensation for work-related injuries, transfers and promotions.

OPM has recently published the *VetsInfo Guide*, a handbook designed to help veterans understand the advantages they have earned regarding federal employment. *VetsInfo Guide* is a companion piece to *Vetguide*, a policy handbook designed for federal human resource managers that was issued in April 1997. This handbook explains to veterans various aspects of civil service employment. Topics include information on filling federal jobs, eligibility and applicability of veterans' preference, complaint procedures for veterans and job search information.

In addition to these hard copies, *VetInfo Guide* is also available on OPM's website at:

www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetinfo.htm. The *Vetguide*, which we sent to our National Service Offices last year, is also available at: www.opm.gov/employ/html/vets.htm.

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

We continue to receive an increasing number of complaints about the Postal Service's employment practices from our NSOs, disabled veterans, union representatives and others.

These complaints tend to reflect USPS' discriminatory practices and a lack of knowledge of veterans' laws. We initially try to resolve these complaints informally, a strategy that sometimes is successful. At other times we advise the veteran to file an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) complaint or appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB).

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

We continue to hold discussions with the SBA on providing direct loan assistance to veterans who wish to start their own business. We support direct loans for business start-ups, but we also believe that "set-asides" in the federal government contracting and procurement process must be made available to service-connected disabled veteran-owned businesses. The set-aside would be similar to that currently provided under the 8(a) Program for minority-owned businesses.

We receive and respond to inquiries from service-connected disabled veterans interested in starting their own business or getting federal contracts for existing veteran-owned businesses.

Assistance to veterans seeking business start-up aid includes putting them in touch with the local SBA office, which has a Veterans' Affairs Officer. Many veterans do not understand that the SBA does not offer direct loans, but they can obtain information and advice through the Veterans' Affairs Officers on the agency's loan guaranty process.

Many service-connected disabled veteran business owners applying for federal contracts are sometimes surprised to learn that they are not eligible as "8(a) contractors" or for any other special consideration. Certain minority-owned businesses that receive special consideration for contracts with federal departments and agencies are considered "8(a) contractors." These contracts are generally referred to as "set-asides" and are available to minority-owned businesses and are not let through the normal competitive process.

We advise those veterans that the DAV is working with the appropriate committees in Congress to establish a separate "set-aside" program for service-connected disabled veteran-owned businesses as well as a separate business loan program within the VA.

On June 26, 1998 a meeting was conducted with representatives of veterans' service organizations and advocacy groups, the SBA Administrator and several Associate Deputy Administrators. The purpose of the meeting was to allow the Administrator to show her commitment to promoting a viable veteran program at SBA.

Aida Alvarez, Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration, announced the establishment of a new veterans affairs task force to provide advice and recommend ways the agency can better serve the veteran-owned small business community.

Clifton Toulson, Jr., newly-appointed SBA Assistant Administrator for Veterans Affairs, said the task force "establishes a baseline for SBA to position itself as the leader in entrepreneurial development for veterans."

The task force is composed of representatives for the major veterans service organizations and veterans advocacy groups, veteran-owned businesses, SBA management board members and SBA resource partners. Task force members will examine all aspects of the agency's programs including business development, education and training, financial assistance, government contracting and advocacy. The objective is to determine ways to improve the delivery of SBA programs and services to veterans and make

recommendations on how these programs can better serve this group.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION PROGRAMS

The EEOC is the final administrative authority on all disability employment discrimination cases filed against federal departments and agencies. Under current law disabled veterans are not specifically identified as a covered group protected by anti-discrimination laws. However, if a disabled veteran meets the statutory definition of a person with a disability (most disabled veterans will meet that definition) and if any such disabled veteran believes he or she has been discriminated against, a complaint may be filed through the equal employment opportunity process. We have developed a positive relationship with one of the commissioners who continues to express interest that disabled veterans' rights are protected.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the EEOC receives, investigates and prosecutes disability civil rights complaints against nonfederal employees. We advise disabled veterans of their rights under that process.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

We monitor the aforementioned agencies' activities and programs, the *Congressional Record, Federal Register* and a myriad of other publications to keep abreast of changing laws, regulations and policies regarding disabled veterans. When appropriate, we respond to proposed regulations that may impact on veterans' employment and training programs.

When significant legislative, regulatory or policy changes are announced by these agencies, we notify our NSOs through bi-monthly Employment Bulletins and special reports. The *DAV Magazine* also reports on activities of the Employment Department.

NON-GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

We have been involved with numerous non-government entities interested in employment and training programs. These include the Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies, International Association of Personnel in Employment Security, National Organization on Disability, National Rehabilitation Association, and the Society for Human Resource Management (formerly the American Society of Personnel Administration).

In conclusion, I want to again thank everyone for their support and encouragement.

(The following annual written report was submitted by Mr. Joseph A. Violante, Deputy National Legislative Director.)

It is once again my privilege and pleasure to bring you another year's news about the legislative activities by the Disabled American Veterans on behalf of America's disabled veterans and their families. This year's report reveals some significant trends that every disabled veteran should be aware of. Before I highlight the year's events, however, let me acknowledge the role and contributions of those who participated in and lent invaluable support to our efforts this past year.

Legislation is a team effort. Working together, your DAV team was on the front lines of the legislative battle to advance the cause of disabled veterans. Let me therefore first express my sincere thanks to our National Commander, Harry McDonald, who was at the forefront of the struggle throughout the year and who persevered through a grueling legislative campaign. In our endeavors and trials, we were always carefully guided by National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson and the Executor Director of our Washington Headquarters, David W. Gorman. Thank you Art and Dave for your continued guidance and encouragement, and most of all for your unfailing support.

I must also give my personal thanks to my foot soldiers, Assistant National Legislative Director Rick Surratt, Associate National Legislative Director Dick Wannemacher, and National

Legislative Assistant Phil Ridley, for their hard work and devotion. Phil joined the legislative staff in November 1997, and, along with Rick and Dick, he has been constantly in the heat of battle this year. I would be remiss if I failed to mention the assistance we received from the DAV National Service and Legislative Headquarters support staff, especially Lisa Bogle, our Legislative Department secretary, for all the long hours they spent in getting our many mass mailings to Congress and the field in a timely manner.

Past National Commander Oliver Meadows has served as a mentor to all of us on the DAV Legislative Staff, and he has been in contact with us almost on a daily basis during some periods to support our strategies and offer his insight. Oliver brings to us the benefit of his extensive knowledge on the workings of Congress, and he communicates in plain-spoken, clear terms that cuts through the political smoke screen to the real fire of an issue. He always enlightens us in our legislative seminars in a way only he can. We owe Oliver our special thanks for all the valuable advice and assistance he provides the DAV.

One group we simply cannot thank enough is our National Service Officers. They have answered the call again and again this year. They have been heavily involved in our grassroots efforts this year, and they continually provide us with insight and assistance on legislative matters.

None of our efforts could succeed without the consistent backing and assistance of our grassroots lobbyists. We simply could not have any meaningful effect on legislation without our Benefits Protection Team, Department and Chapter Legislative Chairpersons, and Department and Chapter officers who provide the support that is absolutely essential to our efforts to protect our rights and benefits. We owe them an immense debt of gratitude for their work and perseverance. All of you who participated in our legislative campaigns this year deserve and have our thanks because every voice counts.

The DAV's principal mission is "to advance the interests and work for the betterment of all wounded, gassed, injured and disabled veterans." From the time the DAV was founded in 1920, our legislative program has been a central part of our advocacy for disabled veterans. We have a long and proud history of supporting reasonable, responsible legislation to assist disabled veterans and their families. We also have remained a staunch defender of veterans' rights and benefits during times when our programs were under attack. Unfortunately, I must report that the most prominent story in the last year was an unprecedented attack on the core benefit for veterans, disability compensation.

Because of the intensity and nature of that attack, this past year has been a time of exceptional challenge. It can be tagged as one of the most turbulent in recent history as far as veterans' benefits are concerned. Our benefits have been under siege, and our adversaries have not retreated. The fight continues today. Our future depends on how well we draw upon our common bonds and employ our solidarity to ward off the unceasing attacks on our programs.

This year, our compensation program became the target of politicians seeking a source for more money to fund increased spending on pork-barrel projects. Our compensation dollars were offered up as the prize or political spoils that would go to the victor in the contest to snatch our benefits to spend on their own pet projects. Even though a sense of honor and obligation to disabled veterans has restrained the majority of politicians from plundering veterans' programs for such ignoble purposes in the past, the temptation of the money in our compensation program proved too much for them this year. Overcome by that temptation, they abandoned the Nation's commitment to disabled veterans, broke through the traditional protective wall around veterans' programs, and in their rampage looted more than $15 billion from the funding set aside for disability compensation.

As I go through the course of this assault on disabled veterans, it is important for us to remain mindful that this shameful action was not perpetrated by faceless politicians from

some place other than your states. With few exceptions, this feeding frenzy was joined in by Senators and members of Congress from almost every state. It is therefore likely that your elected representatives that you elected and trusted to govern fairly participated in this unconscionable scheme. Therefore, it is entirely appropriate for you to take what they did personally and feel that they betrayed your trust. Indeed, if your Senators or House member took part in this robbery of service-connected disabled veterans, you should confront them with their actions at your next opportunity. Let them know that they cannot do something so objectionable to disabled veterans and expect to escape unscathed. Let them know that you, as their constituent and a voter, will hold them accountable for their misdeeds. Now, let us retrace the journey Congress took on this matter.

Although Congress took the action, the scheme was hatched by the Clinton Administration. In the fiscal year 1998 budget, the President proposed a change in law to prohibit service connection for disability or death that resulted in whole or in part from smoking of service origin. Congress took no action on the President's recommendation, however, because the President did not attribute any savings to the prohibition. The President's budget for fiscal year 1999 again included the proposal. The big difference this time was that his budget did indicate there would be savings from not paying compensation for smoking-related disabilities. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) projected a 5-year savings of $17 billion. The President planned to use these savings to pay for various initiatives, to be covered in his proposed "Funds for America" account. This large amount of money and its political potential immediately attracted the attention of Congress, however, who had a different priority for increased spending. As we will see, Congress stole the President's idea to get the money for its own agenda.

Although we had opposed the Administration's proposal to change the law for smoking-related disabilities in our testimony before Congress on the fiscal year (FY) 1998 budget, we intensified our opposition after the President submitted his FY 1999 budget to Congress on February 2, 1998. Because the projected $17 billion savings that would be generated by changing the law on veterans' compensation represented more than half of all of the savings from changes in spending in the entire Federal budget for FY 1999, the significance of this adverse proposal suddenly went well beyond the realm of veterans' programs. Realizing we were in for a serious fight on this matter, we included our opposition to this proposal prominently in our broader efforts to get more adequate funding levels for veterans' programs in the FY 1999 budget.

As a part of our budget campaign in conjunction with the three other veterans' organizations that collaborate to present the *Independent Budget* every year, we scheduled "Veterans' Town Meetings" in key locations with the idea of taking our coordinated effort to our grassroots to persuade Congress to provide adequate funding for VA. In late February 1998, before we could conduct our first Town Meeting in New Jersey, scheduled for March 7, 1998, we learned that the Senate leadership was eyeing the change in law on veterans' compensation as a way to pay for increased spending on the popular and widely supported transportation bill. We immediately wrote every member of the Senate urging them to vote against any legislation that contained this proposal. We elevated this issue to one of the primary areas of focus for our Town Meetings. We began educating veterans on the inequities of this scheme in the New Jersey Town Meeting, where more than 600 interested persons attended. We also activated a service with Western Union through which persons concerned about the inadequate veterans' budget and the smoking-related compensation issue could send prepared letters to their Senators and House members. We began running newspaper and radio ads urging veterans and other interested persons to contact their elected representatives to express their opposition to this attack on disabled veterans.

With the Senate considering this change in veterans' entitlements as a way to finance the highway bill, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) was called on to determine for

Congress how much the change would save. CBO recalculated the savings at a lower figure of $10.5 billion. In early March, responding to demands of a powerful coalition of Republicans and Democrats, the Senate passed a $214 billion transportation bill that exceeded the prior year's budget agreement by nearly $31 billion. Led by Committee Chairman Pete Domenici (R-N.M.), the Senate Budget Committee, on March 17, 1998, reported a Budget Resolution which included provisions to change the law on veterans' compensation to generate savings to fund the increased spending in the transportation bill. On March 21, we again put this issue at the forefront in our Town Meeting in Circleville, Ohio, which was attended by an estimated 600 persons. The following week, on March 28, we conducted our third Town Meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the home of Senator Domenici, where there was an audience of more than 300.

On March 31, 1998, our Washington Headquarters Executive Director, David W. Gorman, testified about smoking-related disabilities in a hearing on that issue before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. During the hearing, several members of the Committee expressed opposition to the move to take veterans' compensation to pay for highways.

The full Senate voted on the Budget Resolution on April 2, 1998. Senator John D. Rockefeller, IV (D-W.Va.), the Ranking Democratic Member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, offered an amendment to remove the veterans' provision from the Budget Resolution. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) and the Senate leadership pressed the members hard to vote against Senator Rockefeller's amendment, however. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 52 to 46, and the Budget Resolution passed the Senate with the objectionable provision included in it. On April 4,1998, we pressed our case on this issue during our fourth Town Meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana, where approximately 300 people attended. We continued our campaign at our Town Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, on April 25, 1998, where over 1,000 persons attended.

Our campaign against this measure then shifted to the House, where we, in the name of the DAV alone and as part of the *Independent Budget*, sent letters to every member urging their opposition to taking veterans' disability compensation to pay for pork-barrel transportation spending. Based on the customary process in which Congress passes a Budget Resolution as a general blueprint for all Federal spending for the year before passing bills that include spending on specific programs, we at first expected the House Budget Committee to take up the matter in its version of the Budget Resolution. However, because of political squabbling, work on the Budget Resolution in the House was lagging behind the work of the Conference Committee laboring to finalize the transportation bill. It became all too apparent that the entire Federal budget was taking a back seat to the pork-laden transportation bill. In addition to this departure from the proper budget process, the sheer momentum of the transportation bill caused Congress to deviate from the regular order of its proceedings in several respects.

For example, under budget rules, normally, a bill that increases spending must include in it the specific cuts in other programs that will offset the increase in spending. In a calculated political move, the congressional leadership had purposefully pushed the transportation bill through to passage without including provisions on where other spending would have to be cut to offset the increased spending on transportation programs. In fact, the House bill contained a sense of the Congress provision not to use veterans' funding for transportation. The House leadership had openly stated that the offsets from other programs would be added while the bill was being finalized in conference so they could avoid the possibility of having members vote against the bill because it required cuts in programs which the members might oppose or find politically unappealing. Although the Chairman of the House Transportation Committee, Bud Shuster (R-Pa.), denied it in a news release, the leadership planned all along to insert into the conference report provisions to take money from veterans'

compensation to cover the increased spending on transportation.

Normally, conference committees serve to iron out differences between the House versions and Senate versions of bills and are not permitted under the rules to add new provisions not passed by either chamber. Congress violated this rule in adding the veterans' provision to the transportation bill in the conference report, however. Here again, the congressional leadership wanted to avoid the proper process and the input of the public. They did not want to be subject to the desires of the electorate or the committee of jurisdiction, the Veterans' Affairs Committee. The House leadership also pushed through a rule waiving the point of order that could otherwise be raised against allowing transportation conferees to include veterans' legislation, which was not within their jurisdiction, in a transportation bill.

As I will discuss in a moment, some members who voted flatly against veterans on the votes that actually counted voted in our favor on purely symbolic matters and engaged in all manner of deception and charades to make it appear they supported veterans, while knowing full well that their ultimate actions would rob from veterans to pay for the bloated transportation bill. This was politics at its worst.

Preceding all this action in the House, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott called a meeting on May 6, 1998, between key Senators, such as Appropriations Committee Chairman Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), Budget Committee Chairman Pete Domenici, Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman John H. Chafee (R-R.I.), and the House Republican leadership to get agreement on the offsets for the transportation bill. The Senate leadership offered, and the House agreed to, the plan to cover most of the offsets by taking money from veterans. However, because the savings from the change in law on compensation would not have alone been enough to cover all of the massive increase in spending on transportation, the congressional leadership also targeted Medicare and other social service programs for small cuts to achieve the additional money needed. This encountered strong objections from state governors of both parties. Advocates for the poor complained about spending more on concrete at the expense of the poor. President Clinton threatened a veto if the bill forced cuts in high-priority domestic programs. Some of our friends in Congress actively opposed the scheme to fund transportation with veterans' money. For example, Congressman Lane Evans (D-Ill.), Ranking Democratic Member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, circulated a paper outlining his opposition to "Committing Highway Robbery of Veterans Benefits" to pay for new roads.

On May 15, 1998, we conducted a Town Meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. We again sent letters to every member of the House and Senate on May 15, 1998, telling them how this plan betrayed the disabled veterans of our Nation. However, on May 17, 1998, it was widely reported that Congressman Shuster and Senator Chafee, the leaders of the conference committee, had reached an agreement on offsets and other issues related to the bill. On May 18, the conferees reached an informal agreement that called for approximately $20 billion in offsets. While a dispute on whether to use CBO estimates or OMB estimates had been a major point leading Congress to shut down the Government in 1995, congressional leadership did a complete reversal and accepted the higher $17 billion estimate of OMB over the $10.5 billion estimate of savings by CBO to allow Congress to pay for most of the increased spending by using veterans' money and thereby avoiding the divisiveness of cutting other social programs that was sure to meet with opposition from the governors and a possible Presidential veto.

Of the $17 billion, Congress would use $15.5 billion for transportation which meant that over 75% of the excess spending on transportation would be paid for with veterans' money and use the remaining $1.5 billion for some improvements in veterans' programs to give the appearance of doing something good for veterans. It is true that the improvements to be made in veterans' programs were beneficial, but it must be remembered that Congress was only allowing veterans to have a falling crumb while they took most of the loaf for transportation. We must also remember that Congress

was not only not giving veterans anything additional, they were cannibalizing the compensation program to pay for what little improvements they were making. This action prompted us to go out to you with another call to action asking you to contact your Senators and Congressman.

Although the House leadership prevailed in adding the veterans' provision to the transportation bill via the conference report, they did not do so without objection from some of their concerned members and without any attempt to protect veterans from this ransacking of their benefits. On May 20, 1998, Congressman David R. Obey (D-Wis.), Ranking Democratic Member of the House Appropriations Committee, offered a motion to instruct the House conferees on the transportation bill to insist that no provision to prohibit or reduce service-connected disability compensation to veterans for smoking-related illnesses be included in the conference report on the transportation bill, H.R. 2400, to offset spending for highway or transit programs. Because this instruction was not binding on the conferees, it passed by a vote of 422-0. While Mr. Obey had good intentions, an overwhelming majority of House members eventually voted for the conference report with the veterans' provision included, and it unavoidably appears that many of them voted for what became simply a symbolic motion. The *National Journal's Congressional Daily* included this statement on the vote: "Aides said the vote will have no [e]ffect on the conference, calling it a 'free vote' to protect members against complaints by veterans." A *Washington Times* article quoted an arrogant statement on the vote as follows: "A Republican leadership aide said the vote was 'crocodile tears.' " These politicians not only betrayed disabled veterans, they insulted our intelligence by thinking that they could deceive us so easily.

The leadership of the DAV and several of the major veterans' organizations met personally with the Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), and several other Republican House members on May 21, 1998, to express strong opposition to the use of money from veterans' compensation to offset the increased spending on transportation.

Congressman Obey also attempted to have the veterans' provision removed from the conference report by offering a motion to recommit the conference report with instructions to remove the provisions that change the law on smoking-related illnesses of veterans. His motion was narrowly defeated by a vote of 195 to 190. After that loss, the House, on May 22, 1998, agreed to the conference report by a vote of 297 to 86 with 50 members not voting. On the same day, the Senate agreed to the conference report in a vote in which only five Senators voted against the report.

In the days immediately following the adoption of the conference report by both chambers, it was learned that the leadership had acted with such haste to stick the veterans' provisions in the conference report in the final drafting that the language contained flaws. These flaws were so serious they could jeopardize the Government's authority to spend the $17 billion. The bill was sent to the President for his signature, and he indicated he would sign it with the mistakes. The House quickly passed a technical corrections bill to fix the mistakes in the transportation bill. The Senate leadership was unable to get the bill passed by unanimous consent in an effort on June 2, 1998, however. Senator Rockefeller, Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.), and others were still opposing the veterans' provision in the transportation bill, and Senator Rockefeller vowed to offer an amendment to the technical corrections bill to rescind the veterans' provision from the transportation bill. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott made it known that he wanted to get the corrections bill passed before opposition to it grew further. Senator Lott declined to bring the bill to the floor, however, despite Senator Rockefeller's urging that he do so because Senator Lott was not confident the bill could be passed with growing opposition on the veterans' issue. Senator Lott, who was critical of Senator Rockefeller's efforts to right this wrong against veterans, vowed to find a way to get the technical corrections

through the Senate without Senator Rockefeller being able to offer his amendment. Meanwhile, we concluded our schedule of Town Meetings with one in the State of Washington on May 30, 1998.

The stalemate between Senator Rockefeller and Senator Lott continued to hold up passage of the corrections bill when President Clinton signed the transportation bill on June 9. The congressional leadership then attached the technical corrections bill to the immensely popular Internal Revenue Service (IRS) reform bill by way of the conference report, and the House voted to agree to the conference report. During consideration of the conference report for the IRS reform bill on the Senate floor on June 8, 1998, Senator Patty Murray (D-Wash.) raised a point of order on grounds that the conference committee exceeded its authority under the Senate's rules when it added the technical corrections bill to the conference report for the IRS reform bill. Her appeal of the chair's ruling against her point of order lost by a vote of 50 to 48. The following day, the Senate agreed to the conference report. Once again, disabled veterans were denied a full and open debate by a small majority of Senators.

Some of our friends in Congress are still looking for ways to undo this wrong against veterans. We certainly do not plan to forget this matter and give up. We will continue to raise the issue and press for reinstatement of the benefits taken away.

The improvements for veterans' programs in the transportation and technical corrections bills are as follows:

- a 20% increase in the Montgomery GI Bill education allowance
- an increase in the amount of the grant available to certain disabled veterans for purchasing or constructing specially adapted housing from $38,000 to $43,000 and an increase in the grant available to certain other disabled veterans for modifications of existing homes from $6,500 to $8,250
- an increase in the amount of the automobile allowance from $5,500 to $8,000
- a $50 monthly increase in the pension rate for veterans needing aid and attendance
- reinstated entitlement to DIC for spouses who became ineligible by reason of remarriage after the death of the veteran but thereafter terminated or had the marriage terminated by divorce or death
- extended the period (to include 1991 to 1996) during which payments of Special Separation Benefits qualify for reduction in the amount recouped from subsequent awards of VA compensation to account for amounts paid as Federal income taxes
- a 20% increase in the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance allowance (known as "Chapter 35" benefits)

The effective date for the increases in benefit amounts is October 1, 1998.

While our 7-month running battle on the smoking-related compensation and transportation bill issue consumed much time and effort, we were also involved in several legislative issues during that time and the other portion of the last 12 months. Let me now go back in time to pick up our major activities from the end of August 1997, after we returned from last year's National Convention, to July 1998 the end of coverage of this report.

In September 1997, we were nearing the end of the FY 1998 budget cycle and following congressional action on VA appropriations for FY 1998. At the same time, we were, among other things, also already working on DAV's portion of the *Independent Budget* for FY 1999 and pressing for enactment of legislation to

allow veterans to have Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) decisions reviewed on grounds of clear and unmistakable error (CUE).

Unable to pass appropriations for VA before October 1, 1997, which was the first day of FY 1998, Congress passed a continuing resolution funding VA and other Federal Departments through the middle of October 1998. Public Law 105-65, enacted on October 27, 1997, which authorized $40.438 billion for VA's FY 1998 budget, provided about $222 million more than the President requested in his budget. We avoided any additional cuts in veterans' programs.

On November 10, 1997, over the strong objections of VA, the Senate passed a bill earlier passed by the House which established the right to review of BVA decisions on grounds of clear and unmistakable error. The President signed this bill on November 21, 1997, and it became Public Law 105-111. We had a long-running effort to get this legislation passed to correct an inequity in existing law which gave veterans the right to request correction of regional office decisions on CUE grounds but not BVA decisions.

Public Law 105-98, enacted on November 19, 1997, provided a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC). This law provided for a 2.1% increase in these benefits, rounded down to the next lower whole-dollar amount, which was effective December 1, 1997.

On November 21, 1997, Public Law 105-116 was enacted to deny burial in a veterans' cemetery in the case of veterans convicted of Federal or state capital offenses. Out of concern that Timothy McVeigh might seek burial in a National Cemetery or Arlington, the Senate passed a bill which barred all veterans' benefits for veterans convicted of Federal capital crimes punishable by death. While we did not oppose denying burial in veterans' cemeteries to persons who have committed crimes against the Nation, we expressed our objection to the voidance of a veteran's earned rights because of crimes that occur after and are unrelated to service. We had testified on these matters before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee in June 1997. As a result, the House had passed a less objectionable bill, which the Senate agreed to and which was enacted as Public Law 105-116.

Also on November 21, 1997, Public Law 105-114, the Veterans Benefit Act of 1997, was enacted. This law contained a variety of improvements in existing veterans' programs, including among others extension of the expiration date for the Native American Home Loan Program and expansion of Persian Gulf War veterans' eligibility for medical care.

We have testified on and followed various other veterans' issues during the past 12 months. On September 18, 1997, we testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee on VA's Strategic Plan. Under law, VA was required to submit to Congress by September 30, 1997, its strategic plan for its program activities covering FY 1998 and at least the four fiscal years following. The Strategic Plan lays out the agency's "blueprint" for its program operations and its strategies for achieving its organizational mission. This document necessarily reveals a great deal about the agency's future direction, philosophies toward those it serves, how it intends to spend its money and use its resources, and what funding and resource levels it will need to fulfill its mission. The plan generally prescribed an overall direction and approach designed to improve VA's services to veterans and yet increase efficiency in the delivery of benefits and services. In some areas, the information was preliminary, and we reserved judgement on those aspects of the plan until VA develops more details on implementation. We generally approved of the goals and strategies of the plan, but cautioned that the plan would be no better than its execution. We urged Congress to provide VA the necessary support and resources to carry out and fully succeed in its efforts to improve VA's operations.

On September 25, 1997, we testified before the House Committee on Banking and Financial Services regarding plans to convert VA benefits checks to electronic funds transfers. During the hearing, we expressed our concern that electronic funds transfer may not work well for all veterans, for example, veterans who are homeless may have no bank. We supported the idea of legislation to exempt

veterans from the impending new requirements that Federal beneficiaries have a bank account into which their benefit checks can be deposited electronically.

Coinciding with the President's submittal of his proposed FY 1999 Federal budget to Congress, the DAV and the other co-authors released the *Independent Budget* for FY 1999. On February 12, 1998, we testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee on the President's proposed FY 1999 budget. We supported his proposal to provide a COLA for compensation and DIC to be effective on December 1, 1998. We also urged the Committee to consider several additional *Independent Budget* legislative proposals to improve veterans' benefits and programs. Of course, we stated our strong opposition to the Administration's proposal to change the law to prohibit service connection for smoking-related illnesses. We pointed to the inadequacy of the President's recommended funding and resources for the operations of the Veterans Benefits Administration. We urged Congress to provide higher amounts to support increased staffing to help VA improve its claims processing timeliness. We repeated several of the *Independent Budget* recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of VA's benefits delivery systems. Commander McDonald addressed these and other of DAV's legislative priorities and concerns in his forceful testimony before the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees on March 18, 1998.

On April 21, 1998, we testified before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee on benefits for veterans exposed to radiation. We outlined the difficulties radiation-exposed veterans experience getting health care and proving their claims for compensation. We pointed to such ongoing problems as the inexactness of the scientific data and knowledge on the health effects of radiation and the serious doubts about the accuracy of dose estimates for those exposed to radiation during military service. We supported legislation that would provide for a presumption of service connection in the case of any disease recognized, either on a statistical or scientific basis, to have a relationship to radiation exposure. We also supported a bill that would authorize VA medical care for veterans who were treated with nasopharyngeal radium.

On April 29, 1998, we submitted written testimony on the operations of the National Cemetery System (NCS) and American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC). We observed the pressing need for NCS to increase its availability of burial space to meet the projected increased demands and commented on the Strategic Plan of NCS. We reviewed with approval the work of the ABMC and its efforts in connection with establishing a memorial for World War II veterans.

On June 10, 1998, in response to DAV's request, the Benefits Subcommittee of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee conducted an oversight hearing on the operations of BVA and the Court of Veterans Appeals. We testified about BVA's reforms, improvements, and continuing problems. Among several areas of concern, we especially pointed to the high rate of reversal and remand by the Court as indicative of BVA's persistent quality problems. We called attention to the unnecessary and unacceptable delay that results from the Court's practice of granting VA attorneys multiple extensions of time for filing their briefs and other documents with the Court. We urged Congress to change the law to require the Court to review BVA's application of the "benefit of the doubt" rule and to simplify the meaning of "well-grounded claims" so veterans would not have the burdens they now have in the prosecution of their claims.

We testified on June 18, 1998, before the Benefits Subcommittee of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee regarding several provisions in a draft bill. This included a recommended COLA for compensation and related benefits. Several provisions in the bill were to improve VA's education program and its administration, and there were an assortment of changes to improve other programs for veterans. We opposed an amendment which would have permanently limited the amount of pension payable to certain veterans in nursing homes. We opposed changing the law to

designate BVA members as "veterans administrative law judges" because of the fundamental differences between judges and members of administrative boards such as BVA.

We have corresponded and met regularly with VA and have been continually involved in ongoing discussions about a wide range of issues related to the administration of VA health care. For example, we have focused on problems stemming from the restrictions on the medications and medical supplies VA provides under its policies and national formulary. We have commented on the efforts to refine VA health care enrollment procedures. We have called attention to increasing problems concerning VA's issuance of prosthetics and related funding shortfalls. We monitor VA's performance in these areas on an ongoing basis and call for action to correct problems as appropriate.

The unique problems of Persian Gulf War veterans continue to receive attention from Congress, the Administration, and various concerned groups. We have, through a variety of channels, provided input on ways to improve services to Persian Gulf veterans. We attended several Department of Defense briefings on Gulf War illnesses, reviewed and commented on proposed legislation that would provide for presumption of service connection for disabilities resulting from exposure to toxins, and met with the other veterans' organizations to coordinate our advocacy for Persian Gulf veterans.

As we near the end of the 105th Congress, we will continue to press for passage of legislation beneficial to disabled veterans. Legislation on several areas of interest to us is currently pending before Congress:

- H.R. 44 would provide partial relief from the current offset between military retired pay and VA disability compensation by establishing three levels of "special pay" with the highest level paid to 100% service-connected veterans, the intermediate level paid to 90% service-connected veterans, and the lower level paid to 70% and 80% service-connected veterans in addition to their VA compensation

- H.R. 65 would remove or reduce the offset between military retired pay and VA compensation under a formula that awards full compensation and full retired pay to a retired member who is 100% service connected, and in the case of retired members with less than 100% service-connected disability, awards full compensation and retired pay reduced by the amount which represents the percentage of remaining ability multiplied by the rate of compensation; for example, a retired member with a service-connected disability rated 10% would receive the full compensation payable for the 10% disability and would receive retired pay reduced by an amount which is 90% of the compensation payable for the 10% disability; a retired member with service-connected disability rated 20% would receive the full compensation payable for the 20% disability and retired pay reduced by an amount which is 80% of the compensation payable for the 20% disability; and a retired member with service-connected disability rated 30% would receive the full compensation payable for the 30% disability and retired pay reduced by an amount which is 70% of the compensation payable for the 30% disability, and so on with the reductions in retired pay decreasing proportionate to the decreasing percentage of remaining ability up to full compensation for disability rated 90% and retired pay reduced by an amount which is 10% of the compensation payable for the 90% disability

- H.R. 303 would completely remove the existing offset between longevity military retired pay and VA compensation and permit full concurrent receipt of both benefits

- H.R. 1426 would provide for presumption of service connection for veterans exposed to cold weather during

military service who suffer from residuals of cold-weather injuries

- H.R. 2050 would extend commissary and exchange privileges to veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 30% or higher and their dependents

- H.R. 2224 would extend commissary and exchange privileges to service-connected disabled veterans and their dependents

- H.R. 2679 would restore Memorial Day to May 30th

- H.R. 3072 would allow VA to reimburse veterans enrolled in the VA health care system for the cost of emergency medical care in private facilities

- H.R. 3279 would provide for the presumption of service connection of any disability that is associated with toxic agents or environmental hazards of the Persian Gulf War

- H.R. 3434 would permit concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA compensation for certain disabled retired members who are over 65 years of age

- H.R. 3653 would require that honor guards be provided by the military departments for veterans' funerals

- H.R. 3828 would provide for Medicare reimbursement for the treatment of veterans' disabilities under certain circumstances

- H.R. 3980 would extend VA's authority to treat the illnesses of Persian Gulf War veterans and make other related changes

- H.R. 4016 would provide permanent authority for home loans to former members of the Selected Reserves

- H.R. 4027 would expand the retroactive period for which accrued benefits may be paid to eligible survivors of VA beneficiaries

- H.R. 4035 would require concurrence of the President in waiving the requirement of informed consent from military members who are administered experimental drugs

- H.R. 4036 would provide certain presumptions of service connection for veterans who served in the Persian Gulf War and other related changes

- S. 162 would authorize space-available air travel on military aircraft for 100% service-connected disabled veterans

- S. 657 is the Senate version of H.R. 303, which would authorize the concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA compensation

- S. 999 would set certain standards for providing VA mammograms

- S. 1320 would require VA to assess the nature of the association between illnesses and exposure to toxic agents and environmental hazards in the Persian Gulf

- S. 1385 would expand the list of diseases for which service

connection may be presumed on the basis of radiation exposure during service

- S. 2054 would authorize Medicare reimbursement for the cost of veterans' medical care in certain circumstances

- S. 2273 would provide a COLA for compensation and DIC

- S. 2278 would exclude veterans' educational benefits from consideration in determining need for financial aid

With this information, I hope I have illustrated the contour of our legislative landscape. Because we must depend in part on the goodwill of politicians and are subject to their whims and caprice, our legislative landscape is rocky and has mountains and valleys in the best of times. Unfortunately, current trends suggest we are in a valley. This year we have not had enough friends in Congress to fully protect our programs from our enemies, let alone reach any legislative summits. Because politics is driven by a complex of contradictory motives, congressional actions do not always correspond to the merits of the issue, and it is therefore difficult to get a conclusive read on the question of whether Congress' action on the transportation bill signifies a decline in support for veterans or simple overwhelming political greed, or both. What is clear is that, if we can call this the year of challenge, we can also say that it should be a time of awakening for all disabled veterans. If we were not fully aware of the vulnerability of veterans' causes in times of political distractions, other causes, or mere indifference toward the plight of disabled veterans and their deserved rights, we should have been startled into the reality of the harsh political climate of today's world. It is not encouraging that we are about to enter a new millennium with so many old struggles still lingering, but it should be a sobering revelation that we still face the same basic types but perhaps a greater degree and complexity of challenges that compelled DAV's birth 78 years ago and subsequent emergence as the voice of America's war disabled. There is an old saying that "adversity builds character." Certainly, we built character this year. If DAV was born out of adversity, it to some degree lives out of adversity, and the special bonds that brought us together under circumstances of common need in 1920 hold us together in a climate of extreme challenge today. We are motivated by the purity of our cause, and our strength derives from our quest for justice and is expressed in our unified, coordinated action. Make no mistake, however, this year has shown that we must reinforce our defenses and strengthen our resolve more than ever. One of the ways we can do that is to ensure we as disabled veterans are ***registered and vote.***

With all of the uncertainties about the level of support for veterans among our elected representatives, it is nonetheless clear that many of those in Congress who abandoned us this year did so only after a conscious and calculated political choice. The congressional leadership subscribed to the cynical and mercenary philosophy that self-interest and greed drive the motivations of the electorate. With that reasoning, they decided they could gain the most political favor by bringing home the bacon and catering to the moneyed interests such as the highway lobby. We fought on high moral ground, on principle and justice, but the real merits of the issue did not matter to them. Those who abandoned us in favor of pork-barrel politics, those who took $15.5 billion from the veterans' disability compensation program to pay for over-budget spending on transportation programs, those that chose to vote for highways and against veterans, did so because they believed that veterans would not take much notice and would not hold them accountable on election day. They thought they could gain more political capital with the voters by giving them new highways to stand as concrete testaments and monuments to the fact that they

were working for their constituents back home. Politicians are preoccupied with getting reelected, and they often choose that over doing what is right. Therefore, because they judged the proponents of and interests associated with highways stronger than veterans in the sense of who could benefit them or harm them in future elections, they abandoned veterans.

It is clear, as veterans alone, we no longer have the respect of politicians. They respond not necessarily to what is right and just, but often to who has the most clout. If we are to have their respect, we must have the political clout to compete with other interests such as highways. We cannot gain their favor with large political contributions like the highway construction lobby. Therefore, every one of us must register and vote. The essence of our representative democracy is that we elect people to represent our interests. We do not elect them to support the political goals and aspirations of the national leadership of their party. Because they hold their political office only by virtue of our choice to elect them and only to represent our interests, if they do not vote for us in Congress, we should not vote for them in the next election. If they know we do not vote, they have no incentive to represent our interests over those of others that do vote, however. They did not listen on the transportation bill. We will never be able to make them listen unless they know we will hold them accountable on election day. That is why it is imperative that all disabled veterans register and vote. That is why DAV's leadership has decided to spearhead a new campaign to encourage all disabled veterans to register and vote. If you are not registered to vote, register now and vote in the upcoming election. All members of the House and a third of the Senate are up for reelection in November.

Just as our focus on the future must include sound legislative goals, it must also include plans to increase veterans' participation in the election process to ensure that we elect representatives who will appreciate and vote in Congress to ensure we accomplish those goals. I therefore take this opportunity to not only urge you to register and vote, but I also want to enlist your assistance in our DAV voter registration drive. Please contact us if you want to be a part of the effort.

I have covered some detailed areas, the good and the bad, as well as our future direction. Let me close with the big picture. I am happy to report that our legislative program remains focused and is on sound footing. We will continue to keep our ear low to the ground to hear what the murmurs and rumbling from Capitol Hill and the Administration are telling us. While we may have to tailor our actions to the immediacy of the moment, we will never allow that or temporary setbacks to divert or distract us from our ultimate course. Our primary objectives will always dictate our long-term approach. We will persist, we will persevere, and we will prevail. Lasting structures require foundations. DAV is an enduring structure because it is built on a strong and honorable foundation. We continue to learn from the past and strengthen our platform for the future. The DAV legislative team the DAV leadership, the DAV legislative staff, and all of you is well prepared to meet the challenges that the future will undoubtedly spring upon us. We will always make it through the valley to again climb those mountains on the horizon. So, let us continue our unique fraternity and celebrate our past triumphs while we work diligently to meet our future challenges. We are resolved to succeed, and we will.

Report closed July 15, 1998

COMMANDER McDONALD: At this time, I'd like to introduce the Deputy National Service Director for Employment, Tony Baskerville, for the presentation of Awards and Employment Awards. (Applause)

MR. ANTHONY L. BASKERVILLE: Good afternoon. Commander, Donald E. Patton, has been selected for this year's Commander's Award for the Outstanding Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist. Mr. Patton served in the United States Army for nearly 30 years before retirement in August of 1989.

He joined the Washington Department of Employment Security, and he became a disabled veterans outreach program specialist in October of 1989, working directly with veterans through the Job Service Center at McChord Air Force Base. Mr. Patton helped establish a close working relationship with most of the small and large employers in the area and obtained exclusive referral agreements. His office contacts more than 1,000 employers each year.

Don was also instrumental in establishing the first Veterans Job Fair at McChord Air Base, which attracted 26 employers and more than 800 applicants. Mr. Patton also provided leadership in the creation of the one of the first Air Force Transition Assistance Programs at McChord. The program has become a showcase for the Air Force and is offered as an example of the ideal transitional program.

Mr. Patton created the Desert Storm Job Fair, which has attracted more than 1500 people. In addition, he has helped coordinate four major job fairs each year, attracting more than 6,000 veterans and 150 employers.

Mr. Patton helped coordinate the Year of the Veteran Job Placement Program, which obtained proclamations of support from mayors, military commanders, veterans organizations, and 43 governors pledging their support for this event.

Unfortunately, due to illness, Mr. Patton could not be here with us today, but here to represent him and the office is his office manager, Marie Brillante. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD:

> The Disabled American Veterans proudly recognizes the contributions made by Donald Patton for your outstanding accomplishments and dedication in assisting disabled veterans obtain employment and training opportunities, and for your contributions to the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program. August 23, 1998.

Signed, Harry R. McDonald, Jr., National Commander; Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant; and David W. Gorman, Executive Director, Washington Headquarters.

Please give that to Mr. Patton with our heartfelt thanks.

MS. MARIE BRILLANTE: Thank you very much. Commander McDonald, distinguished officers and wonderful convention delegates of the DAV: Greetings to you all from the State of Washington, more specifically from Pierce County, where we house Fort Lewis, McChord Air Force Base and American Lake Veterans Hospital.

My name is Marie Brillante, the administrator for the Job Service Center in Pierce County. We served over 29,000 veterans last year, and over 15,000 of them were disabled veterans.

It is with great pride that I accept this award for Don, the nation's Outstanding Employee of the Disabled American Veterans Outreach Program, or DVOP, of the Year. Don, as Tony said, is unable to join us today because his doctor recommended that he not travel very far. Don had asked me -- and I'm very honored that Don was the one who had asked me -- to accept the award in his place.

It took me a while, of course. You know, a pang of conscience, and I just didn't know whether I wanted to go to Las Vegas or not, have a nice trip. But this has turned out to be a beautiful experience, and I've had a chance to meet some of you and talk with some of you over the last several days. And thank you. It's very nice meeting you all.

Don, having served with the Army for over 30 years, retired as a command sergeant-major. He spent 23 years of his service in Europe and in Southeast Asia. He has worked for Employment Security or Job Service since 1988. He's fostered great relationships with the command and the staff at McChord Air Force Base, and he was instrumental in housing a Job Service Center operation directly on the base.

In fact, we are the only Job Service Center in the country, that I'm aware of, that has staff assigned on all our military installations: Fort Lewis, McChord and American Lake.

We are hoping that the national attention the DAV gives to our veterans, especially disabled veterans, will help to educate Congress on the importance of continuing to give meaningful funding

for veterans service programs and the Public Employment Service. The Public Employment Service was founded in 1933 by Franklin Roosevelt. It was primarily founded to help veterans find jobs. For those of you old enough to remember, this was the aftermath of the Great Depression and the aftermath of all the war years, the First World War.

Through the years, funding has continued to decline, and the veterans programs are in jeopardy of losing their funding, as David Gorman so eloquently stated to you all.

I am personally vested in veterans programs. My dad was a Filipino scout and a guerrilla, and then a member of the U.S. Army. He served for over 30 years before he retired. My brother was a West Point graduate, and he served and led as an Airborne Ranger, a recon unit in Vietnam. I also had a shot at having some experience. I joined the Army Reserves and was on reserve duty for six years.

We sincerely thank you again. (Applause) Thanks.

I'd like to especially thank Melanie Branch and Tony Baskerville for all their help and support. And I want to thank you all again for honoring Don. And in fact, I have a picture of him. I don't know if you can all see this picture, but Don's here in spirit, and he thanks you all, and we thank you all. (Applause)

MR. BASKERVILLE: Mr. Commander, this year's electee for the Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative is Wayne H. McCoy. Mr. McCoy has demonstrated exemplary individual service to veteran clients of the Temple, Texas local office of the Texas Workforce Commission. He has been cited for his exemplary individual service to veterans, exceptional leadership in managing and motivating others to serve veterans, interaction with employers, and his active involvement with the veteran employment community.

He was responsible for office activities that have resulted in 96 percent of disabled veterans reporting positive services, 31 percent disabled veterans finding jobs, and 68 percent of disabled veterans referred to jobs.

Serving as the functional supervisor of veterans services for the local office, Mr. McCoy energized and helped the staff to put veterans first in all office practices. These activities included hands-on training, mentoring co-workers, and close monitoring of service delivery to identify successful practices.

Mr. McCoy's efforts are clearly illustrated in the office's success in exceeding all mandated veteran performance standards and in the priority given to veterans: veterans, Vietnam Era veterans and veterans with disabilities. More than two-thirds of veterans who sought employment placement received referrals, and those placed received higher average wages than nonveterans.

Mr. McCoy and his staff created a weekly veterans briefing which serves as a workshop to help recently separated veterans and other vets new to the area become acquainted with the local job market. Mr. McCoy also coordinates the local VA medical center's VA Exit Unit Program, which provides outreach assistance to those being released from care.

Mr. McCoy has been cited for being the cornerstone of the veterans service at his office which ranks seventh out of 200 offices in Texas. He not only supervised the efforts, but challenged the staff to reach new heights by setting in place innovative direct services.

Commander, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure at this time to introduce to you the Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative of the Year, Wayne H. McCoy, and his office manager, Kimberly Patterson. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD:

> Disabled American Veterans proudly presents the National Commander's Award to the nation's Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative, Wayne H. McCoy, for your outstanding dedication and distinguished employment assistance to our nation's service-connected disabled veterans and other veterans. August the 23rd, 1998.

Signed, Harry R. McDonald, Jr., National Commander; Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant; and David W. Gorman, Executive Director,

Washington Headquarters. (Applause)

MR. WAYNE H. McCOY: I know you all have been here a long time, but thank you, Commander McDonald, and your staff here, and all of you delegates. I want to at least personally thank you for your support, because the disabled veterans are such a vital part of this partnership, and you've all been so friendly in the few days that I've been here to see you. And I wish the other people on our staff could see all of these veterans.

And I hope disabled veterans in my area will come to see us, and if you know some in Texas, tell them they need to see their veterans representatives. The best thing that we can do for anybody is to help them get a job where they can pay their own way. And I've enjoyed my career. Some of you have had careers that you enjoy, and you know what that is.

I'm really grateful to my right hand here, my boss. That's not easy either. It's not easy for any placement or employment staff to understand what we're up against and what we're trying to do to serve veterans. And I never have to draw my boss a picture. So I'm very grateful to her for being here.

I did kind of think on the way up here, riding in an airplane, "What are you doing at the DAV convention, Wayne? You're not a disabled veteran." And I have two great disabled veterans outreach people on my staff. Both of them served many years. One of them's retired military. They're both veterans of Desert Storm, and I thank them.

But I got to thinking that when I was growing up and playing with my toys, there were men dying on that beachhead in Normandy. And so I'm very thankful that I'm here to work and live in this country. But I never had to face the enemy in combat. I'm not a disabled veteran. I'm not a retired military veteran.

But I did something in these last 20 years. I've helped put a lot of veterans to work. I've seen a lot of them provide for their families. (Applause) Thank you. And not only do they have a job, but they've come home.

So thank you for allowing me this moment of glory. (Applause)

MS. KIMBERLY PATTERSON: Thank you, Commander McDonald and the delegates of the Disabled American Veterans. From Central Texas, we extend a big Texas thank you for the wonderful visit that we've had here in Las Vegas and for this wonderful award. Central Texas is home of Fort Hood, Texas, the largest free world military installation. And we take pride daily in serving our veterans. And we extend the invitation to any of you, if you're ever in the Central Texas area, please come in and visit with us. And let me give a great big thank you to Wayne McCoy. He is by far the best local veterans employment representative in the state and, as you've shown us today, in the nation. He takes pride in serving that veteran, and he believes 200 percent in the need for that employer to recognize the benefit of hiring that veteran and that disabled veteran.

So again, thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. BASKERVILLE: Commander, this year's electee as the Small Employer of the Year is Lear Siegler Services, Incorporated. Lear Siegler Services, Incorporated has developed close relationships with the Job Service of Florida, local veterans employment representatives, and the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program to actively recruit disabled and Vietnam veterans for employment.

Veterans represent the primary source of qualified applicants for positions with the aircraft maintenance and aviation training services company based at Whiting Field Naval Air Station in Milton, Florida. "The unique blend of veterans and nonveterans have combined to form a highly effective team of employees who excel in all they do," the company said. "Pride and professionalism are clearly evident in the veterans."

Lear Siegler said the veterans working for their company clearly demonstrate leadership abilities. Through its recruitment program, 96 percent of the management, foreman, lead-man and supervisor positions are veterans. Nineteen of the company's 207 employees are disabled veterans.

On behalf of Lear Siegler, Mr. Commander, Paul Stelzner, their personnel manager was here to accept the award for this company.

However, I understand that a hurricane might be going through Florida, and he had to go back and move some airplanes. But he sends his apologies for not being able to stay.

COMMANDER McDONALD: If I might, I hunted on the area that's now Whiting Field in Milton. I'm from that area. And it's great for them to receive an award.

MR. BASKERVILLE: At this time, I would like to show you a brief video.

(Video presentation.)

MR. BASKERVILLE: Mr. Commander, here with us today to receive the Outstanding Large Employer of the Year Award is a former marine, combat veteran with two tours in Vietnam, recipient of two Purple Heart Medals, and my friend, Mike Noa. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD:

> Disabled American Veterans National Commander's Award is presented to the Outstanding Large Employer of the Year, Bell Atlantic, for conspicuous and meritorious effort in providing employment opportunities for disabled veterans; further, that such consistent and noteworthy efforts will serve as an inspiration and challenge to other employees. August the 23rd, 1998.

Harry R. McDonald, Jr., National Commander; Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant; David W. Gorman, Executive Director, Washington Headquarters. (Applause)

MR. MICHAEL S. NOA: Good afternoon. On behalf of Bell Atlantic, thank you for this award. The idea of hiring veterans isn't new to Bell Atlantic. Even though this program began less than ten years ago in 1990, I was hired in 1971. Other veterans have been hired before me, and certainly more follow.

The Borden Avenue Project is an extension of an idea we have practiced for many years. Opportunity feeds desire. When the two come together, much can be accomplished. New York Telephone, NYNEX, now Bell Atlantic, continues to embrace this idea. We recognize and celebrate diversity of ideas and of people, and in this case particularly veterans is what makes a successful company.

At Bell Atlantic, we have a highly skilled and motivated work force where everyone is value and adds value. Veterans who came to Bell Atlantic through the Borden Avenue Project are a perfect example of how valuing the diversity of individuals can contribute to the success of a corporation and success of those individuals. And that's the message we gladly share.

As a veteran, I am honored to be here. As an employee of Bell Atlantic, I am proud of what we've accomplished. For those of you who wonder how you can make a difference, please simply share the Bell Atlantic example in your circles of influence. When people say it can't be done, simply reply, "Oh, yes, it can, and it has."

On behalf of our chairman, Ivan Seidenberg, the Bell Atlantic family, again we say thank you. (Applause)

MR. BASKERVILLE: Mr. Commander, I forgot to add that Mike is also a life member of the DAV. (Applause)

Commander McDonald, this concludes my portion of the program. I thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Our next speaker is a past national commander who distinguished himself during the 1983-84 term and continues to represent the finest attributes of the DAV. A highly respected leader and abiding friend to disabled veterans and their families, he is the president of the board of the DAV Vietnam Veterans National Memorial at Angel Fire, New Mexico, and has commendably led the affairs of the Memorial since 1986.

The Memorial at Angel Fire reflects our loss and grief for those who died in war. It offers the prayer for peace in all of us and reflects a promise of hope for America's future.

Join me now in a warm welcome for Past National Commander and DAV Vietnam Veterans National Memorial President Dennis A. Joyner. (Applause)

MR. DENNIS A. JOYNER: Thank you, Commander. National Commander Harry McDonald, National Adjutant Art Wilson, distinguished guests, fellow members of the DAV and friends: As I begin my remarks today, first I would like to introduce the DAV members who, with me, make up the Board of Directors of the DAV

Vietnam Veterans National Memorial. They are Enid Zysk from Virginia, as vice-president. I believe they're all sitting over here to my left, your right.

Al Linden, the secretary-treasurer. Al is not with us here today. I've had many people ask me about Al. He is doing fine from his surgery, and I can report to you that he was scheduled to be back in the office today. He serves as our secretary-treasurer of the board.

Also there's Hector Salgado from New Mexico and Mike Terry from Colorado.

Our Board of Directors is a worthy team, and I commend them for enhancing the success of the Memorial's mission this past year.

Let me also thank the staff who keep our program going and growing, both on the ground in Angel Fire and at the DAV National Headquarters in Cincinnati. The Memorial's business matters are handled at National Headquarters by Charitable Programs Director Nancy O'Brien. A dedicated Auxiliary member and an exceptionally able administrator, Nancy is a blessing to both the Memorial and to me as president. Manager of our operations on site in Angel Fire is Butch Farley. Butch is a Vietnam combat veteran and also a DAV member.

Bringing you up to date on what's happening at the Memorial, I'm pleased to report generous doses of successes, both in activity and in progress. A real highlight for me was the unusual twist in this year's Memorial Day program. Instead of a keynote speaker, our observance this year featured the play, "Carved in Stone," presented by the Grafton, Virginia High School Historical Drama Theater Group.

Recreating scenes observed at the Vietnam Veterans Wall in Washington, D.C., the play is rightly described as "a healing journey that forces one to remember things the mind forced out years ago." This performance had real power, commanding a profound response from its viewers.

Also powerful was a Charles Kuralt segment entitled "An American Monument" and filmed shortly before Mr. Kuralt passed away. When the piece aired, it did much to increase awareness of the Memorial, and its message became even more potent thanks to the narration in the rich and powerful voice of James Earl Jones.

Visiting the Memorial must have had a profound impact on Mr. Kuralt's cinematographer, Ray Bribieska. A three-tour combat photographer, he donated his slides and negatives to the Memorial, as well as other artifacts he had collected.

Another priceless gift was Robert Sawyer's donation of rare photography of Operation Homecoming, which is now on display in the POW/MIA exhibit.

A sculpture of the bound hands of a prisoner of war, created by Paul Burge and James Anderson, has also been dedicated in honor of all veterans and their families.

Finally, I'm pleased by several donations to our exhibit on women veterans, as well as the addition of a hundred biographies to our collection of material on the war's honored dead.

The Memorial also advanced its mission of building awareness of wartime sacrifices by hosting numerous groups of students, Scouts from the nearby Philmont Scout Ranch, meetings of professional groups, all in addition to our normal operations.

That's what's new. But now let me briefly talk about our ongoing operation for those of you who are just getting to know about the Memorial and its work.

Central to our mission is an educational kiosk in the visitors' center. This kiosk provides access to film footage, photos and historical news coverage of the Vietnam War. Every day it plants the seeds of greater appreciation of the Vietnam War, its veterans and the continuing effect of the war in our society today.

In addition to all of our displays, which really bring the war experience home for the visitors, we have a video projection room where we are showing a moving film on Vietnam veterans and the Memorial.

Probably, though, what's most important to veterans and their families is the contemplative environment of the Memorial Chapel and the stunning mountain beauty in which the Memorial is set.

The most powerful part of our mission is providing a place where these veterans and families can seek to heal the psychic and spiritual wounds of war. This is why I feel there is no exaggeration when I call this place a special sacred ground. Sacred it is. Sacred to me, to thousands of veterans, and to all of our families.

Thank you. (Applause)

I've been approached by different individuals here, you know, at the convention, who have asked me about making contributions to support the Memorial's mission, and at this time, if there are any of those that wish to come forward, we would accept those donations.

MEMBER: Mr. Joyner, as you know, three years ago the Department of Virginia tried to implement and establish an Endowment Fund. And I am privileged to, on behalf of the members of the Department of Virginia, to present to you this check in the amount of $10,000.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: Dennis, another Virginia chapter was a little too late to get in on the $10,000 check, so we'll give their's separately and a little bit other. Archer T. Gammon Chapter 19 in Danville, Virginia has asked me to present you with this $500 check in honor of an individual who's worked very hard for the DAV, the Department of Virginia, his chapter, and national organization, Bill Wiggins.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MR. TAFT YATES: Taft Yates, Department of Kansas. On behalf of the Department of Kansas chapters, we present a check in the amount of $500 to the Memorial.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: Dennis, on behalf of Chapter 16 in Prescott, Arizona, I'd like to present this donation of $5,000 to the Memorial.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: Mr. Joyner, out of Shreveport-Bossier Chapter 30, through the dedication and hard work of the veterans down there through their weekly bingo sessions, it's an honor to give you this check for $3,000.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: On behalf of Murphy Borelli Chapter in Denver, Colorado, we present a check for $2,000. Thank you.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MR. JOHN F. ROETS: John Roets, commander, Chapter 4, Wichita, Kansas, a check for $500.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MR. JIM W. McCARTER, SR.: Mr. Joyner, I'm not Charlie Luttjohann. I want to get the record straight for all you people out here that think I'm Charlie. I'm Jim W. McCarter, Sr., department commander of North Carolina. We have a check here on our pledge, as payment on our pledge, to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

MR. JOYNER: A check for a thousand dollars. Thank you very much.

MEMBER: Mr. Joyner, on behalf of the members of St. Louis Chapter Number 1, I present you this check for a thousand dollars to the DAV Vietnam Memorial.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you.

MEMBER: Mr. Joyner, on behalf of South Dakota, Sioux Falls Chapter Number 1, I wish to give you this check for $100; also, the Department of South Dakota, a check for $250.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: Mr. Joyner, on behalf of the Department of Illinois, a check for $5,100.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: Mr. Joyner, on behalf of the members in the Department of Missouri, I'd like to present you with a check for $200, and thank you very much.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you.

MEMBER: Comrade Joyner, on behalf of the members of the Department of Maryland, I'd like to present this check for $1,000.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you kindly.

MEMBER: Commander Joyner, on behalf of the members of Tri-County Chapter 67, the home of Andy Kistler, I'm proud to present you with a check for $500.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you.

MEMBER: Dennis, it gives me great pleasure to present you a check for $1,000 from the Department of California.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: Dennis, it also gives me great pleasure to present you with a check for $500 from the membership in Chapter 23, California.

MR. JOYNER: Thanks, Bruce.

MEMBER: Mr. Joyner, on behalf of Staff Sergeant William L. Hill, Chapter 87 from Leesburg, Florida, it gives me great pleasure to present this check for $200 to you.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: On behalf of the Department of Oregon, I would like to donate $200.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MR. DAVID ORTIZ: David Ortiz. On behalf of San Jacinto Chapter Number 1, we have a check for you for $250. God bless you.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MR. WALTER WESSING: Mr. Commander, Past National Commander Dennis Joyner, I'm back again, and I've got to pay some cents. We've got to pay taxes on this damn thing, so here's 50 cents taxes. And I've got to autograph this for you.

MR. JOYNER: What state are you from? I might want to move there --

MR. WESSING: The show-me state.

MR. JOYNER: -- if it's only 50 cents in taxes.

MR. WESSING: Walter Wessing, Kansas City, Missouri. This comes from the bottom of my heart, nobody else. So I've got to autograph it. I want you to autograph this for me. Here's a hundred dollars plus a hundred and one. And you've got 50 cents more to make it a hundred and two dollars. (Laughter)

MR. JOYNER: Walter Wessing from Missouri. Thank you, Walter. Thank you very much. Walter has donated $103 in cash. Thank you.

MR. RICCIARDI: Mr. Joyner, I'm the Department of New York commander, Anthony Ricciardi. I'd like to donate $1,000 to the Memorial.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

I want to thank each and every one of you for your donations here today and your past support of the Memorial.

JUDGE ADVOCATE EDWARD G. GALIAN: One more. Ed Galian personal, $100.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you. I thank all of you. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: The Chair will entertain a motion to approve the president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial's report. Mike 3.

MR. CLAUDE A. NELSON: This is Claude Nelson from Chapter 47 in New York. I make a motion to accept the fine report. Thank you.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. Do I hear a second to the motion? Mike 1.

MR. DON L. HARTPENCE: Comrade Commander, Don Hartpence, commander of Chapter 87, Leesburg, Florida, seconds.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. We have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried.

We'll now hear the report of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, Tom Daley, chairman.

MR. THOMAS J. DALEY: This is the report for the national convention committee chairman, Committee on Constitution and Bylaws. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen of the 77th DAV National Convention.

Comrade Commander McDonald, National Adjutant Wilson: The National Convention Committee on Constitution and Bylaws was called to its first order of business on August 24th, 1998 by the Committee Advisors Fred Bristol from Florida and Dick Sarrasin of Texas. The first order of business was the election of the convention committee chairman. Thomas J. Daley was nominated for

chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed, and Thomas J. Daley was elected chairman.

The next order of business was the nomination and election of a secretary. Dick Sarrazin was nominated and elected as the secretary of the committee.

This is the first reading. I will read it only once. There will be no voting today. The committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted, and I will report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption by this National Convention. For the purpose of saving time, I will read only the number and the RESOLVED portions of the resolution.

Resolution Number 217

RESOLVED to amend the indicated sections of the National Bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans by adding or omitting text as follows: Article 9, Chapters, Section 9.2, Paragraph 1, to add the following sentence thereto: "Appointed officers shall serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority."

As you know, this is already covered in our Constitution and Bylaws under the state department. What we're doing is just added appointed officers shall serve at the pleasure of the appointing power in the chapters.

Resolution 218. Resolution recommended by the Interim Committee and Bylaws Committee and proposed to the Convention Constitution and Bylaws Committee for submission to the National Convention.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the National Headquarters be directed to revise the Ritual of the Disabled American Veterans to remove antiquated usages and references and to modernize its language.

What we mean by that is references that clear up the usages and reference in exceeding preference and usages in the Interim Committee Bylaws.

Resolution Number 219. Resolution recommended by the Interim National Constitution and Bylaws Committee and proposed to the Convention Constitution and Bylaws Committee for submission to the National Convention.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the National Headquarters be directed to revise the Official Ritual of the Disabled American Veterans to render it gender neutral, except where prohibited by law or to ensure historical accuracy.

That's another housekeeping that we're looking into, and that will take place also.

Resolution Number 220.

RESOLVED to amend the indicated sections of the National Bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans by adding or omitting text as follows: Article 11, Membership, to omit Section 11.13 in its entirety; and amend Article 16, Disciplinary Actions, to add a new Section 16.2 and renumber the remaining sections, such new section to read as follows:

Section 16.2. Lawsuits; Exhaustion of Remedies. Besides any other grounds therefor, a member may be suspended and tried under Article 16 should he or she resort to, or join in, a civil action against a chapter, state department or the national organization, or officers thereof, as such, before exhausting all remedies available within the organization.

Under Article 11, Membership, we're just moving that Article 11, Membership into Article 16 where it belongs for the disciplinary action, Section 16.2, Lawsuits, Exhaustion of Remedies.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws and the first reading of the recommended changes to the Constitution and Bylaws.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Daley.

We'll now hear the report on the General Resolutions and Membership Committee, James Sursely, chairman.

MR. JAMES E. SURSELY: Thank you, Commander. Good afternoon. Let me first of all extend my thanks and appreciation to all the General Resolutions Committee members and their alternates for a job well done, and a special thanks to our staff advisor, Rick Surratt, for his leadership and guidance. It certainly made our

job easier.

Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on General Resolutions was called to order for its first business session on August the 24th, 1998 by the committee advisor, Rick Surratt.

The first order of business was the election of convention committee chairman. James Sursely was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed, and James Sursely was elected chairman.

The next order of business was the nomination and election of a secretary. Shirley Scofield was nominated and elected as secretary of the committee.

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

Resolution Number 38, supporting a strong national defense.

Resolution Number 46, to keep "The Star Spangled Banner" as our National Anthem.

Resolution 91, construct a monument to commemorate the sacrifices of America's disabled veterans.

Number 242, encourage all veterans to become registered voters.

Number 243, condemnation of desecration of the flag.

Number 265, appreciation to all who are responsible for the success of the 77th National Convention.

And Number 266, appreciation to the Las Vegas Hilton.

And last, but certainly not least, a committee resolution Number 264 is appreciation to Harry R. McDonald, Jr. upon completion of his term of office as national commander, and that one I will read in its entirety.

> WHEREAS, Harry R. McDonald, Jr. earned his eligibility for membership in the Disabled American Veterans during his 28 years of honorable, dedicated and meritorious service in both the United States Navy and the United States Army; and
>
> WHEREAS, during his distinguished military career, he rose from the enlisted ranks to the rank of captain and was awarded numerous awards, decorations and citations for his outstanding leadership, patriotism and fidelity, to include the Bronze Star and the Combat Infantryman's Badge; and
>
> WHEREAS, Commander McDonald actively and effectively served in virtually all DAV chapter and department offices, initiating and perpetuating numerous DAV programs serving disabled veterans, hence leading his peers to trust him and hold him in confidence and high esteem, and thus nominate for and elect him to the DAV's highest national office; and
>
> WHEREAS, he humbly accepted and effectively carried out his responsibilities, duties and obligations as national commander of the Disabled American Veterans; and
>
> WHEREAS, Commander McDonald 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' service-connected disability compensation against all attacks; and
>
> WHEREAS, he has tirelessly advocated for fair and equitable treatment of veterans, condemned those individuals who have attempted to treat veterans as second-class citizens; and
>
> WHEREAS, Commander McDonald has commendably fulfilled the DAV's mission to ensure and uphold the interests of wartime, service-connected disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors by urging veterans, their families and friends to become actively involved in the fight to preserve veterans' benefits and services; and
>
> WHEREAS, he has further embodied the DAV's mission of building better lives for our nation's disabled veterans by demonstrating remarkable vision in spearheading DAV's outreach to homeless veterans and continuing DAV's commitment to

excellence by providing the best qualified and most highly trained corps of National Service Officers;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23rd through the 27th, 1998, salute National Commander Harry R. McDonald, Jr. upon completion of his stewardship as national commander and express our sincere gratitude for the unparalleled and irreproachable character he displayed, which was exemplified by his sound and just ability to reason, his tough and steadfast resolution on behalf of disabled veterans and their dependents and survivors, and by the staunch and cohesive solidarity he spread throughout the organization; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED in acknowledging the personal sacrifices made by Commander McDonald, he has dedicated his life to provide our organization with a strong and effective leader and to provide disabled veterans with a clear and resounding voice, often at the expense of time due to his devoted and loving wife, Marilyn, and we also acknowledge her sacrifice and thank her for the unequalled support of her husband, our national commander, and for her unselfish sharing of him during his term as national commander.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on General Resolutions, and I move the adoption of these resolutions.

(The above-mentioned resolutions follow.)

RESOLUTION NO. 038—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING A STRONG NATIONAL DEFENSE

WHEREAS, the United States military forces are responsible for the defense of this Nation and its interest abroad; and

WHEREAS, the United States has recently been called upon to intervene in various conflicts; and

WHEREAS, a strong national defense led to the defeat of Communism in Eastern Europe; and

WHEREAS, U.S. interests continue to be challenged throughout the world, requiring our military forces to be deployed in protection of world freedom; and

WHEREAS, we can never let our guard down; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, goes on record urging Congress to provide adequate funds for the defense of our Nation both at home and abroad.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 046—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING THE REPLACEMENT OF THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER AS OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM

WHEREAS, the Star Spangled Banner, our national anthem, cherished by millions of Americans, is a patriotic song that reminds Americans that freedom is not free; and

WHEREAS, our liberty is preserved by the sacrifices of millions of Americans who served in our Nation's Armed Forces during time of need; and

WHEREAS, after he received the $100,000 Philadelphia Liberty Medal on Independence Day, Ted Turner showed disrespect for our national anthem, calling it "war-like" and called for a national vote to replace the Star Spangled Banner as the national anthem; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, requests that the Congress of the United States resist any attempts to replace the Star Spangled Banner as our National Anthem.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 091—LEGISLATIVE

TO CONSTRUCT A MONUMENT TO COMMEMORATE
THE SACRIFICES OF AMERICA'S DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, it has been three decades since Americans were involved in a large-scale ground war that resulted in large numbers of significant, combat-related casualties; and

WHEREAS, though the public's reaction to veterans in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War was exceptionally warm, even the high feeling associated with Operation Desert Storm dissipated long ago; and

WHEREAS, the memory of smaller military actions at the Khobar Towers Barracks in Saudi Arabia, and in Grenada, Beirut, Panama and Somalia faded with shocking rapidity, dying away even as combat-disabled veterans were still undergoing initial treatment of their wounds; and

WHEREAS, even as Americans daily face the threat of hostile action in Bosnia and other hot spots around the world, some of them coming home wounded, awareness of their sacrifices among the American people remains distressingly low; and

WHEREAS, the extent of this forgetfulness 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, and the Korean War, historically the largest cohort in the veterans population; 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, the circumstances above 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., in order to commemorate causes and persons of great merit and the sacrifices of disabled veterans deserve at least as much attention as any of these; and

WHEREAS, a statue or commemorative structure on the Washington Mall or in another very prominent location in our Nation's Capital would be extremely useful in permanently reminding the American people of the sacrifices made by disabled veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, seeks the necessary approval and private financial support for the construction and maintenance of a monument honoring the sacrifices of those veterans disabled while in military service to their country and that such monument be placed in a prestigious location in the Nation's Capital, with a strong recommendation that it be placed on the Washington Mall.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 242—LEGISLATIVE

TO 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 by providing adequate funding for veterans' benefits and health care; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Congress and the President's Administration

have targeted veterans' programs for unwarranted spending cuts and reductions under the mistaken and misguided theory that veterans do not base their vote on veterans' issues; and

WHEREAS, the failure of all 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 stricter 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 the November 1998 local, state, and federal elections, NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, encourages 100 percent of our members to become registered to vote and thereby strengthen our organization's ability to preserve and improve our system of veterans' benefits and services; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all DAV 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 DAV 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. 243—LEGISLATIVE

CONDEMNATION OF PUBLIC DESECRATION OF THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES

WHEREAS, the U.S. Supreme Court, by a 5-4 decision, has ruled that public desecration of the American Flag, as a form of free speech and expression, is legal and permissible; and

WHEREAS, the American Flag -- "Old Glory" -- is our National Ensign, the proud, courageous and beautiful symbol of our country's precious, free heritage; and

WHEREAS, this symbol, in the form of our irreplaceable "Stars and Stripes," has been carried and defended in battle, revered and cherished by its citizens and viewed as a beacon of hope and fulfillment by all the world since it was first unfurled at the birth of our Nation; and

WHEREAS, the Constitutional First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech was not intended by our Founding Fathers to enable individuals -- who do enjoy unfettered freedom to express their views, no matter how abhorrent, in both oral and written form -- to publicly and contemptuously desecrate our beloved flag; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, shall go on record as condemning any individual or group who shall at any time publicly and willfully desecrate the flag of the United States.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 265—ADMINISTRATIVE

APPRECIATION TO ALL WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 77TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the success for the 77th DAV National Convention convened in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, 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 Thomas Caenen;

and

WHEREAS, we wish to commend all the news media for their encouragement and assistance at all of our Convention activities; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998 expresses its sincere appreciation to all groups and/or agencies whose dedication to our principles has made our Convention a successful one; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we wish to extend to the citizens of Las Vegas, Nevada, our deepest gratitude for their personal interest in our great organization; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we wish to extend our appreciation to all of the distinguished guests who participated in our convention and support the ideals and principles of our great organization; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we extend our gratitude to the Convention Chairman, Thomas Caenen, and his entire Committee for providing personalized assistance to our friends and delegates during our Convention stay.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 266—ADMINISTRATIVE

APPRECIATION TO THE LAS VEGAS HILTON FOR
THE SUCCESS OF THE 77TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the assistance and cooperation of the Las Vegas Hilton was essential to the success of the 77th DAV National Convention, convened in Las Vegas, Nevada; and

WHEREAS, the responsiveness of the hotel's employees to the requirements of the Convention was beyond compare, meriting the gratitude of the DAV's officers, delegates and staff; and

WHEREAS, the courtesy of the hotel staff to the delegates and guests at the Convention was superb throughout the entire course of the National Convention; and

WHEREAS, everyone associated with the hotel exhibited the highest degree of professionalism in all areas of their association with the National Convention; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, expresses its sincere gratitude to the Las Vegas Hilton and all of its employees for their exceptional assistance in making the convention a tremendous success.

* * *

COMMANDER McDONALD: We have a motion. Do I hear a second? Mike 3.

MS. CAROL JACKSON: Carol Jackson, Chapter 6, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. We have a motion to accept with a second. Is there any discussion? Mike 3.

MR. HERBERT A. PARKER: Commander Parker, North Miami Beach Chapter 81, Florida. Last year, a resolution was presented to the Resolutions Committee. It was a tentative plan whereby all the veterans of our country would get together tentatively for a march on Washington.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Sir, you're out of order. That's not an item for discussion at this convention. You are out of order at this time.

Is there any other -- Mike 1.

MR. FRANK C. TRACY: Commander, on that report, I would like to state that the Department of Florida, every chapter in the State of Florida, is very proud of you, Harry McDonald. You are the first commander from the state, and we really applaud the work you have done. Thank you so much. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. Mike 1, would you please identify yourself?

MR. FRANK TRACY: I'm sorry. Frank Tracy, Chapter 87, Leesburg, Florida.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Frank.

Hearing no further discussion, all those in favor of accepting the report, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried.

Thank you, Jim.

We'll now hear the report of the Employment Committee, Jim Powers, chairman.

MR. JAMES S. POWERS: Good afternoon. National Commander, National Adjutant, national officers, delegates: The National Convention Committee on Employment was called to order for its first business session on August the 24th, 1998 by the committee advisors, Wayne Douglass, Sr. and Mr. Tony Baskerville.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. James Powers was nominated chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed, and James Powers was elected chairman.

The next order of business was the nomination and election of a secretary. Ms. M. Rae White was nominated and elected as secretary of the committee.

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

Number 109, to provide for veterans' preference in all JTPA programs.

Number 203, to amend the residency requirements for state directors and assistant state directors of the Veterans Employment and Training Service.

Number 133, amend the definition of "disabled veteran" for the purpose of benefits administered under Chapter 22, Title 38 USC.

Number 253, oppose the transfer of VETS to the Employment and Training Administration, ETA.

Number 054, amend Chapter 4212 of Title 38 USC to remove the Vietnam Era veterans and replace with "veterans."

Number 55, amend Section 4103(a)(1) of Title 38 to amend DVOP appointment preference to allow the appointment of qualified disabled veterans with priority for Vietnam Era disabled veterans. Number 187 is the same as 055.

Number 056, National Task Force to write proposed changes to 38 USC Chapter 41. Number 114 and 188 were of the same.

Number 076, transfer the Veterans Employment and Training Service to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Number 261, veterans preference for state and assistant state directors of veterans employment and training.

Number 200, Transition Assistance Program be permanently mandated and fully funded.

Number 216, affirmative action for employment of disabled veterans.

Number 211, all disabled veterans retired from military on disability to count service time toward civil service retirement.

Number 113, provide direct loans and set-asides for disabled veterans.

Number 252 was passed and it is the same.

Number 040, adequate funding and permanency for vets' employment and/or training included NVTI, SBA, DVOP and LVER and homeless programs.

Number 108, provide disabled veterans and the handicapped priority in all affirmative action programs.

Number 115, increase funding on TAP and DTAP. Number 189 is the same.

Number 112, employer incentives for retraining disabled veterans.

Number 132, supporting veterans' preference in public employment. Numbers 78 and 168 were the same.

Number 185, support House Resolution 167, veterans preference in all federal employment and training programs. This also included Numbers 81, 186 and 199.

Number 258, amend Chapter 42, Title 38 USC to include grants

under affirmative action.

Number 259, provide an appeal process for veterans who believe their veterans preference or affirmative action rights have been violated.

Number 169, amend the Vocational Rehabilitation Program to delete the time restrictions on starting and completing the program.

Number 101, allow veterans rated less than ten percent service connected, under certain circumstances, be eligible for vocational rehabilitation.

Number 256; expand authority for unpaid work experience.

Number 257, DVOPs should be part of the VA vocational rehabilitation case management.

Number 249, VR and C staff be provided state-of-the-art equipment.

Number 251, oppose limitation of subsistence allowance for vocational rehabilitation clients.

Number 250, implement VA vocational rehabilitation standards for vocational rehabilitation counselor positions.

Number 248, support increased federal funding for homeless veterans initiatives.

Number 260, veterans' preference in the U.S. Postal Service.

Number 254, support of House Resolution 167, veterans' preference in all federal employment and training programs.

Number 262, in support of recommendations of the SBA's Veterans Task Force Subcommittee on capital access.

That's it, Commander. That's the end of the report. That completes the report of the Committee on Employment, and I move the adoption of the resolutions and the committee may be discharged with the thanks of the National Convention.

(The above-mentioned resolutions follow.)

RESOLUTION NO. 040—LEGISLATIVE

ADEQUATE FUNDING AND PERMANENCY FOR VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND/OR TRAINING INCLUDING NVTI, SBA, DVOP, LVER, AND HOMELESS PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, there are numerous veterans' employment and training programs that need adequate staffing and funding; and

WHEREAS, those programs include the Veterans' Employment and Training Service of the Department of Labor, LVER and DVOP, JTPA, SBA, NVTI, Homeless and others; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, seeks and supports adequate funding and permanency for all veterans' employment and training programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 054—LEGISLATIVE

AMEND CHAPTER 4212 OF TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, TO REMOVE "VIETNAM ERA VETERAN" AND REPLACE WITH "VETERAN"

WHEREAS, it is the intent of Congress to provide affirmative action to veterans under Section 4212, Chapter 42, title 38, United States Code, in the employment and advancement with federal contractors; and

WHEREAS, the mandated VETS 100 reports indicate that the majority of the employers covered under the section cited above have ignored or failed to implement the requirements of hiring and advancement of covered veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, hereby goes on record urging Congress to amend the covered groups under Section 4212, title 38, United States Code, by removing the terms "Vietnam era" and "special disabled" and replacing them with "Veteran" and "Special emphasis on disabled veterans."

* * * *

RESOLUTION NO. 055—LEGISLATIVE

AMEND SECTION 4103(a) (1) OF DVOPS APPOINTMENT PREFERENCE TO ALLOW THE APPOINTMENT OF QUALIFIED DISABLED VETERANS WITH PRIORITY GIVEN TO QUALIFIED DISABLED VETERANS OF THE VIETNAM ERA

WHEREAS, it is the intent of Congress that the State Employment Services Agencies (SESA) provide effective employment and training services to veterans with priority given in accordance with title 38 U.S.C. § 4102; and

WHEREAS, it is the SESA's responsibility to provide priority services to veterans and that all Local Employment Service Office staff provide priority services to veterans; and

WHEREAS, the requirements for the appointment of Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) is now based upon the preference to disabled veterans of the Vietnam era; and

WHEREAS, combat veterans and disabled veterans have been historically shown to have special employment and training needs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, seeks legislation to require that preference be given to disabled veterans with priority given to disabled Vietnam era veterans in appointments to DVOP positions.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 056—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING A NATIONAL TASK FORCE TO WRITE PROPOSED CHANGES TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, CHAPTER 41

WHEREAS, Congress and the American people have made it clear that providing employment services for veterans is a national responsibility; and

WHEREAS, the responsibility of providing veterans employment services has been delegated by Congress to the United States Department of Labor—Veterans' Employment and Training Service (USDOL-VETS) through the State Employment Security Agencies (SESA); and

WHEREAS, Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) are the individuals responsible for the provision of services provided to veterans; and

WHEREAS, the LVER program was created by the Servicemen's Benefits Act of 1944 and the DVOP program was created by the Carter Economic Stimulus Package of 1977; and

WHEREAS, title 38, Chapter 41 has not been changed to incorporate the incredible technological opportunities that are now available; and

WHEREAS, the national workforce development system must be in a position to respond to the customer's requirements, both veterans and employers; and

WHEREAS, for the workforce development system to respond to our customers' needs and to carry us into the next century, we must update and modernize title 38, United States Code, Chapter 41; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, hereby goes on record supporting a national task force to write proposed changes to title 38, United States Code, Chapter 41. The task force would be comprised of veterans service organizations, USDOL-VETS, VA, House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees, State Employment Security Agencies' Veterans' Program Administrators, Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies, Incorporated, International Association of Personnel in Employment Security, and the Job Service Employer Committee/National Employer Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Congress of the United States

should direct DOL-VETS Assistant Secretary to act as liaison and as a partner in the development of new language to be submitted to Congress for legislative change. And that all parties mentioned above as the Task force be included as full partners in this endeavor.

* * * *

RESOLUTION NO. 076—ADMINISTRATIVE

DEFINITION OF VETERANS PRIORITY SERVICE IN EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans Department of Texas finds that veterans seeking employment have been served well by the Texas Workforce Commission; and

WHEREAS, "priority" has been a practice prescribed by the Department of Labor (DOL) as one means of fulfilling the mandate of title 38, United States Code, to provide veterans with the maximum of employment and training opportunities; and

WHEREAS, "priority" has been defined and practiced to mean that "eligible veterans who register or otherwise apply for services should be extended the opportunity to participate or otherwise receive such services, appropriate to their needs, before such opportunities and services are extended to other applicants; and

WHEREAS, it must be the policy of DOL that all initiatives and procedures are established and maintained in such a way that eligible and qualified veterans are advantaged over other applicants using such services and that all federally-funded employment, training, and related service providers will provide priority to veterans in all programs and services offered; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, that we affirm the policy, practice, and definition of "priority" as herein defined, and strongly support and seek passage of legislation that will mandate that this definition and practice be codified in title 38, United States Code, Chapter 41, and that the Secretary of Labor and the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training be required to extend this policy and the practice of "priority" of service for veterans to all employment and training service providers in America's system of workforce development through the authority granted them under Section 4102 of title 38, United States Code.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 078—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans has strongly supported federal, state and local veterans' preference laws; and

WHEREAS, attempts are being made to weaken, dilute and circumvent existing veterans' preference laws; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports veterans' preference in federal, state and local employment.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 081—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT OF H.R. 167 VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN ALL FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, it is a National responsibility to provide veterans' preference in all employment and training services available in the United States; and

WHEREAS, it is not practical or feasible to devolve this responsibility to the States because this will weaken or eliminate the current preference for veterans mandated by Title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 167 seeks to provide veterans' preference for all Federally funded employment and training programs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, hereby supports passage of H.R. 167.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 101—LEGISLATIVE

VETERANS RATED 10% OR LESS, UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, BE AUTHORIZED BENEFITS UNDER VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

WHEREAS, current law does not allow veterans with service connection of 10% or less to participate in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Vocational Rehabilitation Program; and

WHEREAS, some veterans in this category are unable to continue in their chosen profession due to their service-connected disability(ies); NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation that would allow veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 10% or less, but due to those disabilities can no longer work in their chosen profession, to be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 108—LEGISLATIVE

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION "PRIORITY" FOR DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 gave new and deserved emphasis to the employment problems of people with physical handicaps and recognized them as a specific group who need special consideration; and

WHEREAS, the attempt is made in other laws to also address problems, specifically the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for the handicapped, and title 38, United States Code, Chapter 42 for disabled veterans who have barriers to employment. Additionally, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, dictates the non-discrimination in employment requirements covering race, religion, age, sex and national origin. Many employers are required to have a written Affirmative Action (AA) plan in order to avoid employment discrimination against any of these groups; and

WHEREAS, title 38, United States Code, Chapter 42 also contains specific requirements for federal contractors and federal agencies to take AA to hire and promote minorities, disabled veterans and the handicapped; however, in actual practice there is no breakdown by priority of AA for minorities, disabled veterans, or the handicapped as specific groups; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the high incidence of employment problems among disabled veterans and the handicapped is not enough. In order to implement the plans and ensure actual practice of AA, the disabled should be considered separately from minorities for preferential treatment by all entities who have AA requirements under law; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, hereby goes on record urging Congress to enact amending legislation that gives disabled veterans priority in AA as a group within the other designated groups for which AA is required.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 109—LEGISLATIVE

VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN THE JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACT

WHEREAS, there currently is no provision in the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), Public Law 97-300, to give preference in services to disabled veterans and veterans; and

WHEREAS, disabled veterans and veterans are given priority under laws governing other employment and training programs (title 38 U.S.C., Chapters 41 and 42); and

WHEREAS, a significant percentage of the work force eligible for services under JTPA are disabled veterans and veterans who have served their country, and now face significant barriers to employment; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, hereby goes on record urging Congress to amend the JTPA so as to provide for disabled veterans and veterans' preference in all programs operated under JTPA to include One-stop Career Centers.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 112—LEGISLATIVE

EMPLOYER INCENTIVES FOR RETRAINING DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, a general transformation of the Nation's economy due largely to defense reductions has caused vast numbers of middle income jobs in the industrial and manufacturing sectors to disappear, leaving many veterans and disabled veterans displaced and in need of retraining; and

WHEREAS, against this background, federally sponsored training programs have failed to target veterans in such existing programs as the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA); NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, hereby goes no record strongly urging the Congress to create additional tax incentives and a training reimbursement program designed to generate the needed amount of employer provided training and employment opportunities leading to meaningful careers for veterans and disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 113—LEGISLATIVE

PROVIDE DIRECT LOANS AND "SET ASIDES" FOR DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, many disabled veterans would like to start their own business but cannot obtain the needed loan; AND

WHEREAS, many disabled veteran-owned businesses would like to do business with the federal government; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation that would authorize direct loans be provided by the federal government to qualified disabled veterans, AND;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the federal government provide "set asides" for disabled veteran owned businesses that are the same as, but separate and apart from, the Small Business Administration Disadvantaged Business 8A Set Aside Program.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 114—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING A NATIONAL TASK FORCE TO WRITE PROPOSED CHANGES TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, CHAPTER 41

WHEREAS, Congress and the American people have made it clear that providing employment services for veterans is a national

responsibility; and

WHEREAS, the responsibility of providing veterans employment services has been delegated by Congress to the United States Department of Labor—Veterans' Employment and Training Service (USDOL-VETS) through the State Employment Security Agencies (SESA); and

WHEREAS, Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) are the individuals responsible for the provision of services provided to veterans; and

WHEREAS, the LVER program was created by the Servicemen's Benefits Act of 1944 and the DVOP program was created by the Carter Economic Stimulus Package of 1977; and

WHEREAS, title 38, Chapter 41 has not been changed to incorporate the incredible technological opportunities that are now available; and

WHEREAS, the national workforce development system must be in a position to respond to the customer's requirements, both veterans and employers; and

WHEREAS, for the workforce development system to respond to our customers' needs and to carry us into the next century, we must update and modernize title 38, United States Code, Chapter 41; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, hereby goes on record supporting a national task force to write proposed changes to title 38, United States Code, Chapter 41. The task force would be comprised of veterans service organizations, USDOL-VETS, VA, House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees, State Employment Security Agencies' Veterans' Program Administrators, Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies, Incorporated, International Association of Personnel in Employment Security, and the Job Service Employer Committee/National Employer Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Congress of the United States should direct DOL-VETS Assistant Secretary to act as liaison and as a partner in the development of new language to be submitted to Congress for legislative change. And that all parties mentioned above as the Task force be included as full partners in this endeavor.

* * * *

RESOLUTION NO. 115—LEGISLATIVE

INCREASED FUNDING FOR THE TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP) AND THE DISABLED TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (DTAP)

WHEREAS, the transition from military service to civilian life is very difficult for most veterans, who must overcome many obstacles to successful employment; and

WHEREAS, the continuation of TAP and DTAP is a much-needed and meaningful step toward easing some of the problems associated with this transition. The ultimate goal of the TAP and DTAP is for these individuals to receive vocational guidance to obtain meaningful careers; and

WHEREAS, the level of funding and staffing is inadequate to support the estimated 250,000 discharges per year projected by the Department of Defense through the year 2000; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, hereby goes on record urging Congress to provide adequate funding for TAP/DTAP.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 132—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans has strongly supported

federal, state and local veterans' preference laws; and

WHEREAS, attempts are being made to weaken, dilute and circumvent existing veterans' preference laws; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports veterans' preference in federal, state and local employment.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 133—ADMINISTRATIVE

TO AMEND THE DEFINITION OF DISABLED VETERAN FOR PURPOSES OF BENEFITS ADMINISTERED UNDER CHAPTER 42, TITLE 38 UNITED STATES CODE

WHEREAS, Chapter 42, title 38, United States Code, defines a disabled veteran as one who is rated 30 percent or more service-connected disabled or as one who was discharged or released from active duty because of a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, disabled veterans continue to bear a disproportionate unemployment rate and have not received adequate assistance under Chapter 42, title 38, United States Code; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation to amend Section 4211 of title 38, United States Code, to redefine the term "disabled veteran" as "one who has a service-connected disability under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs or one whose discharge or release from active duty was for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty."

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 168—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans has strongly supported federal, state and local veterans' preference laws; and

WHEREAS, attempts are being made to weaken, dilute and circumvent existing veterans' preference laws; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports veterans' preference in federal, state and local employment.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 169—LEGISLATIVE

AMEND THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

WHEREAS, under current law, qualified and eligible disabled veterans are entitled to 48 months of education or training assistance under vocational rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, the disabled veteran must start and complete this program within 12 years following the determination of eligibility; and

WHEREAS, many disabled veterans are unable to complete their training and attain suitable employment within 48 months and others are unable or don't need training within 12 years following initial eligibility; and

WHEREAS, other vocational rehabilitation programs in the private sector and federal sector do not impose similar restrictions; and

WHEREAS, we believe disabled veterans deserve no less; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-

27, 1998, seeks legislative change that would eliminate these two restrictions.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 170—LEGISLATIVE

RECOGNIZE AND HONOR AWARD FOR
THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

WHEREAS, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law on July 26, 1990; and

WHEREAS, this significant legislation extends civil rights protection to an estimated 43 million Americans with disabilities in much the same way that individuals are protected on basis of race, color, sex, national origin, and religion; and

WHEREAS, the ADA makes it illegal to discriminate on basis of disability in areas of employment, public services, public accommodations, transportation and telecommunications; and

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans, along with major disability organizations, strongly supported the enactment of the ADA and helped shape the final regulation; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports the creation of a DAV National Award that would allow the organization to recognize and honor businesses, companies, and organizations that are making efforts to accommodate people with disabilities and have gone beyond the letter of the ADA.

* * * *

RESOLUTION NO. 185—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT OF H.R. 167 VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN ALL FEDERAL
EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, it is a National responsibility to provide veterans' preference in all employment and training services available in the United States; and

WHEREAS, it is not practical or feasible to devolve this responsibility to the States because this will weaken or eliminate the current preference for veterans mandated by Title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 167 seeks to provide veterans' preference for all Federally funded employment and training programs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, hereby supports passage of H.R. 167.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 186—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT OF H.R. 167 VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN ALL FEDERAL
EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, it is a National responsibility to provide veterans' preference in all employment and training services available in the United States; and

WHEREAS, it is not practical or feasible to devolve this responsibility to the States because this will weaken or eliminate the current preference for veterans mandated by Title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 167 seeks to provide veterans' preference for all Federally funded employment and training programs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, hereby supports passage of H.R. 167.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 187—LEGISLATIVE

AMEND CHAPTER 4212 OF TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, TO REMOVE "VIETNAM ERA VETERAN" AND REPLACE WITH "VETERAN"

WHEREAS, it is the intent of Congress to provide affirmative action to veterans under Section 4212, Chapter 42, title 38, United States Code, in the employment and advancement with federal contractors; and

WHEREAS, the mandated VETS 100 reports indicate that the majority of the employers covered under the section cited above have ignored or failed to implement the requirements of hiring and advancement of covered veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, hereby goes on record urging Congress to amend the covered groups under Section 4212, title 38, United States Code, by removing the terms "Vietnam era" and "special disabled" and replacing them with "Veteran" and "Special emphasis on disabled veterans."

* * * *

RESOLUTION NO. 188—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING A NATIONAL TASK FORCE TO WRITE PROPOSED CHANGES TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, CHAPTER 41

WHEREAS, Congress and the American people have made it clear that providing employment services for veterans is a national responsibility; and

WHEREAS, the responsibility of providing veterans employment services has been delegated by Congress to the United States Department of Labor—Veterans' Employment and Training Service (USDOL-VETS) through the State Employment Security Agencies (SESA); and

WHEREAS, Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) are the individuals responsible for the provision of services provided to veterans; and

WHEREAS, the LVER program was created by the Servicemen's Benefits Act of 1944 and the DVOP program was created by the Carter Economic Stimulus Package of 1977; and

WHEREAS, title 38, Chapter 41 has not been changed to incorporate the incredible technological opportunities that are now available; and

WHEREAS, the national workforce development system must be in a position to respond to the customer's requirements, both veterans and employers; and

WHEREAS, for the workforce development system to respond to our customers' needs and to carry us into the next century, we must update and modernize title 38, United States Code, Chapter 41; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, hereby goes on record supporting a national task force to write proposed changes to title 38, United States Code, Chapter 41. The task force would be comprised of veterans service organizations, USDOL-VETS, VA, House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees, State Employment Security Agencies' Veterans' Program Administrators, Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies, Incorporated, International Association of Personnel in Employment Security, and the Job Service Employer Committee/National Employer Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Congress of the United States should direct DOL-VETS Assistant Secretary to act as liaison and as a partner in the development of new language to be submitted to Congress for legislative change. And that all parties mentioned above as the Task force be included as full partners in this

endeavor.

* * * *

RESOLUTION NO. 189—LEGISLATIVE

INCREASED FUNDING FOR THE TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP) AND THE DISABLED TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (DTAP)

WHEREAS, the transition from military service to civilian life is very difficult for most veterans, who must overcome many obstacles to successful employment; and

WHEREAS, the continuation of TAP and DTAP is a much-needed and meaningful step toward easing some of the problems associated with this transition. The ultimate goal of the TAP and DTAP is for these individuals to receive vocational guidance to obtain meaningful careers; and

WHEREAS, the level of funding and staffing is inadequate to support the estimated 250,000 discharges per year projected by the Department of Defense through the year 2000; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, hereby goes on record urging Congress to provide adequate funding for TAP/DTAP.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 199—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT OF H.R. 167 VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN ALL FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, it is a National responsibility to provide veterans' preference in all employment and training services available in the United States; and

WHEREAS, it is not practical or feasible to devolve this responsibility to the States because this will weaken or eliminate the current preference for veterans mandated by Title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 167 seeks to provide veterans' preference for all Federally funded employment and training programs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, hereby supports passage of H.R. 167.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 200—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Congress has reduced the active duty military force due to federal budget cuts; and

WHEREAS, our sailors, soldiers, and marines should be provided with the skills necessary to obtain employment in the civilian work force; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports the Transition Assistance Program being permanently mandated and fully funded.

* * * *

RESOLUTION NO. 203—LEGISLATIVE

TO AMEND THE RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE DIRECTORS AND ASSISTANT STATE DIRECTORS OF THE VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE

WHEREAS, the Congress of the United States has enacted

legislation providing for a Veterans' Employment and Training Service within the Department of Labor; and

WHEREAS, the Act provides that the State Director and the Assistant State Director of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service shall be a veteran, and at the time of appointment shall be a bona fide resident of that state for at least two years; and

WHEREAS, this provision prohibits promotional opportunities for Assistant State Directors to other states and restricts them to their own states; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, goes on record in support of a waiver to substitute two years' experience as an Assistant State Director or DVOP or LVER in lieu of the current residency requirements, thereby allowing them the opportunity to compete for State Director positions as they become vacant.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 211—LEGISLATIVE

ALLOW DISABLED VETERANS RETIRED FROM THE MILITARY ON DISABILITY TO COUNT SERVICE TIME TOWARD CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENT

WHEREAS, military personnel who are injured during time of war and who are then retired because of their service-connected disabilities deserve to receive the full benefit of their disability retirement; and

WHEREAS, men and women who are retired for disability from the military and seek employment with the federal government cannot count their few years of service towards civil service retirement unless they waive the receipt of their disability retired pay; and

WHEREAS, retired reservists can draw retirement from civil service and the military service for the service rendered both the military and civil service during the same period of years without reduction to their civil service time or any requirement to waive their military retired pay in order to receive full civil service retirement; and

WHEREAS, ex-servicemen and women who only draw Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) compensation for their service-connected disability can receive both the VA compensation and civil service retirement pay without waiver of one for the other; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, seek legislation to change the law which now prohibits disabled military retirees, disabled from any cause except willful misconduct, and who served during a period of declared national emergency, war or police action, to be entitled to count their service time towards civil service retirement provided that they pay a sum equal to 7 percent of their military pay into the civil service retirement trust fund or FERS (without interest) to cover the pay they received during those years, for the purpose of counting their time towards civil service retirement.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 216—LEGISLATIVE

AMEND CHAPTER 42, TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, TO INCLUDE GRANTS UNDER AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

WHEREAS, section 4212, chapter 42, title 38, United States Code currently requires federal contractors to take affirmative action on behalf of disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, current law does not provide for recipients of federal financial assistance, to include grants to states, to take affirmative action on behalf of veterans; and

WHEREAS, most federal agencies provide grants to universities, colleges, transportation systems and others who are not required to take affirmative action; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, requests that section 4212, title 38, United States Code, be amended to include "recipients of federal financial assistance" be covered for affirmative action purposes.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 248—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT INCREASED FEDERAL FUNDING FOR HOMELESS VETERANS INITIATIVES

WHEREAS, estimates have put homelessness among veterans as high as 280,000 or about 35% of the total homeless population, and these numbers may be a gross underestimate due to the fact many homeless veterans may not be counted because they are living with a parent, relative, or friend; and

WHEREAS, the demographics which make up the homeless veteran population are very diverse and include veterans of every race, creed and color, and ever increasingly more women, children and families; and

WHEREAS, there is no single cause of homelessness nor no single cure for it, and the reasons for homelessness vary to include physical, mental and economic problems, substance abuse and, in some cases, separation or divorce; and

WHEREAS, there exists a critical need for homeless veterans nationwide to receive very basic medical care, financial counseling, vocational training and rehabilitation and in some cases family counseling, in order to achieve a fair and reasonable chance to break the vicious cycle of homelessness and despair; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs has been deeply involved and has actively initiated and operated various outreach and assistance programs to address the unique needs of homeless veterans such as the Homeless Grants and Per Diem Program and has worked with dozens of communities at veterans' "Stand Down" operations to create new opportunities for homeless veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, federal funding for homeless veterans programs is woefully inadequate as evident by the fact that Congress authorized only $10 million for fiscal year 1999 veterans' programs and the President's fiscal year 1999 budget requested only $2.5 million for homeless veterans' programs and will only help 3,600 homeless veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports increased federal funding for homeless veterans initiatives such as "Stand Downs" to provide comprehensive medical care, mental and psychiatric care, vocational training and rehabilitation, employment and financial counseling and family counseling, urging that appropriate agencies such as the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Labor, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Defense and other federal, state and local entities assist in this effort; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each DAV chapter and department become actively involved in a local, state or federal homeless veteran program, thus living up to the mandate, "we don't leave our wounded behind," by helping to give these veterans a hand up and not a hand out in returning as productive members of society.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 249—LEGISLATIVE

VR&C STAFF BE PROVIDED STATE-OF-THE-ART EQUIPMENT

WHEREAS, the current Director of the VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Service has no direct line of authority over the approximately 700 employees located throughout the Regional Office structure; and

WHEREAS, these individuals are responsible to and report to the Regional Office Director; and

WHEREAS, these individuals rely on the goodwill of the Regional Office Director to provide them with needed support including current technological support to include computers, faxes, and even telephones, which are necessary to expedite and streamline the processes and will result in earlier enrollments into a program; and

WHEREAS, it has been reported by the recently established "Design Team" set up to review how vocational rehabilitation does business, some VR&C offices do not have this type of equipment and in at least one instance, they do not even have phones; and

WHEREAS, this type of equipment is essential to assist disabled veterans attain their employment goal; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, seeks change that would assure the Regional Office Directors are held accountable and all VR&C Staff at the Regional Office level be provided state-of-the-art equipment in order for them to efficiently perform the duties of providing vocational rehabilitation and employment services to disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 250—LEGISLATIVE

IMPLEMENT VA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION QUALIFICATION STANDARDS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR POSITION

WHEREAS, in 1988, the Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling (VR&C) Service began to upgrade qualification standards for counseling psychologists and vocational rehabilitation specialists; and

WHEREAS, the qualification standards have been developed and a new Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor position was established but not fully implemented; and

WHEREAS, the failure to implement new qualification standards has resulted in considerable confusion among VA field staff on appropriate hiring practices; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, recommends that the newly developed upgraded qualification standards be implemented immediately.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 251—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE LIMITATION ON SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE

WHEREAS, the Director of VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling (VR&C) Service established a "Design Team" following criticism by Congress that they were not providing adequate employment services to disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, the "Design Team" was charged with reviewing how the VA does business and make recommended changes; and

WHEREAS, one proposal under consideration would be to provide disabled veterans in a vocational rehabilitation program a single payment for compensation and subsistence allowance; and

WHEREAS, one dollar amount being considered in $900 per month; and

WHEREAS, certain disabled veterans are receiving compensation at an amount higher than $900 and therefore would not be eligible to receive subsistence allowance; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, opposes any action to limit the amount of subsistence allowance because of an amount of compensation being received.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 252—LEGISLATIVE

PROVIDE DIRECT LOANS AND "SET ASIDES" FOR DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, many disabled veterans would like to start their own business but cannot obtain the needed loan; AND

WHEREAS, many disabled veteran-owned businesses would like to do business with the federal government; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation that would authorize direct loans be provided by the federal government to qualified disabled veterans, AND;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the federal government provide "set asides" for disabled veteran owned businesses that are the same as, but separate and apart from, the Small Business Administration Disadvantaged Business 8A Set Aside Program.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 253—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE THE TRANSFER OF THE VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE (VETS) TO THE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION (ETA)

WHEREAS, Vice President Gore has established a "National Performance Review" to make recommendations to improve government; and

WHEREAS, it recently came to the attention of the Disabled American Veterans that a recommendation is included in that review to transfer VETS to ETA; and

WHEREAS, part of that proposal abolishes all the positions at the regional level, as well as the State and Assistant State Director positions; and

WHEREAS, this proposal effectively eliminates VETS; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, opposes any efforts by this Administration to transfer VETS to ETA.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 256—LEGISLATIVE

EXPAND AUTHORITY FOR UNPAID WORK EXPERIENCE

WHEREAS, certain disabled veterans pursuing a program of training under vocational rehabilitation may, as part of that program, participate in an unpaid work experience situation with either the federal, state, or local governments; and

WHEREAS, similar authority does not exist for unpaid work experience with private sector employers; and

WHEREAS, private sector employers may provide meaningful training in such a program; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, seeks legislative relief that would allow these disabled veterans to participate in unpaid work experience with private and not-for-profit sector employers.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 257—LEGISLATIVE

DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS (DVOPS) SHOULD BE PART OF VA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CASE MANAGEMENT

WHEREAS, Congress has criticized the VA's Office of Vocational

Rehabilitation for not working closely enough with DVOPS; and

WHEREAS, further criticism was leveled at that office because of VA's inability to determine how many veterans were placed in suitable employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS, they were also criticized for not working closely enough with the DVOP staff; and

WHEREAS, the VA is undergoing a major "redesign" of how Vocational Rehabilitation does business; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, requests that a requirement be made that the DVOPS be made part of case management at the earliest onset of the rehabilitation process.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 258—LEGISLATIVE

AMEND CHAPTER 42, TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, TO INCLUDE GRANTS UNDER AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

WHEREAS, section 4212, chapter 42, title 38, United States Code currently requires federal contractors to take affirmative action on behalf of disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, current law does not provide for recipients of federal financial assistance, to include grants to states, to take affirmative action on behalf of veterans; and

WHEREAS, most federal agencies provide grants to universities, colleges, transportation systems and others who are not required to take affirmative action; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, requests that section 4212, title 38, United States Code, be amended to include "recipients of federal financial assistance" be covered for affirmative action purposes.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 259—LEGISLATIVE

PROVIDE AN APPEAL PROCESS FOR VETERANS WHO BELIEVE THEIR VETERANS' PREFERENCE OR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RIGHTS HAVE BEEN VIOLATED

WHEREAS, disabled veterans and other veterans who believe their rights as a preference-eligible or rights under affirmative action provisions have been violated currently have no recourse other than a general inquiry; and

WHEREAS, many disabled veterans believe that many agencies intentionally and unintentionally circumvent veterans' preference or don't comply with affirmative action; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 240 has passed the House of Representatives and S. 1021 has been introduced in the Senate, both of which grant the relief we are seeking; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation that would provide a meaningful appeal/redress process for veterans and disabled veterans who believe their rights have been violated under veterans' preference or affirmative action.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 260—LEGISLATIVE

VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

WHEREAS, Congress is currently considering legislation to provide certain protections and enhancements to veterans' preference in federal civil service; and

WHEREAS, this legislation would include all federal agencies

including the Postal Service; and

WHEREAS, the Postmaster General of the United States has contacted the Postal Board of Governors indicating his concern that such changes to veterans' preference would be "onerous" on the Postal Service; and

WHEREAS, the Postal Service should be subject to the veterans' preference provisions; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation that would provide additional protections and other enhancements to veterans' preference and that such legislation should include the Postal Service and the Postmaster General be informed of our strong opposition to his language directed to the Postal Board of Governors.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 261—LEGISLATIVE

VETERANS' PREFERENCE FOR STATE AND ASSISTANT STATE DIRECTORS OF VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

WHEREAS, current law requires that the Department of Labor's State and Assistant State Directors of Veterans' Employment and Training be veterans; and

WHEREAS, there has been some discussion to eliminate the veterans' preference provision; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, opposes any change to the veterans' preference provisions accorded state and assistant state directors.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 262—LEGISLATIVE

IN SUPPORT OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SBA'S VETERANS TASK FORCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CAPITAL ACCESS

WHEREAS, title VII of the Small Business Administration (SBA) Reauthorization Act requires SBA to outreach to service disabled veterans jointly with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Labor (DOL); and

WHEREAS, SBA will enter into a partnership with VA and DOL to provide business development and financial assistance to disabled veterans who wish to start a small business; and

WHEREAS, the administrator of the Small Business Administration, established a new Veterans Affairs Task Force, Subcommittee on Capital Access, to examine all aspects of the agency's programs including business development, education and training, financial assistance, government contracting and advocacy; and

WHEREAS, the objective is to determine ways to improve the delivery of SBA programs and services to veterans and make recommendations on how these programs can better serve this group; and

WHEREAS, the Subcommittee on Capital Access recommends:

1. SBA seek legislation to allow guarantee loans to veterans with certified service-connected disabilities or who were POWs to be guaranteed at the 80% and 85% level (5% above the current level). In addition, SBA should seek legislation that reduces the guaranty fee on loans to veterans with certified service-connected disabilities or POWs to a level not to exceed 1% of the guaranteed amount.

2. SBA should create a new Veterans' Loan Program for loans of $100,000 or less, using a one-page application, a 3-day turnaround, with an 85% guarantee and 2% guaranty

fee. This would be available to all veterans. Loan processing would be done by the district office.

3. SBA should develop partnerships with the VA Vocational Rehabilitation Program to provide in-depth counseling at the district office level to disabled veterans which includes but are not limited to: (a) developing business plans, (b) developing financial statements, (c) issuing pre-qualification letters, as needed, and (d) referring veteran clients to attorneys, CPAs and lenders.

4. SBA should develop a Veterans and Disabled Veterans Lender Recognition Program wherein lenders which aggressively market and make loans to veterans and disabled veterans will be given special recognition. This recognition could take the form of a plaque presented at a formal recognition ceremony with local media, veterans organizations and civic leaders.

5. SBA should enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the VA under which SBA's Office of Veterans Affairs and VA's Veterans Benefits Administration, Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Services Office agree to coordinate delivery of services to disabled veterans which include but are not limited to the following actions (a) SBA will provide in-depth business counseling to veterans referred by the VA, (b) SBA will review or assist as requested by the VA, the Self Employment Plan developed by the veteran and the VA counseling psychologist, (c) VA will pay various business startup and counseling costs for disabled veterans with approved plans, as allowed by existing law, and (d) SBA will work with the VA to train appropriate VA personnel on basic business plan development and financial analysis; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, hereby supports the recommendations of the SBA's Veterans Task Force Subcommittee on Capital Access.

* * * *

COMMANDER McDONALD: Mike 2.

MR. LE PORTE: George LePorte, Chapter 30, Syracuse, New York. I move for the adoption of the Employment report and also for the adoption of all of the resolutions put forward by the Employment Committee.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, but would you make that a second, George? We already have the motion.

MR. LE PORTE: Second.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. We have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried. And the committee is discharged with our thanks.

Ladies and gentlemen, please rise, and I will ask Chaplain Todd to lead us in a closing prayer.

CHAPLAIN TODD: As we prepare ourselves for an evening of good times and fellowship, we come to another day of recess, and we thank You, Lord, for this moment. In His Holy Name we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER McDONALD: The convention will stand in recess until 9:00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 3:10 o'clock p.m., August 24, 1998.)

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION

AUGUST 25, 1998

The Third Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans convened in the Conrad Ballroom of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Las

Vegas, Nevada, Tuesday morning, August 25, 1998, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by Commander Harry R. McDonald, Jr.

COMMANDER HARRY R. McDONALD, JR.: Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats. The convention will please come to order.

Will you please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

COMMANDER McDONALD: We'll now be led in prayer by Chaplain Todd.

CHAPLAIN TODD: Lord God, again, we come this day to recognize the beauty of Your world and Your universe, the beauty of the spirit of men and women that have come together from all parts of this great nation to not only recognize the fellowship of hope and care and love, but to reminisce about the days when many men and women have given their lives to bring democracy to our shores.

Let us this day, Lord, remember that not only have we come to do business for DAV, but we've come to be all that we can be and recognizing Your Kingdom in our lives. In His Holy Name we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Be seated, please.

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

How many of you were at the Earl Turner Show last night? Did you enjoy it? I think that we should show Gary Weaver and the Communication Department, Charlie Luttjohann, a little appreciation for that fine show. I even smiled a couple of times. (Applause) Thank you, Charlie, Gary.

I now call upon the Credentials Committee for a partial report.

MR. HOOPES: Commander, delegates, the Credentials Committee met this morning in Conference Room 8 of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel. Roll call showed 1,644 delegates and 42 alternates present. This is a partial report for informational purposes only and reflects the registration at the close of registration at 4:00 p.m. on the 24th of August, 1998.

At the present time, we have 622 chapters, 52 departments, 33 national officers, 12 past national commanders, for a total of 1,644 delegates and 42 alternates, for a total vote of 11,587.

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

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Sloan.

Will you please join me in welcoming the Imperial Golden Rodent, Harry Warburton; Imperial Red-Eyed Gnawer John Engwiller; and the Imperial Council of the National Order of Trench Rats. (Applause)

MR. JOHN D. ENGWILLER, SR.: Good morning. I don't have to holler, I guess. Is everybody winning out there? Greetings from the Imperial Council. This year's 1997-98 Imperial Golden Rodent from Port Charlotte, Florida, Harry Warburton; Imperial Blue Rodent Larry Polzin from Sylmar, California. And since I missed him last year, we have Larry Polzin again from California. (Laughter)

Imperial Bubonic Plague Frank Cummings from Metairie, Louisiana; Imperial Iron Claw Charlie Johns, Kansas City, Kansas; Imperial Turquoise Rodent Bill Brzezinski from Las Vegas, Nevada; Imperial Nightingale Bernard Walkowiak, Clarkburg, Pennsylvania; Imperial Cure Rodent, "The Doc," Joel Devinish from California; and I'm John Engwiller all the way from Florida. Thank you. Imperial Rendezvous Rat Pete Buell from Henderson, Nevada.

Imperial Executive Rodent 1 Gerald Horton, Reading, Massachusetts; Imperial Executive Rodent 2 Vernon Christian from Jamaica, New York; Imperial Executive Rodent 4 William Phillips from Seaford, Delaware; Imperial Executive Rodent Carl Carter from Washington, D.C.; Imperial Executive Rodent Al Sorrentino from Palm Bay, Florida; Imperial Executive Rodent Terrence Flick from Kenner, Louisiana; Imperial Executive Rodent Andrew Magner from Muskegon, Michigan; Imperial Executive Rodent Harry Mulligan -- we call "Mr. Ugly" -- Peoria, Illinois; Imperial Executive Rodent Raymond Drake

from Louisville, Kentucky; Imperial Executive Rodent Mike Stokes from Lebanon, Missouri; Imperial Executive Rodent Clarence Viator from Layton, Utah; Imperial Executive Rodent "Little" Henry Redding, III, Las Vegas, Nevada; Imperial Executive Rodent Denman Riley from Spokane, Washington; Imperial Executive Rodent Chesley Rutledge from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Our bosses are: Imperial Rodent '70, Paul Bailey, Kingston, Pennsylvania; Imperial Rodent '69, Fred Sutton, Terra Haute, Indiana; Imperial Rodent '68 -- everybody knows this guy -- Ernie Balcom from Lake Panasoffkee, Florida; Imperial Rodent '67, George Zoscsak, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Imperial Rodent '65, Oswald Pederson, Kansas City, Missouri; Imperial Rodent '58, Lee Henderson from the hills of Cashiers, North Carolina; Imperial Rodent '49, Al Grajek, Worth, Illinois; Imperial Rodent '39 Sam Beehill from Colorado; Imperial Rodent '38, Charles Merrifield, Louisville, Kentucky.

We all welcome you, and it's great to be back, and there's some money floating around here, so if you get on a "let it ride" table, just pick it up, tell them it used to belong to John Engwiller.

If I could have National Commander Harry McDonald and Art Wilson come forward, please? Mr. Commander, it's a pleasure for me to present to you to keep in your house so you'll always remember us, one of our very own -- not Larry. And to go along with that is our ball cap for this year and our pin.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you.

MR. ENGWILLER: Mr. Wilson. And for you, I'd like to present a ball cap and a pin for this year, and also the rules for "let it ride" and how to play, so that you can study up. Okay? (Laughter and applause)

ADJUTANT WILSON: Thank you.

MR. ENGWILLER: Again, thank you. You'll see us around. And good luck at the tables. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: I want to thank the Imperial Golden Rodent and the Imperial Council for coming in and seeing us, and we will see all of you later. Thank you.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the next individual for his report. He's the president of the DAV National Service Foundation, Mr. Richard Cosgriff. Richard, please. (Applause)

MR. RICHARD J. COSGRIFF: National Commander McDonald, National Adjutant Wilson, national officers, delegates and guests all: It is a pleasure for me today to present the annual report of the DAV National Service Foundation. Helping the DAV's national organization fund programs of service to disabled veterans and their families, the Foundation takes pride in what we've achieved during the past year.

If you're a Foundation supporter, I hope you share in that pride, whether that support comes from your chapter, the Auxiliary or the dugout, the DAV and the DAV department Auxiliaries, or you as an individual, which we know most of it comes from.

I congratulate you and thank you very much. After all, what would the Foundation be if you weren't there, expressing your compassion for our nation's disabled veterans through their national programs?

That's why I see the national program and the Foundation's programs as your program. Our work expresses your concern for your fellow disabled veterans and their families, an expression of the deep kindness at the core of your heart.

As the Foundation's president, I was assisted during the 1997-98 term with such distinguished members as National Commander McDonald; the Foundation's vice-president, National Adjutant Art Wilson; Secretary-Treasurer Bill Leach; Directors Bonnie Maile and Gary Burns; and National Finance Chairman Sal Tornatore.

We also thank Charitable Programs Director Nancy O'Brien and her staff at National Headquarters. Their assistance, efficient, thorough and first-rate service is essential to our success.

Buoyed by record growth, the Foundation confronts the future with confidence. As of December 31st, 1997, we reported total net assets of $19.5 million, a 25.8 percent increase over the previous year. Our assets showed the following trends: A 40 percent

increase in the General Fund, which stood at $7.7 million; 11 percent growth in the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund, which ended the year with $9.1 million; The Colorado Trust, which grew more than half again to $2.5 million; and $191,294 in the NOTR Special Legislative Fund.

During the past year, the Foundation has done a great deal to enhance the service the national organization offers to disabled veterans and their families. Two key factors of our ongoing work include office furniture and equipment for our National Service Offices, and financial support of medical studies to help establish expert medical testimony in support of veterans' claims.

The DAV National Service Foundation does not engage in any public solicitation. Rather, we rely on support from DAV and Auxiliary members. And leaders of the DAV and Auxiliary at every level have earned our deep appreciation, because it shows in the amount of money we have of $19 million.

Individual chapters, Auxiliary units, our departments, the Trench Rats, and dedicated DAV and Auxiliary members all play a fundamental role. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you very much.

The past year saw an astounding 18 percent increase in the number of awards we presented to our foremost donors. These 193 awards included Certificates of Commitment to 18 chapters and one Auxiliary unit that contributed at least $1 for each member in their ranks; Certificates of Commitment to 19 departments that gave at least $10 for each chapter in their department; 130 commendation plaques for donors whose contribution topped $1,000 during the past year; and the Grand Memorial Honor Roll at the DAV Washington Headquarters added 25 donors, recognizing them for total contributions of $5,000 or more.

In the year ended December 31st, 1997, DAV NSOs were responsible for a figure of $582,000. This is $110,000 over the previous year, and we certainly owe them a big hand of appreciation. (Applause) Thank you very much.

It's only proper at this time to call on National Service Director Ken Wolfe who will assist in recognizing the winning National Service Offices by category, based on contributions this past year.

I'll call the names, and the supervisor, if they'll come up and receive their plaque. Division I, Togus, Maine. This is getting to be a habit on Togus, Maine. Gary Burns, supervisor. (Applause)

MR. GARY BURNS: Thank you, Dick. Ken says I've got to do better next year, so we intend on doing so. We were here last year. Tony Baskerville and I got together, pretty cocky. We put 1997 on this last year when we were here, so before the day's over, we're going to put '98 on here as well, and a challenge to our division.

Thanks to all the guys and gals in Maine who contributed to the Foundation as a demonstration of appreciation for services rendered by the organization through the National Service Office. I also want to thank guys like Tim Seavey, who is not only here today with the department but also all year long; Paul Bisson; Harold Smith; Department Commander Norman Newell; Greg Holmes. You guys and gals pitch in all year long.

Especially thanks to the department, because what we've done in Maine is the department funds a second full-time secretary. Of course, the organization nationally has one in the office, as it does in all offices. But the Department of Maine, by funding that, allows us to hit hard membership and hit hard the Foundation. And obviously it worked for us.

Thanks to all of you folks here today who contributed through the Foundation to the State of Maine.

And as a director, now a Board member of the directors for the Foundation, there's one person I want to thank, really the nuts and bolts of this entire operation. I don't know if this is protocol or not, but I'm going to do it anyway. Nancy O'Brien, would you stand up? I'm the rookie on the board, and this lady really is tremendous. (Applause) She makes it happen for us.

Art Wilson, right on down through -- any of us will answer any

questions you've got about the Service Foundation as long as she's standing around nearby.

So thank you very much. And we'll be back next year. (Applause)

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, Gary. Division II, Syracuse, New York. Those of you that remember Nick Cachianes, he'd be turning over in his grave if he was here today, because he always felt all New York money should stay in New York. Syracuse, New York, Harry Schultz, supervisor. (Applause)

MR. HARRY SCHULTZ: Thank you, Dick. Thank you, Ken. I don't know if Nick did a flip in his grave or anything, but I would like to at this time thank Ed Galian and the Department of New York. But I'd also like to thank Paul Breuer, my associate in Syracuse. Without his hard work and dedication, this wouldn't be possible. I'd also like to thank the staff of the DAV Office in Buffalo, New York, who we work very closely with.

And mostly I want to thank everybody out here, anybody here who's a donor, and I encourage everyone to continue making donations to the Service Foundation. It's a worthwhile cause, and you'll see your money at work.

And lastly, I'd like to issue a challenge to all the other Service Officers out there, because I'm really going to make a habit out of this. I'm going to come back every year, unless somebody gives me some competition. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. COSGRIFF: Division III, St. Louis, Missouri, Bill Beachum, supervisor. (Applause)

MR. BILL BEACHUM: Thank you very much, Mr. Cosgriff and Mr. Wolfe. It's indeed a pleasure that I have received this award, but the credit goes to the very generous contributors and membership of the Department of Missouri, and, most importantly, the dedicated effort of our National Service Officers in St. Louis, and I'd like to name them at this time: Assistant Supervisor Vic Price; National Service Officers Ken Hale, Jack Bickerton and Dan Memmesheimer, who was recently promoted and went to Seattle.

And I know that our new National Service Officers coming up here that have just recently come to our office, Steve Collings and John Williams, will be a great part of this in the next year to come, and we hope to win it again. We're going to do everything we can.

Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. COSGRIFF: The next item is the cohort of Nick Cachianes, Joe Harold, God bless his soul. He always felt that any monies coming in from any state should be designated for that particular state and that state only, and until we changed our Bylaws, he wouldn't give us any money. So we never did change the Bylaws, but poor old Joe passed away.

So now we have from Boston, Massachusetts, Dan Stack, supervisor. (Applause)

MR. DAN STACK: I'm about the same height as Joe, too. As you know, it takes a team effort to win this award, and I would like to thank the team that we have in Massachusetts. And really, it does start with the department. When you talk about the department for this year, it was under the leadership of the commander, John Regan, and the adjutant, Tom Daley.

But one of the ways that we constantly are able to bring donations into the DAV is by having our name out there, and one of the first fronts, besides the National Service Officers is the hospital service coordinator and those volunteer drivers. I would like to thank them. They're out there every day, and because of that, we're able to get these donations to come into our office.

In addition, I want to thank my staff, the support staff that helps us greatly, and also my National Service Officers: the assistant supervisor, John Rogers; Bob Sinclair: Laroy Canady; Matt Carpenter. And we're going to have a couple of new additions to add to that to help even win this award next year, and that would be Tim Voner and Tim Carman.

Thank you very much, and we look forward to coming back again next year. (Applause)

MR. COSGRIFF: In Division V, from St. Petersburg, Florida, Andy Marshall, supervisor. (Applause)

MR. ANDY MARSHALL: Thank you, Mr. Cosgriff. National Service Officers at St. Petersburg, home of National Commander Harry McDonald, appreciate this award. This award was given to me, but the ones who earned it are the staff at St. Petersburg, especially two people who work harder than anyone I know soliciting money for the National Service Foundation. That's Derrick L. Modest and G. Raymond Raulerson.

Without them and the staff at St. Petersburg, this would not be possible, and we appreciate what the National Service Foundation does for the National Service Office, and we're trying to protect our interests by raising money for this most worthwhile program.

And again, thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. COSGRIFF: Please join me in thanking these Service Officers and Service Offices for the job that they do for us. Thank you. (Applause)

I'll continue on with the report. All funds of the Foundation remain invested with the Trust Division of Cincinnati's Fifth Third Bank. Our annual audit was done by Deloitte and Touche. This audit also includes The Colorado Trust. I was asked the question a couple of times if The Colorado Trust was included in our audit. I want to assure you it is. This report will be incorporated in the official record of this convention. As a charitable organization, we report to the Internal Revenue annually.

The National Order of Trench Rats Fund shows a balance of $191,294. I'm going to turn over to Commander McDonald a check in the amount of $8,914, the amount earned by this account during the past year. By request of the Trench Rats, this gift is designated to support the National Legislative Program. (Applause)

As mentioned earlier, The Colorado Trust was introduced two years ago by National Adjutant Art Wilson. It's maintained as a separate fund within the National Service Foundation, and expenditures are decided upon with the advice of representatives, one from each of the 21 districts.

Since its inception, $3.3 million has moved into The Colorado Trust. And as I said before, we owe thanks to National Adjutant Art Wilson for his idea of establishing this trust. This includes the initial $500,000 grant from the Department of Colorado, which established the Trust; contributions from chapters and departments across the nation; matching funds from the DAV national organization; and appropriations from the National Service Foundation, which houses the Trust.

We've made some well-chosen grants totaling $2.7 million to chapters and departments in the last two years. These have been used to support the Transportation Program, the hospital service coordinators, and other worthy service initiatives at local and state levels.

Art Wilson did a terrific job in reporting on The Colorado Trust in his remarks yesterday, so I don't have to go into that in more detail, because Art really explained the whole program.

I do want to say this. Almost from the beginning, we've had chapters and departments with more funds than opportunities to serve, and we've had other departments and chapters without resources to fund important services that they wanted and needed to provide.

Thanks to The Colorado Trust, the playing field is now level. Wealthier chapters and departments enjoy an immense opportunity to make sure that no disabled veterans lose out on DAV service in their programs, programs that less fortunate chapters and departments could not and were not able to afford prior to The Colorado Trust.

I offer my thanks on behalf of the board to the chapters and departments whose generosity enables the Trust to fulfill its mission. I also want to thank the national organization which has matched one for one every dollar that the chapters and the departments have contributed to The Colorado Trust.

Comrade Commander, this concludes my report. And, as tradition would have it, the Foundation stands ready to accept donations from the convention floor. And these donations will be placed in the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund, the Trench Rats Fund or The Colorado Trust as designated.

Before we start, I'd like to say that we received a check from a long-time past national commander, Bonnie Maile, for $2500. And I also have a check from Chapter 2 for $2500, Chapter 2, San Diego.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Dick, just to kick this off, I want to make a donation in the amount of $500 in memory of my granddaughter, Jennifer Erin Day. (Applause)

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

I have a check here for a hundred dollars from the Azusa Chapter 64, Glendora, California. Thank you very much.

MR. DON J. POULIOT: Dick, Chapter 2, San Diego, Don Pouliot. It's a pleasure to present this check to you for the fine work that you've been doing. Thank you very much.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you. Don has presented a check every year for the last 18 years. And you ought to read, be sure to read the list of contributors. It's in the annual report. One hundred dollars.

MEMBER: Mr. Cosgriff, from Machado Memorial Chapter, San Jose, California, Chapter 11, we'd like to donate $500.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MEMBER: The Department of Florida presents a check for $100 to the National Service Foundation in honor of our past department commander Robert Melcher. Thank you so much.

MR. COSGRIFF: This is for the Perpetual Rehab Fund.

MR. DAVID SMITH: David Smith, department commander from Michigan. On behalf of the Department of Michigan, I would like to present this check to you for $5,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. HENRY A. VEILLETTE: Hank Veillette, past department commander, California. Dick, here's a contribution in memory of my mother, Lucy Veillette.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, Hank. Thank you. This is a check from Henry Veillette in memory of his mother for $100.

MR. RICHARD J. FERRARO: Past Department Commander Richard Ferraro from the great State of New Jersey. Argonne Chapter Number 18 would like to donate $1,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: Good morning, Mr. President. It gives me a great pleasure to present to you the check from the State of California in the amount of $1,000 to the National Service Foundation. We want to thank you.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: Oh, and by the way, I would like to present this check to The Colorado Trust from the Department of California for $50,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: We'll accept both of them.

MR. RONALD J. LEADER: Mr. Chairman, Ron Leader, Chapter 95, California. Here's a check from the chapter for $350. And a little reminder here that whenever I come to Las Vegas I apply three rules: First of all, fill up the gas tank as soon as you get to town; secondly, save enough money to drive back home; and third, never put your money on anything but a sure thing. So here's $150 personal check for the National Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. RICCIARDI: Anthony Ricciardi, department commander of New York, proudly presents from the Empire State, $1,000 for the National Service Foundation and $25,000 for The Colorado Trust Fund.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. MICK JONES: Mick Jones, Department of Missouri commander. I'd like to present a check for $500 to the National Service Foundation and a check to The Colorado Trust for $500.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. ROBERT T. REYNOLDS: Robert Reynolds, department commander, Department of Virginia, is proud to present this check in the amount of $1,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, sir. That's $1,000 for the Foundation.

MR. DAVID TANNENBAUM: Dave Tannenbaum, adjutant, Department of Virginia. I'm proud to present, on behalf of Prince William County Chapter 15 a check in the amount of $500, and from Archer T.

Gammon Chapter 19, Danville, Virginia, $1,500 in honor of Bill Williams, both for the Rehab Fund.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. JAMES HORNSHAW: Jim Hornshaw, Chapter 22, Portsmouth, Virginia, the home of the Atlantic Fleet, presents this check for $300, sir.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. FELIX MEJIA: Felix Mejia, commander, Chapter 70, California. Again, we are pleased to present you with this check in the amount of $500.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MEMBER: Hi, Dick! You know, from the desert, we don't have any gold mines any more, and I had to scratch through the sand quite a bit for this. This is from Morongo Basin Chapter 60 in Twenty-Nine Palms, California, the home of the largest and the hottest marine base in the world.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, $500.

MEMBER: The Blind Veterans National Chapter would like to donate $100 in memory of our departed comrades this past year.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. HENRY H. SADLER: Hank Sadler, department commander from the State of Minnesota. We'd like to present a check for $5,000 to the Charitable Trust, and we have an additional check for $5,000 for the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much. Minnesota has done an awful lot for this Foundation over the years.

MR. RICHARD W. TURPEN: Richard Turpen, Minneapolis Chapter Number 1, a check for the National Service Foundation of $5,146, which puts our total contribution over $100,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. WAYNE W. BLUE: Wayne Blue, adjutant, Minneapolis Chapter 1, Minnesota, a check for $5,000 for the Charitable Trust.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. ROETS: John Roets, commander, Chapter 4, Wichita, Kansas, a check for $500.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, Commander.

MR. JAMES L. PRITCHETT, JR.: Jim Pritchett, commander of the Department of Maryland. On behalf of the members of the Department of Maryland, I present this check for $1,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. JESSE SHERROD: Jesse Sherrod, Chapter 1, Baltimore, Maryland, would like to give you a check for the National Service Foundation for $3,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. RANDALL J. SABOUSKY: Randy Sabousky from Tri-County 67. We'd like to present to you a thousand dollars to the National Service Foundation and also a thousand dollars to the DAV Colorado Trust.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. EUGENE J. NEWTON: Department of New Jersey, Gene Newton, donating $5,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. VICTOR PRICE: Victor Price, senior vice-commander, on behalf of the members of St. Louis Chapter Number 1 donate $2,000 to the National Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. DONALD E. BREN: Mr. Chairman, Don Bren, commander of the Department of South Dakota, Chapter 1, Sioux Falls, Past National Commander Gene Murphy's home chapter, a check for $250; from the Department of South Dakota, a check for $500.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

NEC VANDEMORE: Mr. Chairman, Harry VandeMore, NEC, the 14th District. And we have kind of a unique situation up in the 14th District. Every time we meet, we pass the hat and contribute to the Memorial Fund in the name of Hiram J. Fuller and Robert Hannah. And so I've got an envelope sealed up here, and there's some change in there, but it's $178, if our count is right.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. RUSSELL T. HENDERSON: Russell Henderson, Department of Massachusetts commander. On behalf of the department, I'd like to

present you a check to the Foundation for a thousand dollars.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you.

MEMBER: On behalf of Salem, Virginia, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Chapter, I would like to donate $500 to the National Service Foundation and in honor of Past National Commander and President of the Board of Directors of the DAV Vietnam Veterans Memorial for $500.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. DAVID NELSON: David Nelson, commander, Chapter 2, Kansas City, Missouri, to the National Service Foundation, $10,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. GREGORY R. HOLLOWAY: Greg Holloway, commander, Chapter 7, the great State of Nebraska, in Lincoln. In a long-standing tradition we are donating $100 in the name of our past commander. However, in addition to that, we have made a direct contribution to our National Service Office for the sum of $7,000 to totally refurbish and modernize our office to make it user friendly and better friendly to the employees.

And I want to thank the Service Office for sending us a new Service Officer, a great Service Office, Dave Thomason.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much. And you know, that means that the Foundation doesn't have to spend that $7,000. You did it for us. Thank you.

MEMBER: Mr. Cosgriff, on behalf of Shreveport-Bossier Chapter 30, the largest chapter in Northwest Louisiana with a small corps of dedicated workers, I'd like to present this check to the National Service Foundation for $5,000: 2500 in memory of Eddie Marks and 2500 in honor of Lewis Ketchum.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. RICHARD SAMUELSON: Dick Samuelson, Chapter 22, Colorado, Games chairman. We have two checks that we're donating through our Games Committee, and $1,000 for the National Service Foundation and $1,000 for The Colorado Trust Fund.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. LOUIS TORREZ: Louis Torrez, department commander for the great State of Colorado, would like to present a check for $5,000 to the National Service Foundation, and a check for 5,000 to The Colorado Trust.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, sir.

MR. CHRISTOPHER D. HARL: Chris Harl, Arlington-Fairfax, Virginia, Chapter 10. I'd like to donate a hundred dollars to the Service Fund.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. JOHN F. McCOY: John McCoy, commander, Lakewood, California, $200, Dick.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, John, very much. Appreciate it.

MR. CHARLIE STEPHENS: Mr. Chairman, Charlie Stephens, Chapter 11, Salina, Kansas. On behalf of our 400 members, it's pleasure to present this check to you for the National Service Foundation for $1,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you again, sir.

MEMBER: Mr. Cosgriff, on behalf of the National Guild of Attorneys-in-Fact, I have two checks I'd like to present to you: One for $1600 to The Colorado Trust, and one for $1600 to the National Service Foundation. I would be remiss, however, if I would not recognize the following departments and chapters for their donations to our 3rd Annual Golf Tournament that made this possible: The Department of Maryland; Department of Indiana; Department of California; Department of Massachusetts; Department of Florida; Ron Drach; Alabama Chapter 12; Alabama Chapter 25; Indiana Chapter 3; Minnesota Chapter 1; Minnesota Chapter 2; Missouri Chapter 1; DAV Des Moines, Iowa Chapter; DAV Chapter Number 1, North Dakota; and DAV Chapter 41, New Jersey; and lastly, Chapter 1, South Dakota.

We thank you. We anticipate your support next year.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. McCARTER: Mr. Chairman, Jim McCarter, department commander of the great State of North Carolina, where service to veterans and their families is our only job. At this time, I'd like to present this check for $1,000 to the Service Foundation,

and we pledge another thousand dollar check at Midwinter, and we send out a challenge to all departments to match it at Midwinter.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: Chapter 45, Oconto County, Wisconsin, Chapter of the Year, presents you with this hundred dollar check.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. FRAZIER: Larry Frazier, commander, Department of Arkansas, the natural state, and the most beautiful state, wishes to donate this check to the National Service Foundation for good use. Thank you.

MR. COSGRIFF: One thousand dollars.

MR. ERNEST K. WHITE: I'm Ernest K. White, chapter commander of Louisville Chapter 6 of Louisville, Kentucky, and we would like to present this $500 check to the Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you.

MR. G. RAYMOND RAULERSON: Mr. Cosgriff, Ray Raulerson from Chapter 143 in Florida. I have two presentations. First is my own personal $100 in honor of my father, who taught me we take care of our own and always give back to those who help us.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. RAULERSON: The second is $1,000 from the chapter in honor of Robert Timmons, National Service Officer in St. Petersburg who could not be with us today, who truly epitomizes that you give all to serve the veteran.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. NORMAN RESNER: Norman Resner, senior vice, Department of Illinois, a check for $500 from the DAV Auxiliary from Quad City Chapter 53 for the National Service Foundation; also, from Chapter 17, DAV, a check for the National Service Foundation for $5,000; from the Department of Illinois for the National Service Foundation, another check for $5,000; and from the Department of Illinois, a check for $5,000 to The Colorado Trust Fund.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir. Appreciate it.

MR. MICHAEL VENEZIA: Mike Venezia, department commander, Department of Vermont. I'd like to present the National Service Foundation with a check for $1,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. JACK SCHURMAN: Jack Schurman, commander, Holland, Michigan, Chapter 14.

MR. COSGRIFF: $200, appreciate it.

MR. CLEVE LENZ: I'm Cleve Lenz, treasurer, Chapter 34, Kansas, big flat state. You travel through, and you go one way or you go the other way. It doesn't make any difference which way you go, you've got a long ways to go.

MR. COSGRIFF: $500.

MR. LENZ: This is in memory of Thomas Bond, our VAVS, who passed away.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. MICHAEL R. SWEAT: Mike Sweat, Chapter 3, Roanoke, Virginia. On behalf of David H. McKenzie Chapter Number 3, and in honor of Sloan Hoopes, president of the Commanders and Adjutants Association, we'd like to present you $1,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

Another check for $100 from Lew and Mary Snowbeck.

MR. VICTOR J. LAMPE: Vic Lampe, commander of Cincinnati Chapter Number 1, the mother chapter of this great organization, the Disabled American Veterans. And it's also a thrill to see that the Robert S. Marx flag is in attendance at this convention. I present you with a check for $5,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you.

MR. ANDY ANDREWS: A hundred dollars, Department of Nevada, Commander Andy Andrews.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. PETE BUELL: Pete Buell, Henderson, Nevada, Chapter 12.

MR. COSGRIFF: All right; $100.

MR. NORMAN NEWELL: Norm Newell from the Department of Maine, Maine, the way life ought to be. We donate a check for $500 in memory of Chris Ann Burns.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. JOHN E. OGOZALY: John Ogozaly, Department of

Pennsylvania, the State of Pennsylvania, a check to the National Service Foundation for $1,000. I also have a personal check here for $500 on behalf of the National Service Officers and the NSO Offices in the State of Pennsylvania.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much sir, appreciate it.

MEMBER: Mr. Cosgriff, this year I did bring the check. On behalf of the Disabled American Veterans from Fresno Chapter 1 in California, I'd like to present you a check. And also, that chapter happens to be the home chapter of a candidate we have running, George Steese, for higher office. I figure we could get that in here. It's a check for $2500 for the Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you.

MR. HARLAN F. PLUMMER: Good morning, sir. My name is Harlan Plummer. I'm from the District of Ohio, and I'm here to give you a check for the National Service Foundation from the PDCs of Ohio, $1,100.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. JAMES PENN: My name is James Penn from Gardena Chapter 43 in California. I present to you a check for the Service Foundation for $100.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you again, sir.

MR. J. McDOWELL: Mr. Chairman, J. McDowell, department commander from the Grand Canyon State of Arizona. I'd like to present this check to you in the name of The Colorado Trust for the sum of $25,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. CONRAD J. MORIN: My name's Conrad Morin from Chapter 4, Portsmouth, New Hampshire on the eastern sea coast, and present a hundred dollars to the National Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. TAFT YATES: Taft Yates, department commander, Department of Kansas. It gives me great pleasure to present a check to the National Service Foundation for $500.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, sir.

MEMBER: On behalf of the Department of Wisconsin, I'd like to present you with an IOU for $1,500. The reason for the IOU is that someone has inadvertently picked up our commander's bag with the check for $1500 that is to go to the National Service Foundation. Since we are all honorable ladies and gentlemen, I would appreciate it if you would check your bags and see if you have that check.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you. That's a warning.

MS. EVELYN E. HARRISON: Eve Harrison, department commander of the First State of Delaware. I'd like to donate $100 in honor of our Immediate Past Commander Reese Phillips.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. GILBERT G. BROWN: Gil Brown from Florida Chapter 84. I thought I was going to be the first on an IOU. But on behalf of the chapter here, we're going to have $1,250 for the National Service Foundation, and if anybody has found a check for that amount, I'd appreciate you turning it in. Thank you.

MR. COSGRIFF: We won't let you forget it.

MR. GAUDENCIO R. REYNO: Audi Reyno, commander, Long Beach Chapter Number 17, and Department of California Service Officer. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to present a check for $1,000 for the National Service Foundation in memory of our deceased members of Long Beach Chapter 17.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. REYNO: And then I have another check for $125 donated by Mr. Alex Andres in memory of his son, Artemio Andres; $125 for the National Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MEMBER: On behalf of San Jacinto Chapter 1, Department of Texas, I hereby donate this $1500 check for the National Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. GERALD E. HUMPHRIES: Mr. Cosgriff, Gerald Humphries, DAV, Jackson, Mississippi. On behalf of the department, here's a thousand dollars for the National Service Office, Jackson. I also have another check for a thousand dollars from DAV Chapter 11 in the name of the Jackson NSO Office.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much. They're both for the Foundation.

MR. FRANK J. DROGO: Frank Drogo, past state commander of Massachusetts. Yesterday I won a few bucks in the slots, and our National Executive Committeeman Alan Bowers says we should donate ten percent of that to the National Service Foundation. So in memory of my mother, Angelina, I'd like to donate $100 to the National Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. WILLIAM F. COLEY: Bill Coley, Chapter 14, Philadelphia. I'd like to donate $100 in the memory of Nick Mano.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. I. ARLEQUIN-MENDEZ: Good morning. Puerto Rico is here, Arlequin-Mendez, Puerto Rico Department commander, give $500.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. NORMAN MACON: Good morning. I'm past commander of Chapter 3, the Philippines, Norman Macon. And on behalf of our chapter -- I didn't bring a check book, and I'm new at this; this is my first time -- I'd like to pledge on behalf of our chapter $100.

MR. COSGRIFF: Fine, thank you.

MR. WESSING: National Commander, Mr. Chairman, here's $101. Walter Wessing, Kansas City, Missouri. This is a little-bitty boy. But this is in honor of our state adjutant, Paul Pealer.

MR. COSGRIFF: Okay, sir. Thank you very much.

MR. TOM TOMLINSON: Tom Tomlinson from Chapter 119, St. Clair Shores, Michigan, a check for $500.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you.

MR. THOMAS H. FARRAND, III: Good to meet you, and it's a great convention. I have a heart in my life, love for Jesus Christ with all you people and the great job you all have done. An IOU, Commander Thomas H. Farrand, III, Yorktown Chapter 13, $400, and I'll send that check to you.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much. Send it to Nancy O'Brien.

Just trying to make some bets out there how much money we just collected: $230,000. (Applause) And $90,000 was designated for The Colorado Trust. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We know this and you know it: This came from members and departments and chapters. Again, thank you very much.

Commander, that completes our report.

COMMANDER McDONALD: May I have a motion to accept the report of the Service Foundation? Mike 3.

MR. RICCIARDI: Department of New York Commander Anthony Ricciardi seconds that motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: I need a motion. Make it a motion.

MR. RAYMOND J. LANDRY: Ray Landry, Chapter 11, California. I second the --

COMMANDER McDONALD: Ladies and gentlemen, I've got two seconds. I need a motion and then I need a section. Mike 3.

MR. RICCIARDI: Anthony Ricciardi, commander of the Department of New York, makes the motion to accept that fine report.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. Mike 1.

MR. BIXBY: Jim Bixby, Massachusetts Chapter 29, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: We have a motion and a second to accept that outstanding report of the National Service Foundation. All those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

Financial Statements for the Years Ended December 31, 1997 and 1996 and Independent Auditors' Report

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu International

Deloitte & Touche LLP

250 East Fifth Street
P.O. Box 5340
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INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

Board of Directors,
Disabled American Veterans
National Service Foundation:

We have audited the accompanying statements of financial position of the Disabled American Veterans National Service Foundation (the "Foundation") as of December 31, 1997 and 1996 and the related statements of activities, functional expenses and cash flows for the years then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Foundation's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

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

In our opinion, such financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Foundation at December 31, 1997 and 1996, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

February 6, 1998

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu International

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 1997 AND 1996

	1997	1996
ASSETS		
CASH, (including $235,765 and $26,271 relating to The Colorado Trust in 1997 and 1996, respectively) (Note 2)	$ 288,295	$ 63,499
INTEREST AND DIVIDENDS RECEIVABLE (Note 2)	139,200	101,970
CONTRIBUTION RECEIVABLE		25,050
THE COLORADO TRUST RECEIVABLE FROM DAV (Notes 2,3)		558,600
PREPAID EXPENSES	14,253	322,832
INVESTMENTS - Marketable securities (including $2,285,810 and $224,124 relating to The Colorado Trust in 1997 and 1996, respectively) (Note 2)	19,139,639	14,523,581
TOTAL	$19,581,387	$15,595,532
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
LIABILITIES:		
Due to DAV (Note 3)	$ 42,578	$ 46,713
Due to DAV legislative program (Note 2)	8,914	10,044
Other liabilities	10,116	19,881
Total liabilities	61,608	76,638
NET ASSETS (Note 2):		
Unrestricted net assets:		
General	4,693,089	3,501,707
The Colorado Trust	1,000,000	500,000
Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund	9,086,403	8,276,320
Accumulated unrealized appreciation of investments	3,019,924	1,927,003
Total unrestricted net assets	17,799,416	14,205,030
Temporarily restricted net assets - The Colorado Trust	1,529,069	1,125,070
Permanently restricted net assets - National Order of Trench Rats DAV Legislative Fund	191,294	188,794
Total net assets	19,519,779	15,518,894
TOTAL	$19,581,387	$15,595,532

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1997 AND 1996

	1997				1996			
	General, The Colorado Trust, Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund (Unrestricted)	The Colorado Trust (Temporarily Restricted)	National Order of Trench Rats (Permanently Restricted)	Total	General, The Colorado Trust, Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund (Unrestricted)	The Colorado Trust (Temporarily Restricted)	National Order of Trench Rats (Permanently Restricted)	Total
PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUES (Notes 2,3):								
Public support - contributions and bequests	$ 810,083	$ 1,069,575	$ 2,500	$ 1,882,158	$ 890,364	$ 1,117,200	$ 4,000	$ 2,011,564
Net assets released from restrictions (Note 4)	721,567	(721,567)						
Revenues:								
Interest and dividend income	610,955	55,991		666,946	617,274	7,870		625,144
Gain on sale of investment securities	1,321,244			1,321,244	156,308			156,308
Total revenues	1,932,199	55,991		1,988,190	773,582	7,870		781,452
Total public support and revenues	3,463,849	403,999	2,500	3,870,348	1,663,946	1,125,070	4,000	2,793,016
EXPENSES:								
Program:								
Grants in accordance with The Colorado Trust (Note 2)	721,567			721,567				
Transfers to DAV National Headquarters (Note 1)	85,514			85,514	73,913			73,913
Total program expenses	807,081			807,081	73,913			73,913
Supporting services	155,303			155,303	153,419			153,419
Total expenses	962,384			962,384	227,332			227,332
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS BEFORE UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	2,501,465	403,999	2,500	2,907,964	1,436,614	1,125,070	4,000	2,565,684
INCREASE IN UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	1,092,921			1,092,921	813,157			813,157
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS AFTER UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	3,594,386	403,999	2,500	4,000,885	2,249,771	1,125,070	4,000	3,378,841
NET ASSETS, Beginning of year	14,205,030	1,125,070	188,794	15,518,894	11,955,259		184,794	12,140,053
NET ASSETS, End of year	$ 17,799,416	$ 1,529,069	$ 191,294	$ 19,519,779	$ 14,205,030	$ 1,125,070	$ 188,794	$ 15,518,894

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1997 AND 1996

	1997	1996
ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGES (Note 3)	$ 92,555	$ 89,385
TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES	11,609	8,443
INSURANCE	3,503	3,974
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	3,550	10,918
AWARDS	4,594	2,820
PRINTING, POSTAGE AND SUPPLIES	11,720	14,457
REGISTRATION FEES	65	85
INVESTMENT TRUSTEE FEES	27,189	22,563
MISCELLANEOUS	518	774
TOTAL SUPPORTING SERVICES	$ 155,303	$ 153,419

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
YEARS ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1997 AND 1996

	1997	1996
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Change in unrestricted and temporarily restricted net assets	$ 3,998,385	$ 3,374,841
Adjustments to reconcile change in unrestricted and temporarily restricted net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Increase in unrealized appreciation on investments	(1,092,921)	(813,157)
Gain on sale of investment securities	(1,321,244)	(156,308)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Interest and dividends receivable	(37,230)	35,832
Contribution receivable	583,650	(583,650)
Prepaid expenses	308,579	(313,492)
Due to DAV	(4,135)	2,482
Due to DAV legislative program	(1,130)	(785)
Other	(9,765)	14,881
Net cash provided by operating activities	2,424,189	1,560,644
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Purchases of investments	(16,581,949)	(8,805,498)
Proceeds from sale of investments	14,380,056	7,269,769
Net cash used by investing activities	(2,201,893)	(1,535,729)
CASH FLOW FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:		
Contributions of permanently restricted assets	2,500	4,000
NET INCREASE IN CASH	224,796	28,915
CASH, Beginning of year	63,499	34,584
CASH, End of year	$ 288,295	$ 63,499

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1997 AND 1996

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.

Contributions - Contributions received are recorded as unrestricted, temporarily restricted or permanently restricted support depending on the existence and nature of any donor restrictions. The Foundation recognizes contributions with donor imposed restrictions that are met in the same period as unrestricted contributions.

Unrestricted Net Assets - All contributions and bequests to the Foundation are designated by the Board of Directors (the "Board") for permanent investment in the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund as a reserve for future needs. Investment income derived from these invested amounts is used for current operations of the Foundation or appropriated for use by DAV. Donated assets are recorded at their fair market value at the time of the donation. Additionally, in both 1997 and 1996, the Board designated $500,000 for The Colorado Trust, which designations are included in unrestricted net assets.

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 1997 and 1996, respectively, The Colorado Trust received $194,575 and $558,600 in contributions which were matched by DAV. In 1997, DAV made an additional contribution of $305,425 to The Colorado Trust. Additionally, in both 1997 and 1996, the Foundation's board designated $500,000 for use by The Colorado Trust, which designations are included in unrestricted net assets.

Permanently Restricted Net Assets - Contributions by the National Order of Trench Rats for the DAV Legislative Program are permanently restricted. Investment income of $8,914 and $10,044, in 1997 and 1996, respectively, from the National Order of Trench Rats DAV Legislative Fund are transferred to DAV and are 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 gains at December 31 are summarized below:

1997	Cost	Market	Unrealized Gain
Cash Equivalents	$ 2,459,226	$ 2,459,226	
Corporate Bonds	3,237,694	3,269,520	$ 31,826
U.S. Treasury Notes	4,261,853	4,294,958	33,105
Common Stocks	5,510,942	8,459,453	2,948,511
Common Stock Funds	650,000	656,482	6,482
Total	$16,119,715	$19,139,639	$3,019,924
1996			
Cash Equivalents	$ 518,492	$ 518,492	
Corporate Bonds	1,101,233	1,113,864	$ 12,631
U.S. Treasury Notes	4,446,900	4,599,361	152,461
Common Stocks	5,774,645	7,514,466	1,739,821
Common Stock Funds	755,308	777,398	22,090
Total	$12,596,578	$14,523,581	$1,927,003

Income Taxes - As a not-for-profit service organization, the Foundation has been approved as exempt from federal income taxes as a 501(c)4 organization. Contributions made to the Foundation are tax deductible by the contributor.

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

Reclassifications – Certain 1996 amounts have been reclassified to conform with the 1997 presentation.

3. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The DAV provides the Foundation with the use of DAV personnel, facilities and equipment. DAV charged the Foundation $92,555 and $89,385 in 1997 and 1996, respectively, for personnel services. At December 31, 1997 and 1996, the Foundation owed $42,578 and $46,713, respectively, for personnel services. Facilities and equipment are provided by the DAV at no charge.

In 1997, the DAV Charitable Service Trust made a $375,000 contribution to The Colorado Trust for the DAV National Transportation Van Grants administered through The Colorado Trust.

As discussed in Note 2, DAV contributed $500,000 and $558,600 to The Colorado Trust in 1997 and 1996, respectively. At December 31, 1996, this balance of $558,600 was payable to The Colorado Trust by DAV.

Additionally, as discussed in Note 2, the Board of the Foundation designated $500,000 in both 1997 and 1996 for The Colorado Trust.

In performing the duties of their positions, the DAV's National Commander, National Adjutant and National Finance Committee Chairman serve on the Board of the Foundation.

4. NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS

Net assets are released from restrictions by incurring expenses to satisfy the restricted purposes or by occurrence of other events specified by donors and are summarized as follows for the year ended December 31, 1997:

Grants to DAV chapters and departments in accordance with The Colorado Trust:	
Hospital Service Coordinator Program	$384,204
National Transporation Network Van Program	327,119
Other	10,000
Miscellaneous expenses	244
Total	$721,567

* * * * * *

COMMANDER McDONALD: And, by the way, you can pass on to Al Linden down in Florida that California made us look bad again. (Laughter)

At this time, it's my pleasure to introduce for a report on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, Mr. Tom Daley, chairman.

MR. DALEY: Commander, this is the second reading of the proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen of the 77th DAV National Convention.

Commander McDonald, National Adjutant Art Wilson and delegates: I will now proceed with the second reading of the proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws which are recommended for adoption. In the interests of time, again, I will only read the number and the RESOLVED portions of these resolutions.

Resolution Number 217.

RESOLVED to amend the indicated section of the National Bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans by an addition: Article 9, Chapters, Section 9.2, Paragraph 1, to add the following sentence thereto: "Appointed officers shall serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority."

This is covered under Article 8, State Department, Section 8.3. It's an addition to include the chapters.

Resolution Number 218.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that National Headquarters be directed to revise the Official Ritual of the Disabled American Veterans to remove the antiquated usages and references and to modernize its language.

All that is is housekeeping, and we plan to do that.

Resolution Number 219.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the National Headquarters be directed to revise the Official Ritual of the Disabled American Veterans to render it gender neutral, except where prohibited by law or to ensure historical accuracy.

Resolution Number 220.

RESOLVED to amend the indicated sections of the National Bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans by adding Article 11, Membership. This would omit Section 11.13 in its entirety; and amend Article 16, Disciplinary Actions, to add a new Section 16.2 and renumber the remaining sections, such new section to read as follows:

Section 16.2. Lawsuits; Exhaustion of Remedies. Besides any other grounds therefor, a member may be suspended and tried under Article 16 should he or she resort to, or join in, a civil court action against a chapter, state department or the national organization, or officers thereof, as such, before exhausting all remedies available within the organization.

This was originally in Article 11, and we are amending it and putting it under 16 for disciplinary actions.

Now I will read each and move for adoption.

Resolution Number 217. Article 9, Chapters, Section 9.2, Paragraph 1, to add the following sentence thereto: "Appointed officers shall serve at the pleasure of the appointing power." Recommend its adoption.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Do I hear a motion to adopt Resolution 217? Mike 2.

MR. CARL VLECK: Comrade Commander, Carl Vleck, Department of Nebraska, Chapter 2, so moves.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. We have a motion. Mike 1.

MR. HENDERSON: Russell Henderson, department commander of Massachusetts, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. You've heard the motion and the second. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried.

MR. DALEY: Thank you, Commander.

Resolution Number 218.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that National Headquarters be directed to revise the Official Ritual of the Disabled American Veterans to remove antiquated usages and references and to modernize its language.

Move for its adoption.

COMMANDER McDONALD: The Chair will entertain a motion to adopt Resolution 218. Mike 3.

MR. HORNSHAW: Jim Hornshaw, Chapter 22, Portsmouth, Virginia, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: I need a motion, sir. Make it in the form of a motion if you would, please.

MR. HORNSHAW: I make it in the form of a motion that we accept it.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. Mike 1.

MR. GILPIN: John Gilpin, alternate NEC Chapter 50, Rockland, Mass, makes a second on that motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. We have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried.

MR. DALEY: Thank you, Commander.

Resolution Number 219.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that National Headquarters be directed to revise the Official Ritual of the Disabled American Veterans to render it gender neutral, except where prohibited by law or to ensure historical accuracy.

We move it for adoption.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Mike 1.

MR. DROGO: Frank Drogo, Chapter 29 in Braintree, Massachusetts, makes a motion to adopt the Resolution 219.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. Mike 3.

MR. CLAUDE A. NELSON: Claude Nelson, Chapter 47, New York. I second that motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. You've heard the motion and the second to adopt Resolution Number 219. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried.

MR. DALEY: Thank you, Commander.

This is Resolution Number 220.

RESOLVED to amend the indicated sections of the National Bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans by adding text as follows. Omissions are indicated by lining through and additions are indicated by the underlining.

What we're doing is removing from Article 11.

Article 11, Membership. Omit Section 11.13 in its entirety; and to amend Article 16, Disciplinary Actions, to add a new Section 16.2 and renumber the remaining sections, such new section to read as follows:

Section 16.2. Lawsuits; Exhaustion of Remedies. Besides any other grounds therefor, a member may be suspended and tried under Article 16 should he or she resort to, or join in, a civil action against a chapter, state department or the national organizations, or officers thereof, as such, before exhausting all remedies available within the organizations.

What we're doing is removing under Article 11, Membership, and adding it, amending it to Article 16, Disciplinary Actions. And it's moved for adoption.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Mike 1.

MR. TANNER: Jim Tanner, adjutant, Joseph R. Harold Chapter Memorial Number 10, Massachusetts, makes that motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. Mike 3.

MR. LUCIANI: Mike 3 is Nick Luciani, Chapter 18, Watertown, New York. I'll second that motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: You've heard the motion and the second to adopt Resolution Number 220. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried.

MR. DALEY: Thank you, Commander. Commander, this completes the resolutions that the committee recommended for adoption. I'd like to thank Fred Bristol and Dick Sarrazin. Every primary district was present, and I want to thank them for their support and contribution. Commander, I move that the committee recommendations be accepted, that the resolutions be adopted and that the committee be dismissed with a vote of thanks.

COMMANDER McDONALD: We have a motion. Do I hear a second? Mike 1.

MR. HENDERSON: Russell Henderson, commander, Massachusetts, seconds that.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. You've heard the motion and second. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried. Thank you.

MR. DALEY: Thank you, Commander. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Well, some good news. We were just handed two additional checks from the Department of New Hampshire and one is for $500 to the DAV National Service Foundation, and the second one is $500 for The Colorado Trust. We thank you. (Applause)

We will next hear the report on Legislative and Veterans Affairs, Dick Giese, chairman.

MR. RICHARD E. GIESE: Thank you, Commander. Comrade Commander, delegates: The National Convention Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights was called to order for its first business session on August 24th, 1998 by Committee Advisors Tommy L. Tomlinson and Joseph A. Violante.

The first order of business was the election of a convention chairman. Dick Giese of Florida was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed, and Dick Giese was elected chairman.

The next order of business was the nomination and election of a secretary. Don Pouliot of California was nominated and elected as secretary of the committee.

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

Resolution Number 2, a ten-year protection for service-connected evaluations.

Resolution Number 4, provide for commencement of payment period for temporary total ratings for compensation as of the date of entitlement event.

Number 6, supporting legislation to provide service connection to atomic veterans for all recognized radiogenic diseases.

Resolution Number 7, expand POW presumptions.

Number 8, to liberalize criteria for Agent Orange claims.

Number 9, authorize automobile adaptive equipment eligibility to any veteran who has a service-connected disability that inhibits the ability to safely operate a motor vehicle.

Number 11, supporting a change in the payment of certain accrued benefits upon death of a beneficiary.

Number 12, oppose reduction, taxation or elimination of VA benefits.

Number 13, opposing the indexing of VA disability compensation benefits.

Number 14, to raise the estate limit applicable to certain incompetent institutionalized veterans.

Number 15, allow all veterans to recover amounts withheld as tax on disability severance pay.

Number 16, opposing any proposal that would offset payments of Social Security disability insurance benefits for any other federal benefit by VA compensation.

Number 17, concurrent receipt of VA disability compensation and military longevity retirement pay.

Number 20, mortgage protection life insurance for 100 percent service-connected veterans.

Number 22, to increase the face value of service disabled veterans insurance.

Number 23, restore entitlement and increase burial and plot allowances for survivors of all wartime veterans.

Number 24, provide headstones or markers for all veterans.

Number 27, support cost-of-living adjustment for dependents education assistance program.

Number 30, allow for the payment of fees, expenses and court costs under Equal Access to Justice to unsupervised, nonattorney representatives practicing before the Court of Veterans Appeals.

Number 32, in support of a COLA for all military retirees.

Sorry. I overlooked one here.

Number 31, amend the vocational rehabilitation program.

Number 34, seeking the immediate release of any Americans who may still be held captive from World War II, Korea or Vietnam. (Applause)

Number 36, extend military commissary and exchange privileges and space-available air travel to certain service-connected disabled veterans.

Number 37, oppose any authorization to use members of the Armed Forces for human experimentation.

Number 44, oppose reorganization of the VA as a bureau within the Department of Defense. (Applause)

Number 50, oppose the use of VA-generated savings for purposes other than restoring VA benefits and services. (Applause)

Number 61, to support the implementation of a Department of Defense award of a peace heart medal in lieu of the purple heart for noncombat-incurred wounds, injuries and death.

Number 70, disability compensation increase.

Number 74, in support of legislation to provide that special separation benefits not be withheld from VA disability compensation payments.

Number 86, oppose redefining service connection.

Number 87, oppose any change in the Veterans Administration's duty to assist.

Number 88, oppose the practice of allowing the Board of Veterans Appeals to participate in defending decisions before the Court of Veterans Appeals.

Number 89, oppose any reduction in veterans' programs.

Number 93, provide a temporary total rating for the period that an amputee has a new prosthetic device constructed.

Number 94, SMCK for loss of female mammary gland.

Number 102, to increase the service-connected burial allowance.

Number 120, oppose a freeze in the rates of VA disability compensation benefits.

Number 123, support state veterans home programs.

Number 125, support adequate funding for all VA programs.

Number 127, eliminate the delimiting date for spouse in the VA's Chapter 35 education program.

Number 128, provide Chapter 35 educational benefits for dependents of veterans rated 80 percent or more service-connected disabled.

Number 150, to provide an open period to apply for service disabled veterans insurance.

Number 182, provide higher ratings for repugnant and disfiguring scars of the trunk or extremities.

Number 194, oppose the taxation of VA disability compensation benefits. (Applause)

Number 196, support legislation to ensure that military retirees receive all benefits promised to them. (Applause)

Number 197, support legislation to allow veterans service officers to solicit contributions on Post Office property.

Number 205, extend CHAMPVA benefits for dependent children enrolled as full-time students.

Number 221, to establish equal payment of service-connected disability compensation for World War II Filipino guerrilla and army veterans. (Applause)

Number 222, opposing lump-sum payment for service-connected disabilities.

Number 223, opposing the permanent rounding-down of all COLAs in veterans' benefits.

Number 224, restore protection against unwarranted awards of veterans' benefits to third parties in divorce actions.

Number 225, supporting legislation to repeal the prohibition against service connection for smoking-related illnesses.

Number 226, opposition to the imposition of time limits for filing compensation claims.

Number 227, supporting legislation to preclude inappropriate remands from the Court of Veterans Appeals to the Board of Veterans Appeals.

Number 228, opposing reduction of the appeal period for VA decisions.

Number 229, oppose any change in the scope of the review of VA decisions by the Board of Veterans Appeals.

Number 230, opposition to subjecting compensations to means testing.

Number 231, to compensate Persian Gulf veterans suffering from illnesses circumstantially linked to their service in the Persian Gulf War.

Number 232, support a change in regulatory requirements for a temporary total rating under Section 4.30 of Title 38 CFR.

Number 233, increase the grant for automobiles or other conveyance available to certain disabled veterans and to provide for automatic annual adjustments based on the increase in the cost of living.

Number 234, provide an increase in the specially adapted housing grants authorized by Section 2101(a) of Title 38 U.S. Code.

Number 235, support legislation to provide for waiver of premiums for supplemental service disabled veterans insurance.

Number 236, support legislation that would exempt benefits paid to wartime service-connected disabled veterans for the pay-go provisions of the Budget Enforcement Act.

Number 237, oppose dissolution of the military commissary system.

Number 238, extend commissary and exchange privileges to veterans with service-connected disability and their dependents.

Number 239, extend space-available air travel aboard military aircraft to 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans.

And finally, Number 240, extend commissary and exchange privileges on the basis of an award of DIC benefits.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights, and I would like -- they did a terrific job, and I just want to make a comment, that if there was any indication of the amount of people that came to that meeting and stood outside of what kind of support you're going to have this year to enforce legislation through our congressional ranks, they should have been there yesterday.

And Mr. Luttjohann, we need a bigger room next year. (Applause)

And I move the adoption of these resolutions, and that the committee be discharged with the thanks of the National Convention.

(The above-mentioned resolutions follow.)

RESOLUTION NO. 002—LEGISLATIVE

TO PROVIDE A 10-YEAR PROTECTION PERIOD FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY EVALUATIONS

WHEREAS, section 110 of title 38, United States Code, now provides for the protection of all disability compensation evaluations that have been continuously in effect for 20 or more years; and

WHEREAS, permanency should be conceded for disability compensation ratings which have been in effect for 10 years without change in evaluation with no further examination scheduled; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports amendment of section 110 of title 38, United States Code, to provide that disability evaluations continuously in effect at the same evaluation rate be protected after a period of 10 years.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 004—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING CHANGE IN LAW TO PROVIDE FOR COMMENCEMENT OF PAYMENT PERIOD FOR TEMPORARY TOTAL RATINGS FOR COMPENSATION AS OF DATE OF ENTITLING EVENT

WHEREAS, prior to the addition of section 5111 to title 38, United States Code, by Public Law 97-253, the payment period for temporary total ratings for compensation purposes under paragraphs 29 and 30 of the VA *Schedule for Rating Disabilities* commenced the date of award of the temporary total rating based on the date of entrance into the hospital for service-connected disability, the date of institution of hospital treatment for a service-connected disability, or the date of qualifying outpatient treatment for service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, section 5111, added by Public Law 97-253, now provides that the payment period for such temporary total rating does not commence until the first day of the calendar month following the month in which the award is effective, except where hospitalization or treatment commences and terminates in the same month; and

WHEREAS, veterans under a temporary total service-connected disability are, under section 5111, deprived of any increase in compensation to offset the total disability during the first month in which temporary total disability occurs; and

WHEREAS, this deprival and consequent delay in the payment of increased compensation on account of total disability often jeopardizes the financial security of disabled veterans and often unfairly causes them hardship; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation seeking an exemption of the temporary total ratings from this provision of section 5111 of title 38, United States Code.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 006—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTION TO ATOMIC VETERANS FOR ALL RECOGNIZED RADIOGENIC DISEASES

WHEREAS, members of the United States Armed Services have participated in test detonation of nuclear devices and served in Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan following the detonation of nuclear bombs; and

WHEREAS, the United States government knew or should have known of the potential harm to the health and well-being of these military members; and

WHEREAS, atomic veterans served their country with honor, courage, and devotion to duty; and

WHEREAS, remedial legislation passed by Congress in 1984 has not been effective in providing compensation to those atomic veterans suffering from radiogenic diseases; and

WHEREAS, by the VA's own admission, approximately no more than 50 claimants have obtained disability compensation/dependency indemnity compensation pursuant to Public Law 98-542; and

WHEREAS, the government has spent tens of millions of dollars to provide dose reconstruction estimates which do not accurately reflect actual radiation dose exposure; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation to provide presumptive service connection to atomic veterans for all recognized radiogenic diseases.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 007—LEGISLATIVE

EXPAND POW PRESUMPTIONS

WHEREAS, former prisoners-of-war (POWs) suffered cruel and inhumane treatment, together with nutritional deprivation at the hands of their captors, which resulted in long-term adverse health effects; and

WHEREAS, POWs were subjected to numerous and varying forms of abuse dependent upon the place, time and circumstance of their captivity by the enemy; and

WHEREAS, for this reason former POWs suffer from a wide range of different physical and psychological maladies; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation which would add those medical conditions which are characteristically associated with or can be reasonably attributed to the POW experience as presumptive disorders for former POWs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 008—LEGISLATIVE

LIBERALIZE CRITERIA FOR AGENT ORANGE CLAIMS

WHEREAS, herbicides, the most potent known as Agent Orange, were used extensively and in great quantities in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, many veterans were exposed in varying degrees to these toxic defoliants and continue to suffer diseases of unknown origin; and

WHEREAS, more than 250,000 Vietnam veterans, concerned over this exposure to herbicides, have been entered on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Agent Orange Registry; and

WHEREAS, the National Academy of Sciences, in studies mandated by the U.S. Congress, continues to review and evaluate scientific data to determine whether a direct link exists between dioxin exposure and certain physical disorders; and

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans continues to support the premise that such exposure is the proximate cause of certain health disorders; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports liberalizing the criteria for herbicide-related claims, including placing burden of proof for the award of disability compensation on the U.S. Government and not on the individual veteran, and making the U.S. Government responsible for providing needed medical attention, examination, care and treatment, as required by sound medical judgment, and where appropriate, awarding service-connected compensation on the basis of sound medical/scientific findings; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that those veterans now carried on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Agent Orange Registry be given the opportunity for a prompt examination by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to ascertain dioxin levels, and to determine whether shared medical conditions exist among them.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 009—LEGISLATIVE

AMEND PROVISIONS REGARDING ELIGIBILITY FOR AUTOMOBILE ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT TO INCLUDE ANY VETERAN WHOSE SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY INHIBITS HIS/HER ABILITY TO SAFELY OPERATE A MOTOR VEHICLE

WHEREAS, section 3902 of title 38, United States Code, and section 17.119(a) of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, restrict the eligibility for adaptive equipment to those veterans who qualify for the automobile grant as specified in section 3901 of title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, not all veterans whose service-connected disabilities prohibit the safe operation of a motor vehicle meet the requirements of section 3901 of title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, these service-connected disabled veterans should be provided the adaptive equipment necessary to safely operate a motor vehicle; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans

in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports the enactment of legislation that would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide or assist in providing the adaptive equipment deemed necessary to any veteran whose service-connected disability interferes with the safe operation of a motor vehicle.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 011—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING A CHANGE IN THE PAYMENT OF CERTAIN ACCRUED BENEFITS UPON DEATH OF A BENEFICIARY

WHEREAS, section 5121 of title 38, United States Code, sets forth the requirement for payment of accrued benefits upon death of a beneficiary and limits accrued benefits to periodic monetary benefits due and unpaid for a period not to exceed two years; and

WHEREAS, the current appeals process, including a favorable Board of Veterans' Appeals decision and payment of retroactive benefits can take considerably longer than two years; and

WHEREAS, the spouse and/or dependent children are part of the veteran's "family unit" and suffer the financial loss incurred during the appeals process; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation which would provide for payment in full of all due and unpaid accrued benefits to the spouse or dependent children.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 012—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSITION TO REDUCTION, TAXATION, OR ELIMINATION OF VETERANS' BENEFITS

WHEREAS, veterans' benefits are earned benefits paid to veterans and their families as a direct result of their service to the United States Government; and

WHEREAS, veterans' benefits are part of a covenant between our Nation and its defenders; and

WHEREAS, certain government leaders have continued to attack veterans' benefits in an attempt to tax those benefits, reduce them, or eliminate them completely; and

WHEREAS, these attacks are occurring on a more frequent basis, with more and more attacks every year; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, vigorously supports the protection of veterans' benefits from taxation, cutbacks, and elimination.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 013—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING THE INDEXING OF VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION BENEFITS

WHEREAS, the Administration and the Office of Management and Budget have proposed that future adjustments in VA service-connected disability compensation benefits shall be automatically "indexed" to changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI); and

WHEREAS, adjustments of the benefit levels in this most important VA program have always been determined through legislative action by the U.S. Congress; and

WHEREAS, over the years such legislated increases have resulted in more realistic levels for disabled veterans, improvement in other compensation related entitlements and a continued and active Congressional oversight of the entire compensation program; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, goes on record as being strongly opposed to the automatic indexing of future adjustments in the VA service-connected disability compensation program.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 014—LEGISLATIVE

TO RAISE THE ESTATE LIMIT APPLICABLE TO CERTAIN INCOMPETENT, INSTITUTIONALIZED VETERANS

WHEREAS, current law requires the suspension of VA disability compensation, pension and emergency officers' retirement pay in the case of mentally incompetent veterans who have neither a spouse nor child and who are being furnished hospital treatment, institutional or domiciliary care at U.S. government expense once the estate of such veterans equals or exceeds the sum of $1,500.00 (not to be continued until the estate is reduced to $500); and

WHEREAS, this is discriminatory treatment towards this single group of veterans; and

WHEREAS, this $1,500 estate level has not been adjusted in many years and conceivably can cause financial hardship to such veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation which would provide a realistic upward adjustment in the present maximum $1,500 estate level that applies to such mentally incompetent, institutionalized veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 015—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO ALLOW ALL VETERANS TO RECOVER AMOUNTS WITHHELD AS TAX ON DISABILITY SEVERANCE PAY

WHEREAS, money received as a result of personal injury or disability is not taxable; and

WHEREAS, disability severance pay is paid to a military member as a result of injury or disease suffered during military service; and

WHEREAS, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has, and continues to, tax military disability severance pay as regular income; and

WHEREAS, a United States District Court has held that military disability severance pay is nontaxable income; and

WHEREAS, the IRS has acquiesced in the District Court holding; and

WHEREAS, the three-year statute of limitations prevents veterans who have been discharged for more than three years from recovering the nontaxable money withheld by the IRS; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, 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. 016—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING ANY PROPOSAL THAT WOULD OFFSET PAYMENTS OF SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE BENEFITS OR ANY OTHER FEDERAL BENEFIT BY VA COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, there has been consideration given to proposing an offset of Social Security Disability Insurance Benefits by payments of any other federal benefit; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of such a measure would reduce the overall income provided to those service-connected veterans who have a compensable disability and who also suffer a permanent and total disability for purposes of Disability Insurance Benefits from the Social Security Administration; and

WHEREAS, such an offset would work a grave and undue hardship on all totally disabled service-connected veterans and their families by drastically reducing their total income; and

WHEREAS, benefits received from the Department of Veterans Affairs or under military retirement pay and other federal programs have differing eligibility criteria as compared to the earned payments of Social Security Disability Insurance Benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, 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. 017—LEGISLATIVE

CONCURRENT PAYMENTS OF VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND MILITARY RETIREMENT PAY

WHEREAS, ex-servicemembers who are retired from the military on length of service must waive a portion of their retired pay in order to receive disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, it would be more equitable if the laws and regulations were changed to provide that in such cases the veteran would be entitled to receive both benefits concurrently since eligibility was established and earned under two entirely different sets of enabling laws and regulations; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation and changes in applicable regulations which would provide that a veteran who is retired for length of service and is later adjudicated as having service-connected disabilities, may receive concurrent benefits from the military department and from the VA without deduction from either.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 020—LEGISLATIVE

TO EXTEND ELIGIBILITY FOR VETERANS' MORTGAGE LIFE INSURANCE TO SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS RATED PERMANENTLY AND TOTALLY DISABLED

WHEREAS, VA Mortgage Life Insurance is presently available to veterans entitled to the special adapted housing award under section 2101(a) of title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, service-connected veterans rated as permanently and totally disabled cannot obtain Mortgage Life Insurance through commercial insurance companies; and

WHEREAS, their widows and dependents must bear an undue hardship upon the death of such veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, seeks the enactment of legislation which would extend VA Mortgage Life Insurance to service-connected veterans who are rated as permanently and totally disabled.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 022—LEGISLATIVE

TO INCREASE THE FACE VALUE OF SERVICE DISABLED VETERANS INSURANCE (RH)

WHEREAS, certain veterans are eligible for National Service Life Insurance (NSLI) under section 1922 of title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, honorably discharged veterans released from active military duty on or after April 25, 1951, found by the Department of Veterans Affairs to be suffering from a disability or disabilities for which a compensable evaluation would be payable, shall, upon application, be granted insurance by the United States government under section 1922(a) of title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, this insurance, commonly referred to as RH insurance, is non-participating with no dividends payable; and

WHEREAS, many of these veterans are uninsurable by private insurance companies as a result of their service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, inflation has rapidly increased and diminished the value of the insurance since the maximum was set at $10,000; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports amendment of section 1922(a) of title 38, United States Code, to increase the maximum amount of insurance coverage available under the Service Disabled Veterans Insurance (RH).

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 023—LEGISLATIVE

RESTORE ELIGIBILITY AND INCREASE BURIAL AND PLOT ALLOWANCE

WHEREAS, all veterans who have served their country honorably and faithfully are entitled to a decent burial and final resting place; and

WHEREAS, the amount payable by the VA as a burial allowance ($300) and the amount payable as a plot allowance ($150) have remained constant for many years in spite of the inflationary spiral; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 97-35, effective October 1, 1981, restricted the eligibility for the $300 burial allowance, greatly reducing the number of veterans who previously qualified; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 101-508, enacted in November 1990, reduced the number of veterans who would have otherwise been eligible for the $150 plot allowance; and

WHEREAS, these restrictive measures enacted over time were intended purely as cost-savings measures without regard to intrinsic value of this final honor which was bestowed by a grateful nation; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation to (1) increase both the VA burial and plot allowance to a level reflecting the inflationary impact of the intervening years, (2) restore entitlement to the VA burial allowance to those categories of veterans eliminated by Public Law 97-35, and (3) restore entitlement to the VA plot allowance to those categories of veterans eliminated by enactment of Public Law 101-508.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 024—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE A HEADSTONE OR MARKER FOR ALL VETERANS

WHEREAS, section 2306 of title 38, United States Code, authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish appropriate government headstones or markers at the expense of the United States only for the *unmarked* graves of veterans interred in public or private cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, veterans interred in a national cemetery, post, or

veterans' cemetery owned by a state are furnished an appropriate headstone or marker at the expense of the United States; and

WHEREAS, it is inappropriate and unfair to deny veterans and their families their rightful recognition of service to the United States by limiting the availability of headstones or markers at government expense to gravesites of veterans who have no other marker; and

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans desires that the U.S. Congress take appropriate action to correct this injustice and inequity to America's veterans and their families; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation to amend section 2306(a) of title 38, United States Code, by deleting the word "unmarked," thereby authorizing the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish appropriate government headstones or markers at the expense of the United States for all graves of veterans interred in public or private cemeteries notwithstanding the presence of other markers on the grave site.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 027—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION FOR A COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT FOR THE DEPENDENTS EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the VA provides educational assistance to children and spouses of veterans whose service-connected disabilities are rated permanently and totally disabling and to eligible survivors of veterans who die from service-connected disabilities or whose service-connected disabilities were totally disabling for 10 years or more prior to death; and

WHEREAS, the monthly benefit rate of this program was regularly adjusted to keep pace with the rising costs of education but has not been so adjusted since 1989; and

WHEREAS, since 1989 the costs of education are known to have risen substantially, and the value of this educational assistance has been allowed to erode year after year becoming less and less effective in accomplishing the purpose for which the program intended; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports Congress adjusting the monthly benefit rate of Survivors and Dependents Education Assistance under title 38, United States Code, to offset the rising educational costs since the last adjustment and amend the law to provide for annual cost-of-living adjustments.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 030—LEGISLATIVE

IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION TO ALLOW FOR THE PAYMENT OF FEES, EXPENSES, AND COURT COSTS UNDER SECTION 2412 OF TITLE 28, UNITED STATES CODE, EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACT, TO UNSUPERVISED NONATTORNEY REPRESENTATIVES PRACTICING BEFORE THE U.S. COURT OF VETERANS APPEALS

WHEREAS, attorneys practicing before the United States Court of Veterans Appeals (COVA) are allowed to collect reasonable attorney fees, expenses and court costs pursuant to the provisions of section 2412 of title 28, United States Code, Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA), in cases where the government was not substantially justified in withholding benefits or services; and

WHEREAS, COVA allows nonattorney representatives employed by veterans' service organizations to practice, unsupervised, before the Court; and

WHEREAS, DAV attorneys and nonattorney representatives practice before COVA; and

WHEREAS, COVA has recently determined that DAV's nonattorney representatives are not entitled to reasonable fees, expenses or court costs pursuant to EAJA; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation in Congress which would allow unsupervised nonattorney representatives to obtain EAJA fees under section 2412 of title 28, United States Code.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 031—LEGISLATIVE

AMEND THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

WHEREAS, under current law, qualified and eligible disabled veterans are entitled to 48 months of education or training assistance under vocational rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, the disabled veteran must start and complete this program within 12 years following the determination of eligibility; and

WHEREAS, many disabled veterans are unable to complete their training and attain suitable employment within 48 months and others are unable or don't need training within 12 years following initial eligibility; and

WHEREAS, other vocational rehabilitation programs in the private sector and federal sector do not impose similar restrictions; and

WHEREAS, we believe disabled veterans deserve no less; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, seeks legislative change that would eliminate these two restrictions.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 032—LEGISLATIVE

IN SUPPORT OF COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS (COLAs) FOR MILITARY RETIREES

WHEREAS, COLAs for military retirees were reduced or eliminated as a result of legislation during 1986 and 1993; and

WHEREAS, other categories of federal annuitants and beneficiaries -- Social Security and VA service-connected disability compensation and nonservice-connected pension recipients, for example -- were not subject to these same COLA restrictions; and

WHEREAS, it is basically unfair -- especially in the case of military disability retirees -- to provide a COLA to one category of federal beneficiary while withholding such an adjustment from another category; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation in the Congress which would ensure the timely extension of COLAs to military retirees when similar adjustments are being authorized for beneficiaries in the Social Security and VA benefit programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 034—LEGISLATIVE

SEEKING THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF ANY AMERICANS WHO MAY STILL BE HELD CAPTIVE FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II, THE KOREAN WAR AND VIETNAM WAR AND THE RETURN OF THE REMAINS OF ANY AMERICANS WHO DIED DURING THESE WARS

WHEREAS, the members of the Disabled American Veterans are deeply concerned for the thousands of American Servicemen still unaccounted for in the aftermath of World War II, the Korean War

and the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, numerous efforts by high level American delegations including members of Congress have visited Southeast Asia in continuing efforts to solve the mystery of the whereabouts and fate of these brave men without success; and

WHEREAS, the brave families of these missing Americans continue to live in uncertainty and anguish regarding their missing sons and husbands; and

WHEREAS, there are still today more than 78,000 unaccounted for following World War II, some 8,000 from the Korean War and over 2,200 in Southeast Asia from the Vietnam War who have not been forgotten; and

WHEREAS, the DAV was extremely disappointed with the timing of President Clinton's decision to normalize relations with the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, prior to the fullest possible accounting of our POW/MIAs from Southeast Asia; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, 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 passage of legislation that would direct the heads of federal departments and agencies to fully disclose to the American public information concerning United States personnel classified as prisoners of war or missing in action from World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge the U.S. Government not to establish most favored nation status with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam until the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam provides the U.S. Government with the fullest possible accounting of over 2,200 personnel classified as prisoners of war or missing in action from the Vietnam War.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 036—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 VA compensation as a sole source of income are experiencing difficulties in keeping pace with the increased cost of living; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation which would extend military commissary and exchange privileges, as well as space-available air travel aboard military aircraft, to enlisted personnel who were discharged from active military service prior to October 1, 1949, for a service-incurred injury or disease rated by the Department of Veterans Affairs as 30 percent or more disabling and who retained at least a 30 percent evaluation for a period of five years from the date of separation from active duty.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 037—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING ANY AUTHORIZATION OF USE OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES FOR HUMAN EXPERIMENTATION WITHOUT THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMED CONSENT

WHEREAS, those who serve in our Nation's Armed Forces make personal sacrifices to maintain our national security; and

WHEREAS, members of the Armed Forces should be accorded special respect and the gratitude of us for whom they serve; and

WHEREAS, their willingness to sacrifice and relinquish their liberty does not surrender their natural right to determine what shall be done with their own bodies and their right to personal dignity; and

WHEREAS, it is unethical and a trespass against the person to use 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; and

WHEREAS, the Food and Drug Administration plans to make final a temporary rule allowing administration of experimental drugs to military members without their knowledge and informed consent; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, opposes any rule or provision that would authorize use of servicemembers for human experimentation without their knowledge and informed consent.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 044—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING REORGANIZATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AS A BUREAU WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

WHEREAS, the people of the United States, through Federal law, in recognition of this Nation's debt to its veterans, established a Federal Department dedicated to serving veterans' needs; and

WHEREAS, a public policy group called the Heritage Foundation, apparently not appreciating the priority of this Nation's obligation to its veterans, in its report entitled "Mandate for Leadership IV," recommended in the name government efficiency that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) be abolished and reorganized as a bureau under the Department of Defense; and

WHEREAS, the fiscal year 1999 budget proposed by the Clinton Administration recommends several alternatives for moving VA discretionary accounts into the Defense function; and

WHEREAS, veterans deserve a Federal Department whose focus is solely upon providing them with the compassionate service they have earned through their special sacrifices; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, opposes such abolishment of VA as a Federal Department and reorganization as a lesser agency under the Department of Defense.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 050—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING THE USE OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) GENERATED SAVINGS FOR PURPOSES OTHER THAN RESTORING VA BENEFITS AND SERVICES

WHEREAS, a former Office of Management and Budget Director proposed to use savings from reductions in veterans' benefits and services to revamp the welfare system; and

WHEREAS, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Acts of 1990 and 1993 required VA to cut veterans' programs by more than six billion dollars, which include the loss of compensation payments for certain incompetent veterans, elimination of Vocational

Rehabilitation for some service-connected veterans, elimination of entitlement to Dependency & Indemnity Compensation for remarried surviving spouses and the elimination of cost-of-living increase for the Montgomery G.I. Bill educational benefits; and

WHEREAS, in addition, the fiscal year 1996 budget proposed by Congress for veterans' benefits and services called for a seven-year freeze in spending levels for health care and general operating expense, ignoring the fact that the Department of Veterans Affairs' current spending levels do not permit the timely delivery of health care and benefit determinations; and

WHEREAS, the use of VA generated savings should be used for restoring VA benefits and services which have been taken away from America's veterans over the past several years; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, goes on record as strongly opposing the use of VA generated savings for purposes other than restoring VA benefits and services.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 061—LEGISLATIVE

TO IMPLEMENT THE AWARD OF A PEACE HEART MEDAL IN LIEU OF THE PURPLE HEART FOR NONCOMBAT-INCURRED INJURIES OR DEATH

WHEREAS, the Order of the Purple Heart for Military Merit, commonly called The Purple Heart, is America's oldest military award; and

WHEREAS, the Order of the Purple Heart is awarded to members f the Armed Forces of the United States who are wounded by an instrument of war in the hands of the enemy and posthumously to the next of kin of those who are killed in action or die of wounds received in action; and

WHEREAS, the Purple Heart is a combat decoration; and

WHEREAS, the criterion of the Purple Heart has changed eight times since 1932; and

WHEREAS, the role of the Armed Forces of the United States has evolved from that of "peace maker" to "peace keeper;" and

WHEREAS, numerous servicemen and women in the Armed Forces of the United States have been wounded, injured or killed in non-combat situations, NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, implores the Department of Defense to institute a new award known as "the Peace Heart Medal," to be awarded to those members of the Armed Forces of the United States and civilians who are injured or die as a result of actions in non-combat situations.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 070—LEGISLATIVE

DISABILITY COMPENSATION INCREASE

WHEREAS, it is the historical policy of the Disabled American Veterans that this Nation's first duty to veterans is to provide for the rehabilitation of its wartime disabled; and

WHEREAS, the percentage ratings for service-connected disabilities represent, as far as can be practicably determined, the average impairment in earning capacity resulting from such diseases and injuries in civil occupations; and

WHEREAS, compensation increases should be based on the loss of earning capacity; and

WHEREAS, disabled veterans who are unable to work because of service-connected disabilities should be entitled to compensation payments commensurate with the after tax earnings of their able-bodied contemporaries; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-

27, 1998, supports the enactment of legislation to provide a realistic increase in VA compensation rates to bring the standard of living of disabled veterans in line with that which they would have enjoyed had they not suffered their service-connected disabilities.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 074—LEGISLATIVE

IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE THAT SPECIAL SEPARATION BENEFITS (SSB) PAYMENTS NOT BE WITHHELD FROM VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION PAYMENTS

WHEREAS, as a result of the downsizing of our military forces, many career military personnel are leaving service prior to becoming eligible to longevity retirement pay; and

WHEREAS, these individuals are entitled to separation pay; and

WHEREAS, many of these individuals are also eligible to VA disability compensation; and

WHEREAS, VA General Counsel, in an opinion rendered on June 22, 1992, held that any monies received as a result of the Special Separation Benefit (SSB) must be recouped from any VA disability compensation payment; and

WHEREAS, SSB payments are in no way related to a disability; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation to clarify that SSB payments are not disability payments and therefore should not be recouped from VA disability compensation payments.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 086—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING ANY CHANGE THAT WOULD REDEFINE SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY OR RESTRICT THE CONDITIONS OR CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH IT MAY BE ESTABLISHED

WHEREAS, current law authorizes service connection for disabilities incurred or aggravated during service in the United States Armed Forces in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, there are various proposals to limit service connection to disabilities caused directly by the performance of duty; and

WHEREAS, disability incurred in the line of duty is sometimes not directly due to a job injury but may be due to less obvious factors attributable to the Armed Forces environment; and

WHEREAS, proof of a causal relationship may often be difficult or impossible notwithstanding an inability to disassociate the disability from service-related factors; and

WHEREAS, current law equitably alleviates the onerous burden of establishing performance of duty or other causal connection as a prerequisite for service connection; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, opposes changes in current law so as to redefine or restrict service connection.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 087—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING ANY CHANGE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS' DUTY TO ASSIST

WHEREAS, America's high esteem for its veterans and its desire that their benefits be administered in a friendly, helpful manner,

without antagonism or an adversarial relationship, is the basis for the benevolent benefits delivery system of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, a fundamental element of this system is the VA's duty to assist claimants in the prosecution of their claims by assisting in the gathering of supporting evidence; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission, created by Congress to study VA's claims processing system, suggested that the duty to assist is too much of an administrative burden for the VA and suggested that Congress consider action to redefine or limit the scope of the duty; and

WHEREAS, such change would not increase the VA's efficiency but would erode veterans' rights and would represent a departure from the principle that our Nation owes its veterans this special treatment to ensure that they receive all benefits to which they are entitled; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, opposes any lessening of VA's duty to assist.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 088—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING THE PRACTICE OF ALLOWING THE BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS TO PARTICIPATE IN DEFENDING DECISIONS BEFORE THE COURT OF VETERANS APPEALS

WHEREAS, all veterans and other persons seeking review from the Board of Veterans' Appeals of adverse decisions made by the Department of Veterans Affairs' agencies of original jurisdiction on claims for benefits have a Constitutional right to due process of law which includes the right to have their appeals decided by an impartial decision maker; and

WHEREAS, the function of the Board of Veterans' Appeals is expressly limited by statute to reviewing such decisions; and

WHEREAS, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs is the Appellee in all appeals to the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals and is represented before that Court by his General Counsel; and

WHEREAS, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has adopted the practice of permitting the Board of Veterans' Appeals to participate in the defense of its decisions before the Court to the extent of allowing the Board to review, comment upon and approve the terms under which the Secretary will agree to a joint motion for remand or settle the issues raised by an appeal; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, shall take such actions as may be necessary or advisable, whether in Congress, the Courts or otherwise, to defend the Constitutional right of veterans to due process of law in the adjudication of their cases by opposing the VA's improper practice of allowing the Board of Veterans' Appeals to participate in defending its decisions when such decisions are appealed to the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 089—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING ANY REDUCTION IN VETERANS' PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, there is a concerted effort to streamline and make more efficient the federal government; and

WHEREAS, the Vice President's National Performance Review ("Reinventing Government") makes numerous recommendations which impact on the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, several of those recommendations appear to be directed at cost-saving measures rather than efficiency and effectiveness; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans

in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, urges Congress to reject any proposed intention to "streamline" government that would reduce or diminish the VA's ability to properly serve and care for our Nation's veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 093—LEGISLATIVE

TO PROVIDE A TEMPORARY TOTAL RATING FOR THE PERIOD THAT AN AMPUTEE HAS A NEW PROSTHETIC DEVICE CONSTRUCTED

WHEREAS, it takes four to six weeks to manufacture a prosthetic device; and

WHEREAS, many employers will not accept an amputee back to his employment until he has his artificial limb; and

WHEREAS, the veteran who does not have an artificial limb is incapacitated and unable to perform gainful employment; and

WHEREAS, the VA *Schedule for Rating Disabilities* does not contain any provision to provide this temporary total rating; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, 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. 094—LEGISLATIVE

SPECIAL MONTHLY COMPENSATION FOR LOSS OF FEMALE MAMMARY GLAND

WHEREAS, section 1114(k) of title 38, United States Code, and section 3.350(a) of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, grants special monthly compensation for loss of use of one hand, one foot, both buttocks, one or more creative organs; blindness -- one eye having light perception only, deafness -- both ears having the absence of air and bone conduction; and complete organic aphonia with constant inability to communicate by speech; and

WHEREAS, there is a significant hormonal interrelationship between the female mammary glands and the female reproductive system; and

WHEREAS, the female mammary glands can be a necessary postpartum accessory organ; and

WHEREAS, severe physical disfigurement and complete loss of use results from the removal of the female mammary gland; and

WHEREAS, major reconstructive surgery or utilization of a prosthesis is necessary to replace the amputated organ; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation to amend section 1114(k) of title 38, United States Code, to add the anatomical loss of a female mammary gland.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 102—LEGISLATIVE

IN SUPPORT OF AN INCREASE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BURIAL ALLOWANCE FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides service-connected veterans a $1,500.00 burial allowance; and

WHEREAS, the VA burial allowance for service-connected veterans has been in effect for approximately 20 years. The current burial allowance has been overcome by inflation, it is unrated, and is grossly unfair when compared to the current economic conditions; and

WHEREAS, we believe the current burial allowance of $1,500.00 should be increased; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, requested that the Department of Veterans Affairs increase the current provision which provides for service-connected veterans burial allowance.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 120—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING A FREEZE IN THE RATES OF VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION BENEFITS

WHEREAS, no segment of our society is more deserving of federal benefits and services than those veterans who have incurred disabilities while serving their country honorably in time of need; and

WHEREAS, under the guise of "reducing federal expenditures," proposals have been advanced to freeze the current rates of VA disability compensation benefits; and

WHEREAS, the disability compensation benefits of service-connected disabled veterans should be periodically adjusted to reflect inflationary pressures and the rise in the costs of goods and services; and

WHEREAS, service-connected disabled veterans, who have suffered so much for their country, should not be expected to endure further hardships such as would occur should a cost-of-living adjustment be denied to their benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, opposes any freeze in the VA disability compensation program if such program is singled out (from all other major federal entitlement programs) for such treatment.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 123—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING THE STATE VETERANS' HOME PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, continues to support the established mission and objectives of the State Veterans' Homes Program and that VA pay each state a per diem rate adequate for the continuation of providing quality care; AND

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

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 125—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR ALL DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, understaffing of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

programs in recent years has hampered the VA's ability to effectively administer programs intended to benefit this Nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, continued efforts by the Office of Management and Budget to reduce the VA budget will lead to further deterioration of all VA programs; and

WHEREAS, this Nation's first concern should be to fulfill its obligation to those who served in the military services in defense of the country; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, seeks and strongly supports adequate funding for all VA programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 127—LEGISLATIVE

ELIMINATE THE DELIMITING DATE FOR ELIGIBLE SPOUSES AND SURVIVING SPOUSES FOR BENEFITS PROVIDED UNDER CHAPTER 35 OF TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE

WHEREAS, dependents and survivors eligible for VA education benefits under chapter 35 of title 38, United States Code, have ten years in which to apply for and complete a program of education; and

WHEREAS, this 10-year period begins either from the date a veteran is evaluated by the VA as permanently and totally disabled from service-connected disabilities or ten years from the date of such veteran's death due to service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, in many instances, because of family obligations or the need to provide care to the veteran, spouses or surviving spouses may not have had an opportunity to apply for these benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, seeks the enactment of legislation which would eliminate the delimiting date for spouses and surviving spouses for purposes of benefits provided under chapter 35 of title 38, United States Code.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 128—LEGISLATIVE

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS FOR DEPENDENTS OF SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS RATED 80 PERCENT OR MORE DISABLED

WHEREAS, chapter 35 of title 38, United States Code, extends educational assistance to the dependents of service-connected veterans who are evaluated as permanently and totally disabled; and

WHEREAS, there are many service-connected veterans rated 80 percent and 90 percent disabled, whose dependents cannot afford to attend an institution of higher learning or pursue a vocational endeavor because of the reduced earning ability of such veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, seeks the enactment of legislation which would extend educational assistance under chapter 35 of title 38, United States Code, to the dependents of veterans who have a service-connected disability rating of 80 percent or more.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 150—LEGISLATIVE

TO PROVIDE AN OPEN PERIOD TO APPLY FOR SERVICE DISABLED VETERANS INSURANCE (RH)

WHEREAS, service-connected disabled veterans are entitled to apply for Service Disabled Veterans Insurance (RH) within one year from the date the VA grants service connection for any disability; and

WHEREAS, many eligible veterans, due to financial difficulties and problems associated with readjustment to civilian life, did not apply for this insurance within the one year eligibility period; and

WHEREAS, many of these service-connected disabled veterans are now prepared and can afford to purchase this insurance but are not able to purchase comparable insurance coverage in the private sector; and

WHEREAS, precedent has been established to extend previously closed "eligibility periods" for certain other VA benefits and services, including insurance; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, 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. 182—LEGISLATIVE

TO AMEND SECTION 4.118 OF TITLE 38, CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TO ALLOW FOR A MORE EQUITABLE RANGE OF RATINGS FOR SCARS OF TRUNK AND EXTREMITIES

WHEREAS, section 4.118 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, diagnostic code 7800, provides for ratings of visible scars of head, face and neck from 0 percent to 50 percent depending on degree of repugnancy and disfiguring conditions; and

WHEREAS, section 4.118 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, diagnostic codes 7803 and 7804, only allows a maximum 10 percent rating for other scars of the body; and

WHEREAS, scars of the trunk of the body or extremities can be just as repugnant, disfiguring, and psychologically damaging when viewed at a public beach, locker room, or other communal situations which require removal of clothing; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation to allow for a range of ratings from 0 percent to 50 percent for scars of the trunk and extremities which is consistent with the rating for scars of the head, face and neck.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 194—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING THE TAXATION OF VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION BENEFITS

WHEREAS, the Tax Simplification Plan, released by the Department of the Treasury in November 1984, proposed the federal taxation of VA disability compensation benefits; and

WHEREAS, in the entire history of the disability compensation program these benefits have never been subject to taxation at either the federal, state or local levels; and

WHEREAS, taxation of these benefits would amount to nothing more than a permanent, enduring reduction in benefits and would demean the sacrifice and service of our Nation's service-connected disabled veteran population; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, vigorously opposes any proposal that would subject VA disability compensation benefits to taxation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 196—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO ENSURE THAT MILITARY RETIREES RECEIVE ALL BENEFITS WHICH WERE PROMISED THEM WHEN THEY ENTERED THE ARMED FORCES

WHEREAS, men and women who enter military service set aside their personal lives, goals, and opportunities to wear the uniform and bear the burdens of our Nation's defense; and

WHEREAS, these men and women were promised certain benefits, such as free medical and dental care for life, full retired pay based on longevity of service, and other benefits, to entice them to remain in the military and make it a career; and

WHEREAS, our Government has reneged on many of its promises to provide these benefits to military retirees; and

WHEREAS, our Nation has a compelling moral duty to honor its pledges to military retirees; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation to require our government to provide military retirees with all benefits promised them.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 197—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT FOR LEGISLATION TO ALLOW VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS TO SOLICIT CONTRIBUTIONS ON POST OFFICE PROPERTY

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) was founded on the principle that this Nation's first duty to veterans is the rehabilitation of its wartime-disabled; and

WHEREAS, it is the first duty of the DAV to assist the service-connected disabled, his widow and survivors; and

WHEREAS, DAV Chapters and Departments provide assistance to hospitalized and needy veterans such as donations to VA Medical Centers, financial assistance to needy veterans, meal programs, temporary housing, and transportation programs; and

WHEREAS, the efforts of the DAV on behalf of this Nation's wartime-disabled veterans augments the government's legal and moral obligation to wartime-disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, postal regulations, now being enforced, prohibit any solicitation on post office properties; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation to allow veterans' organizations to solicit contributions on postal property.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 205—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING 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 eighteen, continues to age twenty-three when such child is pursuing an approved full-time course of education; and

WHEREAS, while attending school, these children generally continue to be dependent upon the veteran or surviving spouse and are unable to provide for their own medical care; and

WHEREAS, continuing medical care eligibility under CHAMPVA until graduation would further the goal of aiding a veteran's child while pursuing an education and alleviate financial hardship that might otherwise interrupt a child's education; NOW

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation to extend eligibility to CHAMPVA

until an eligible child's graduation from an approved course of full-time education.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 221—LEGISLATIVE

ESTABLISH EQUAL PAYMENT OF SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY COMPENSATION FOR WORLD WAR II FILIPINO GUERILLA AND ARMY VETERANS

WHEREAS, Filipino guerrilla and Army forces fought bravely, side by side with U.S. troops, against Imperial Japanese forces during World War II; and

WHEREAS, many of these Filipino guerrilla and Army veterans suffered gunshot, mortar and shrapnel wounds as well as starvation, illnesses endemic to their tropical theater of operations and other debilitating injuries and illnesses associated with their service under the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has recognized their wounds and disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the government of the United States has an obligation to compensate these veterans for their sacrifices; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports equal disability compensation for Filipino veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 222—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING 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 so long as the veteran continues to suffer its effects at a compensable level; and

WHEREAS, by law, the rate of compensation is determined by the level of disability present, thereby requiring reevaluation of the disability upon a change in its degree; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission, created by Congress to study the Department of Veterans Affairs claims processing system, has suggested lump-sum payments as a way for the Government to avoid the administrative costs of reevaluating service-connected disabilities and as a way to avoid future liabilities to service-connected disabled veterans when their disabilities worsen or cause secondary disabilities; and

WHEREAS, such lump-sum payments would not, on the whole, be in the best interests of disabled veterans but would be for Government savings and convenience; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, opposes any change in law to provide for lump-sum payments of VA disability compensation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 223—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING THE PERMANENT ROUNDING DOWN OF COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS IN VETERANS' BENEFITS

WHEREAS, to maintain the worth of veterans' benefits, they must be adjusted to keep pace with the rise in the cost-of-living; and

WHEREAS, permanently rounding down the adjusted rates to the

next lower dollar amount will erode the value of these benefits over time and thus not keep pace with the rise in the cost of living; and

WHEREAS, permanently rounding down veteran's cost-of-living adjustments unfairly singles out veterans for a disproportionate and unfair burden in deficit reduction; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, opposes permanent rounding down of cost-of-living adjustments for veterans' benefits.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 224—LEGISLATIVE

TO RESTORE PROTECTIONS AGAINST UNWARRANTED AWARDS OF VETERANS' BENEFITS TO THIRD PARTIES IN DIVORCE ACTIONS

WHEREAS, disability compensation and other veterans' benefits were intended and should be provided solely to fill specific needs of veterans; and

WHEREAS, Congress intended to exempt veterans' benefits from the claims of third parties to ensure that such benefits were not voluntarily assigned or through legal processes diverted to purposes or persons other than for which they were intended; and

WHEREAS, for purposes of support payments in divorce actions, state courts and the Supreme Court of the United States have arbitrarily created exceptions to the protection for veterans' benefits Congress established in section 5301 of title 38, United States Code, thereby forcing veterans to surrender their benefits to third parties, contrary to the intent of Congress; and

WHEREAS, the courts show little understanding or appreciation for the principle that veterans' entitlements are awarded solely to veterans because of their personal sacrifices, contributions in the defense of our Nation, or consequent personal suffering associated with service-connected disabilities and for that reason should not inure or vest to the benefit of others who have no natural right or valid legal interest in such benefits; and

WHEREAS, courts have, for example, shown no hesitation to force disabled veterans to surrender their disability compensation and sole source of sustenance to able-bodied ex-spouses as alimony awards; and

WHEREAS, there is a lack of uniformity in how the various courts treat veterans' benefits in divorce actions because the courts act according to their own will rather than any consensus on the meaning and intent of the law; and

WHEREAS, this situation creates a need for Congress to intervene to override the effect of the law given by the courts; to restore meaning, equity, and uniformity to the law; and to reinstate safeguards against veterans' benefits being siphoned into the pockets of persons who have no right to such benefits; NOW

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, 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. 225—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO REPEAL THE PROHIBITION AGAINST SERVICE CONNECTION FOR SMOKING-RELATED ILLNESSES

WHEREAS, until recently smoking of tobacco was an activity

fully accepted by society and not only condoned but encouraged and subsidized by the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, because the Armed Forces and the military environment encouraged smoking among servicemembers, higher percentages of veterans smoke or have a history of smoking than the general population; and

WHEREAS, the Government rejects the tobacco companies' defense that responsibility for the health effects of smoking is with the individual who personally chose to smoke but relies on that same excuse to prohibit compensation for service-incurred smoking-related illnesses in veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Government has imposed a dual standard against veterans because it has not sought to hold other Federal beneficiaries personally responsible and prohibited benefits for smoking-related illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Congress conveniently seized upon the personal choice-personal responsibility excuse and enacted the prohibition against service connection for smoking-related illnesses solely to finance over-budget spending on politically popular transportation programs and not because of any genuine public policy considerations; and

WHEREAS, for all the foregoing reasons, the enactment of this prohibition was an extreme injustice against America's disabled veterans; NOW

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation to repeal the prohibition of service connection for smoking-related illnesses.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 226—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING THE IMPOSITION OF TIME LIMITS FOR FILING COMPENSATION CLAIMS

WHEREAS, compensation is a benefit available to service-connected veterans at any time they choose to claim it; and

WHEREAS, veterans who, for whatever reason, do not initially desire to claim and receive compensation should not forfeit the right to claim and receive it at some later time; and

WHEREAS, no reason other than defeating delayed claims exists for imposition of a statute of limitations on compensation claims; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission, created by Congress to study the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) claims processing system, suggested a time limit for filing compensation claims as a way to reduce VA's workload; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, opposes any change in law to limit the time for filing compensation claims.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 227—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO PRECLUDE INAPPROPRIATE REMANDS FROM THE COURT OF VETERANS APPEALS TO THE BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS

WHEREAS, appellants, but not the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), may appeal decisions from the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) to the United States Court of Veterans Appeals (COVA); and

WHEREAS, only appellants have the right to challenge the BVA decision, therefore; and

WHEREAS, COVA nonetheless remands cases for further action and a new decision by the BVA based on the VA's motions for remand which contain the VA's arguments of error in its own decision; and

WHEREAS, this practice allows the VA to appeal its own

decision, to deprive appellants of their right to an independent review of BVA's decisions by COVA, allows the VA to avoid scrutiny of BVA's decision and consideration of errors specified by appellants, and allows the VA to attempt to gather new evidence on remand in an effort to provide after-the-fact justification for the prior denial; and

WHEREAS, appellants are not permitted remands merely to allow them to strengthen their cases; and

WHEREAS, permitting the VA to take cases back from the Court to the BVA, allows the VA an unfair advantage and is therefore prejudicial to appellants seeking independent review; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation to constrain COVA from remanding cases to BVA for reasons argued by the VA, over appellants' objections, and to prevent remands which permit the VA to search for additional evidence in an attempt to justify the BVA denial.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 228—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING 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 1 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 VA system where service to veterans is paramount; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission, created by Congress to study the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) claims processing system, has recommended a reduction of the appeal period from 1 year to 60 days; and

WHEREAS, the length of the current appeal period is not responsible in any way for the claims backlog and related problems the Commission was created to study, the real cause being the ratio of workload to production capacity; and

WHEREAS, a reduction of the appeal period will therefore not increase VA's efficiency nor reduce the claims backlog; and

WHEREAS, a reduction in the appeal period would be an unnecessary reduction of veterans' rights under the pretense of improving the VA claims and appeal processes; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, opposes any change in law to reduce the period for appealing VA claims decisions.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 229—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING ANY CHANGE IN THE SCOPE OF
THE REVIEW OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DECISIONS
BY THE BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS

WHEREAS, claimants for veterans' benefits currently have a right to full review of adverse Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) decisions on appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA); and

WHEREAS, BVA allows a large percentage of the appeals it considers because it finds that benefits are wrongfully denied in many cases; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission, created by Congress to study the VA claims and administrative appeals processes, has suggested restricting the scope of BVA's review to

reduce types of errors it can overturn and therefore the number of appeals it can allow; and

WHEREAS, such a restriction would deny justice to many veterans who would receive favorable decisions by BVA under the current full review; and

WHEREAS, such a change would represent a change in the Government's long-standing philosophy toward veterans, placing administrative convenience and Government savings through denial of meritorious claims above the Nation's obligation to fairly treat and care for its veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, opposes any change to restrict the scope of BVA's review of VA claims decisions.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 230—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSITION TO SUBJECTING COMPENSATION TO MEANS TESTING

WHEREAS, the citizens of our Nation have heretofore honorably recognized their indebtedness to those who sacrificed in the service of their country by providing compensation as restitution for the personal injuries suffered in such service; and

WHEREAS, a disabled veteran is rightfully entitled to restitution for the effects of service-connected disability during its continuation, without regard to good fortune or income of the veteran or spouse from sources wholly independent of the government's obligations to the veteran; and

WHEREAS, it is fundamentally unfair for the government to seek to disclaim its obligation to disabled veterans or their survivors merely because of the receipt of other, unrelated income; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the special status of disability and death compensation, there are efforts to reduce or eliminate it where the veteran or spouse, or survivor has other income; and

WHEREAS, this degrades compensation by providing it to the extent of the veteran's or survivor's economic needs rather than a measure of restitution equal to personal losses, thereby disassociating compensation from that which merits it and associating it with factors which govern purely gratuitous and welfare benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, opposes any scheme to means test disability and death compensation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 231—LEGISLATIVE

TO COMPENSATE PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS SUFFERING FROM ILLNESSES CIRCUMSTANTIALLY LINKED TO THEIR SERVICE IN THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

WHEREAS, the DAV has a significant concern regarding the multitude of ailments reported by a growing number of Persian Gulf War veterans who were exposed to both identified and unknown health hazards; and

WHEREAS, Persian Gulf War veterans were exposed to numerous and various environmental health hazards, including smoke from oil field fires and other petroleum agents, depleted uranium, chemical and biological elements, desert parasites, vaccines, chemoprophylactic agents and vehicle paints; and

WHEREAS, primary investigations and multifarious studies have been unable to identify the source or sources of these ailments; and

WHEREAS, the scientific/medical community's inability to identify the disease has caused considerable anxiety for these veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, there appears to be a commonality of ailments plaguing Persian Gulf War veterans; and

WHEREAS, these ailments have been unofficially labeled "Persian Gulf Syndrome," "Multiple Chemical Sensitivity" and "Chronic Fatigue Syndrome"; and

WHEREAS, these brave veterans suffering from these unknown ailments are often prevented from providing for their own basic needs and for the needs of their families; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, vigorously supports the Department of Veterans Affairs 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 and subsequent exposure to certain chemical, biological and environmental toxins; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we strongly urge that these Persian Gulf War veterans receive priority medical treatment for those ailments that may be associated with their service in the Persian Gulf; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we vehemently urge VA, DoD and HHS to continue to cooperate in tests and studies to unlock the mysteries surrounding the ailments suffered by Persian Gulf War veterans, including the possibility of exposure to chemical agents by U.S. military personnel.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 232—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING A CHANGE IN REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR A TEMPORARY TOTAL RATING UNDER SECTION 4.30 OF TITLE 38, CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS

WHEREAS, with advances in modern medicine and increasing emphasis on more efficient use of health care resources, health care providers are being encouraged to utilize suitable alternatives to inpatient care; and

WHEREAS, as a consequence, veterans are often treated through home health services or convalesce at home rather than in the hospital; and

WHEREAS, convalescent ratings are currently only authorized where inpatient or outpatient treatment resulted in surgery or immobilization of a major joint by cast; and

WHEREAS, there are instances where the veteran's treatment did not involve surgery or casting of a major joint, but the veteran has undergone healing, convalescence, or a therapeutic course in the home, with a duration of more than 21 days; and

WHEREAS, exacerbation of a service-connected disability sometimes makes work activities contraindicated for periods of more than 21 days; and

WHEREAS, in such instances, the therapeutic course, convalescence, or restriction from work would occur in the home in lieu of hospitalization for more than 21 days; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, 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. 233—LEGISLATIVE

TO INCREASE THE GRANT FOR AUTOMOBILES OR OTHER CONVEYANCES AVAILABLE TO CERTAIN DISABLED VETERANS

AND TO PROVIDE FOR AUTOMATIC ANNUAL ADJUSTMENTS
BASED ON THE INCREASE IN THE COST OF LIVING

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides a grant to assist eligible disabled veterans and servicemembers in purchasing specially equipped automobiles or other conveyances; and

WHEREAS, when originally established, the amount of the grant was set at an amount sufficient to cover the full cost of lower-priced automobiles; and

WHEREAS, later amendments established grants in amounts representing 80% 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 $8,000 represents only about 36% of the total average cost of automobiles based on most current available pricing; and

WHEREAS, the automobile grant must be adjusted annually if it is to keep pace with the rise in the cost of living and remain a meaningful amount; NOW

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation to increase the automobile grant to an amount representing 80% 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. 234—LEGISLATIVE

TO PROVIDE AN INCREASE IN THE SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING GRANT
AUTHORIZED BY SECTION 2101(a) OF TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE

WHEREAS, section 2101(a) of title 38, United States Code, authorizes a onetime specially adapted housing grant to veterans who have incurred the service-connected conditions of blindness, with loss or loss of use of one lower extremity, multiple loss or loss of use of extremities, and/or loss of functions which affect balance or propulsion; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this grant is to enable such severely disabled veterans to provide necessary structural adaptations and modifications in their homes for comfort and egress; and

WHEREAS, the current $43,000.00 maximum amount authorized for this grant is insufficient to allow such veterans to make all necessary adaptations and modifications; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation in the Congress which would provide a realistic increase in the grant authorized by section 2101(a) of title 38, United States Code.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 235—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR WAIVER OF PREMIUMS
FOR SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICE DISABLED VETERANS INSURANCE

WHEREAS, section 1922A(a) of title 38, United States Code, provides for supplemental service disabled veterans' insurance for totally disabled veterans, in an amount not to exceed $20,000; and

WHEREAS, section 1922A(d) of title 38 United States Code, provides that, "no waiver of premiums shall be made in the case of any person for supplemental insurance granted under this section"; and

WHEREAS, such prohibition of premium waiver is based on the

Servicemen's Indemnity Act of 1951, which states in part, "[t]he amount of insurance placed in force hereunder. . .at the time of the insured's application for waiver hereunder, may not exceed $10,000" (section 1912(d), title 38 United States Code); and

WHEREAS, such denial of waiver on supplemental Service Disabled Veterans' Insurance for totally disabled veterans constitutes an inequity based on prior established standards; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, 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. 236—LEGISLATIVE

TO SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT WOULD EXEMPT THE BENEFITS PAID TO WARTIME SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS FROM THE "PAY-GO" PROVISIONS OF THE BUDGET ENFORCEMENT ACT

WHEREAS, wartime disabled veterans have earned the benefits and services they, their dependents and survivors receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs as a result of the injuries sustained during their period of wartime service; and

WHEREAS, the benefits and services received by wartime disabled veterans as a result of their service-connected disabilities is an extension of the costs of war; and

WHEREAS, this country has a moral obligation to continue to care for these citizen soldiers who have risen in defense and support of the ideals of this great Nation and who have returned to civilian life with service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the benefits and services provided to America's veterans, dependents and survivors have not caused this Nation's deficit problems; and

WHEREAS, the so-called "pay-go" provisions of the Budget Enforcement Act require any new benefits or services to be paid out of existing benefits or programs, in effect, requiring one group of disabled veterans to give up a benefit or service so that another worthy group of wartime disabled veterans can receive benefits or services to which they are entitled; and

WHEREAS, Persian Gulf War veterans suffering from ailments associated with their service in the Persian Gulf War are compensated from funds generated by cutting the benefits of other service-connected veterans and their survivors; and

WHEREAS, the benefits and services provided to wartime disabled veterans are unique and are not a "welfare benefit"; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation to exempt VA benefits and services provided to service-connected disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors from the "pay-go" provisions of the Budget Enforcement Act.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 237—LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSING THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MILITARY COMMISSARY SYSTEM

WHEREAS, some members of Congress and other officials have proposed to phase-out the Military Commissary System; and

WHEREAS, the Commissary System is of vital importance to the personnel of our Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, active duty personnel, their dependents, retired military and disabled veterans who live on fixed incomes should

have high quality food at fair and reasonable prices; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, vigorously opposes any proposal to phase-out the Armed Forces Commissary System.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 238—LEGISLATIVE

TO EXTEND COMMISSARY AND EXCHANGE PRIVILEGES TO VETERANS WITH SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY AND THEIR DEPENDENTS

WHEREAS, current Department of Defense regulations authorize military commissary and exchange privileges to a broad category of active and retired military personnel, their dependents and survivors; and

WHEREAS, veterans injured while in service to their Nation have earned the privilege to use commissary and exchange stores; and

WHEREAS, the recent downsizing of the military jeopardizes the continued, profitable operation of military and exchange stores; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports legislation to extend commissary and exchange privileges to service-connected disabled veterans and their dependents.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 239—LEGISLATIVE

TO EXTEND SPACE-AVAILABLE AIR TRAVEL ABOARD MILITARY AIRCRAFT TO 100 PERCENT SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, totally disabled service-connected veterans have sacrificed greatly in terms of their impairments and loss of earnings capacity; and

WHEREAS, more than any other living group of Americans, such veterans should be eligible for all benefits and privileges that the Congress may provide; and

WHEREAS, such totally disabled veterans should be extended the same privileges as other personnel currently authorized to utilize space-available military air travel; and

WHEREAS, the extension of such travel to totally disabled service-connected veterans would not place any additional burden upon the administration of this program; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, seeks the enactment of legislation which would extend space-available air travel aboard military aircraft to all 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans to the same extent and under the same conditions as is currently provided to retired military personnel.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 240—LEGISLATIVE

TO EXTEND COMMISSARY AND EXCHANGE PRIVILEGES ON THE BASIS OF AN AWARD OF DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION BENEFITS

WHEREAS, current Department of Defense regulations authorize military commissary and exchange privileges to a broad category of active and retired military personnel, their dependents and survivors; and

WHEREAS, these regulations authorize such privileges to the

spouses of living veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability and to the survivors of veterans who were permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability at time of death; and

WHEREAS, the survivors of veterans whose service-connected impairments were evaluated at less than totally disabling but whose deaths were determined to be service-related are denied these privileges; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 23-27, 1998, supports the enactment of legislation that would authorize military commissary and exchange privileges for the survivors of veterans whose deaths were found to be related to a service-connected disability.

* * *

COMMANDER McDONALD: We have a motion. Do I hear a second? Mike 1.

MR. PHIL P. FICARRA: Phil Ficarra, Department of Utah commander, Vernal, Utah 10. I make a motion that we accept the resolutions as read.

COMMANDER McDONALD: I need a second, sir. We already have the motion.

MR. FICARRA: I'll make a second, sir.

COMMANDER McDONALD: We have a motion and a second to accept the report of the Legislative Committee. Do I hear any -- no, I don't hear any. (Laughter) Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried.

MR. GIESE: Thank you, Commander. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Ladies and gentlemen, please rise, and I will ask Chaplain Todd to dismiss us with a prayer.

CHAPLAIN TODD: Good God, again we come to the close of another session, but more than that, we thank You for the blessings that have come in from the hard-working efforts of men and women throughout our great nation. And we praise Your Name, Lord, for those who have given their time and their talents and their resources so that all of us may benefit from this great organization's works and services.

Again, we thank You, Lord, for all You've done and all You shall do in our lives. In His Holy Name we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER McDONALD: This convention will stand in recess until Thursday morning at 9:00 o'clock.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 10:40 o'clock a.m., August 25, 1998.)

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION

AUGUST 27, 1998

The Third Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans convened in the Conrad Ballroom of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, Thursday morning, August 27, 1998, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by Commander Harry R. McDonald, Jr.

COMMANDER HARRY R. McDONALD, JR.: The convention will come to order.

Please join me in giving the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Chaplain Todd, will you please lead us in prayer?

CHAPLAIN TODD: We have come this far by faith, just leaning, leaning on The Lord, trusting in His Holy Word, He never failed us yet. Lord God, as we come now to the close of this great convention, we come thanking You for a new day, new opportunity, new moments of fellowship, and another day's journey.

We pray now that You will protect those and bless those who are caught up in the eye of the storm on the East Coast. And we pray that You'll continue to bless our leaders and give them the victory that they need in sharing their wisdom and knowledge. And Lord, let us remember our men and women on foreign shores who are

part of our military.

And Lord this day, we just pray that You will continue to give us that peace that surpasses all human understanding. In His Holy Name we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Be seated, please.

At this time, I would like to introduce Chaplain Marvin R. Gant for a presentation from the Chapel of the Four Chaplains. Chaplain Gant.

CHAPLAIN MARVIN R. GANT: Good morning to each of you, and I once again welcome you to Nevada. And Yes, we do have churches in Las Vegas. Some of you say we need a lot of them. We're privileged to have you here with us, such honorable men and women representing our nation and our veterans.

I come to you today from the Chapel of Four Chaplains, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, to make a distinguished presentation. Before I do that, though, let me take just a couple of moments to talk to you about how the Bronze Medallion, the Legion of Honor, has come into being.

No tradition of American society is more precious to, or characteristic of our culture than the voluntary reaching out to neighbors in need. Such selfless service is part of both our civic and religious heritage.

The Chapel of Four Chaplains is a national nonprofit organization founded upon one shining manifestation of our heritage, that of four Army chaplains who, after giving up their life jackets to soldiers who had none, linked arms with one another and went down with the USAT DORCHESTER after it was torpedoed on February the 3rd, 1943.

This historical event began at Torpedo Junction, the U-boat infested, icy water of the North Atlantic during World War II. On January the 23rd, 1943, the USAT DORCHESTER, an old coastal steamer quickly pressed into military service, left New York Harbor for Greenland. The DORCHESTER was escorted by three Coast Guard cutters. Two patrolled the flanks; the third, the TAMPA, was 300 yards out in front.

Most of the men were seasick and green with nausea. The weather was bitterly cold with gale-force winds. Ice began building up on the decks, slowing the DORCHESTER to ten knots.

Moving among them were four Army chaplains: George L. Fox, Alexander D. Goode, Clark V. Poling and John P. Washington. The chaplains talked with and listened to the men, soothing their apprehensions, offering encouragement, sharing jokes. By their concern and camaraderie with the men and one another, they brought solace.

On February the 2nd, 1943, the TAMPA's sonar detected the presence of a submarine. She dropped back and swept the periphery of the convoy but failed to find the submarine's position. That evening, the TAMPA returned to the patrol area up front, and the other ships followed.

The captain ordered the men to sleep in their clothing with life jackets close at hand. They were only 150 miles from Greenland. With daylight, there would be air cover from the American base.

It was just after midnight, February the 3rd, 1943 that an enemy submarine fired a torpedo toward the DORCHESTER's flank. The missile exploded in the boiler room, destroying the electric supply and releasing suffocating clouds of steam and ammonia gas. Many on board died instantly. Some were trapped below deck. Others, jolted from their bunks, groped and stumbled their way to the decks of the stricken vessel. Taking on water rapidly, the ship began listing to the starboard.

Overcrowded lifeboats capsized, rafts drifted away before anyone could reach them. Men clung to rails, frozen with fear, unable to let go and plunge into the dark, churning water below.

The testimony of survivors tells us that the sole order and the only fragment of hope in this chaos came from the four chaplains, who calmly guided men to their boat stations. They opened the storage locker and distributed life jackets. Then they coaxed men frozen with fear over the side. Soon the supply of life jackets was exhausted. Several survivors report watching in awe as

the four chaplains either gave away or forced upon other young men their own life jackets.

These four men of God had given away their only means of saving themselves to save others. The chaplains gathered together and led the men in prayer and a hymn. They linked their arms together as the slant of the deck became severe. And just that way, with their arms linked in brotherhood and their heads bowed in prayer, they sank beneath the waves.

It was a heroic act. It was not the only heroic act aboard the DORCHESTER, but was especially significant because of these four young chaplains. Two were Protestants, one Jewish, another of the Catholic faith.

Today, as it has been for these many years, the Chapel of Four Chaplains serves the memory of these brave men and carries their message of interfaith cooperation and selfless service to every part of our country.

To recognize and encourage the acts of volunteerism, brotherhood and sacrifice among Americans of every age and station of life, the Chapel has established the Legion of Honor. The Bronze Medallion is given by the Chapel in recognition of exceptional selfless service on the part of an individual who contributes to the well-being of others at the national or world level and to a spirit of interfaith cooperation.

I'm here today representing the Chapel of Four Chaplains, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, to give the Distinguished Bronze Legion of Honor and present it to Mr. Harry R. McDonald, Jr., National Commander of the DAV. (Applause)

Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Chaplain Gant. And please express my sincere appreciation to the Chapel personnel.

MR. ARTHUR L. LEACH: Commander, Mike 1.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Mike 1.

MR. LEACH: Art Leach, Chapter 134 Ohio, would like to make a motion that we send a citation or a plaque to the Veterans Administration here in Vegas for all the help they've done, and the clinic that they've had upstairs. They've helped not only the veterans, but they helped their families, too.

COMMANDER McDONALD: We've already passed a resolution to that effect, so it's not in order at this time. Thank you.

At this time, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you the new president of the Commanders and Adjutants Association. Will you please welcome Harry Yaukey of Maryland, the newly elected president of the Commanders and Adjutants Association for 1998-99. (Applause)

MR. HARRY E. YAUKEY, SR.: Thank you, Commander McDonald, also Adjutant Art Wilson. Officers and guests and comrades: It is my pleasure to serve this year as president of the Commanders and Adjutants Association, and we're looking forward to doing good things.

I would like to let National know that we are in full support with them, and we will work with them, and we'd like to let the state departments know we will be working with them.

In the meantime, I'd like to at this time give you the list of my staff under me that will be working with me this year, the Executive Committee included. I'd like to introduce Jim Tanner from Massachusetts, vice-president. Executive Committee: James Clem of Virginia; Don Smith of Arizona; Irvin Eddy from Oklahoma; Cliff Piersee from Kansas; James Stewart from South Carolina; Francis McLaskey from Iowa; Dave Tannenbaum, as secretary and treasurer; the immediate past president and assistant secretary-treasurer, Sloan Hoopes from Virginia; Judge Advocate Tom Daley from Massachusetts; Chaplain George Le Porte from New York; Sergeant-at-Arms Robert Reynolds from Virginia; and Ray Chatary from Maryland. (Applause)

Again, we are looking forward to having a fine year and supporting all, and especially the causes for the veterans and their families to help through legislation and other means of helping them in the future.

At this time, if I may, I'd like to have Commander Harry McDonald and Adjutant Art Wilson, if they'd step forward, please.

I have here a check for $1500 for the National Service Foundation from the Commanders and Adjutants Association. (Applause)

Thank you all.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Harry.

At this time, I would like to introduce Harry Warburton, the Immediate Past Imperial Golden Rodent of the National Order of Trench Rats.

MR. HARRY WARBURTON: Good morning, brothers and sisters. I have two resolutions at this time. The first one reads:

> WHEREAS, God has seen in His infinite wisdom to call to the great beyond, Robert Elliott, Imperial Golden Rodent Number 66; 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 the Disabled American Veterans.
>
> THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the National Order of Trench Rats assembled at the 74th National Rendezvous in Las Vegas, Nevada, that we recognize his outstanding service by contributing a sum of $100 as a memorial to him to be placed in the trust account of the Perpetual Rehabilitation Funds of the Disabled American Veterans Service Foundation, the income of which shall be used from time to time toward the maintenance of nationwide rehabilitation activities of the Disabled American Veterans and their dependents; and
>
> BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED his name be inscribed on the Memorial Honor Roll so as all may see and appreciate his sacrifice and devotion to the cause of the Disabled American Veterans as exemplified by Robert Elliott, Imperial Golden Rodent 66.

The other resolution reads the same, and it's in honor of David Oglesby, Imperial Black Plague, 1997-1998.

And while I'm here, I'd like to make a donation to the DAV Rehab Fund from the National Order of Trench Rats for $2500. (Applause)

I was hoping that our newly elected Imperial Rodent would be here, but I see Jimmie Foster is not around yet. He'll be installed in a little while, and back him as much as you backed me.

It's been a pleasure. I know it's a first that the national commander and the Imperial Golden Rodent both come from Florida, and we've tangoed for years, so it's nothing new. At this time, I want to say thank you, and I enjoyed it. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Harry.

The registration is closed, and I now call upon the Credentials Committee for their final report.

MR. HOOPES: Commander, the Credentials Committee met this morning in Conference Room 8 of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel. This is a final report and reflects the total registration as of the 26th of August, 1998. At the present time, we have 629 chapters, 52 departments, 33 national officers, 13 past national commanders, for a total of 1,678 delegates and 47 alternates, for a total vote of 11,669.

This completes the final report of the Credentials Committee, Commander, and I move for its adoption.

COMMANDER McDONALD: We have a motion to accept the final report of the Credentials Committee. Do I hear a second? Mike 3.

MR. REYNOLDS: Robert Reynolds, department commander, Department of Virginia, seconds that.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. We have a motion and a second to accept the Credentials Committee's final report. All those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried.

I now call upon the Nominating Committee for the report of the Committee on Nomination of National Officers.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you, Commander McDonald. The National Convention Committee on Nomination of National Officers was called to order for its first business session on Monday, August 24th, 1998 by Committee Advisors William E. Leach and Gene A. Murphy.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. Dennis Joyner was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed, and

Dennis Joyner was elected chairman.

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

The committee held meetings in addition to Monday also on Tuesday and Thursday mornings for the purpose of interviewing candidates for national offices. Twelve candidates were interviewed by the committee.

The following individuals have been recommended unanimously for national office by the Nominating Committee: For the office of national commander, Andrew A. Kistler from Pennsylvania; for the office of national senior vice-commander, Michael E. Dobmeier of North Dakota; for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander, Armando C. Albarran of Texas; for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander, George H. Steese, Jr. from California; for the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander, Edward R. Heath, Sr. from Maine; for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander, Alan W. Bowers from Massachusetts; for the office of national judge-advocate, Edward G. Galian from New York; and for the office of national chaplain, Alfonso Todd, Jr. from Michigan. (Applause)

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Nomination of National Officers, and I move the adoption of this report, and that the committee be discharged with the thanks of the National Convention. Thank you.

COMMANDER McDONALD: I will now call for a second for that report of the Committee on Nomination of National Officers to be adopted and the committee be discharged. Do I hear a second? Mike 2.

MR. LE PORTE: George Le Porte, New York. I second that motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. You've heard the motion and the second. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried. Thank you, Dennis.

You have heard the report of the Committee on Nomination of National Officers, and they have nominated Andrew A. Kistler for national commander. Here to second that nomination is Vincent Darcangelo of Pennsylvania. Mr. Darcangelo. (Applause)

MR. VINCENT P. DARCANGELO: Thank you, Commander. Members and guests: An avid baseball player most of his childhood, after high school Andrew A. Kistler began a promising career as a professional baseball player with the St. Louis Cardinals farm system. In 1951, as Mickey Mantle went to the Yankees and Willie Mays went as a rookie to the San Francisco Giants, Andy Kistler went into the Army.

Following basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, he was assigned to the Army's 45th Division Signal Company in Korea. While serving as a wire construction team chief during the frigid Korean winter of 1952, Sergeant Kistler tripped a land mine. The explosion ripped apart his lower body, right hand and arm. Both of his legs were amputated below the knee. Mr. Kistler's baseball career had ended. Following extensive treatments and rehabilitation at the Walter Reed Army Hospital, Andy Kistler was medically discharged from the Army in 1953.

Andy returned to his native Franklin, Pa., and began a career with the Juvenile Probation Department of Venango and Crawford Counties. He retired from the department with 20 years service as chief juvenile probation officer and director of services at a juvenile institution. After retiring from this position, he began a second career as a sales representative for Franklin Steel Company, which lasted an additional 15 years. Andy is now retired.

Andy is a member of the DAV for more than 18 years and is a life member of DAV Chapter 67 in Franklin, Pa., which he helped form. In addition to his current national office as senior vice-commander, Andy recently completed a one-year term as department commander of Pennsylvania. He has also served as a member of the National POW-MIA Committee; chairman of the DAV Department of Pennsylvania Employee Committee; served as department 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th junior vice-commanders, senior vice-commander and was named Pennsylvania Disabled American Veteran of the Year in 1993-94.

Andrew A. Kistler is a proud former member of our Armed Forces. He has maintained and represented with honor and integrity this fine organization of the Disabled American Veterans at both the national and the department levels.

He has advanced the interests of and worked for the betterment of all worthy wartime disabled veterans, their widows and their families. He has demonstrated helpfulness and comradeship. He has shown a willingness to serve our comrades, our communities and our country. He has applied the principles of respect, loyalty and devotion among disabled veterans.

He represents moral integrity and has demonstrated executive ability. He acts and conducts himself in such a manner at all times and places as will only affect the good of the order. As he attains the highest office of national commander, he will enforce and sustain the principles of this DAV, enabling that this organization's future will continue to be vibrant and strong.

I assure all present to be sure he will serve the principles this organization is based on, and he will provide by example the moral leadership this million-member national organization of the Disabled American Veterans can be proud of.

It is my honor to nominate Andrew A. Kistler for the position of national commander, Disabled American Veterans. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: The Chair will now call for any further nominations for office of national commander. Are there any further nominations for national commander? Any further nominations for national commander? Any further nominations for national commander? Nominations for national commander are closed. I close the nominations and declare Andrew A. Kistler elected as national commander and instruct the national adjutant to cast one unanimous ballot for his election. (Applause)

ADJUTANT WILSON: I, Arthur H. Wilson, national adjutant of the Disabled American Veterans, hereby cast one unanimous ballot for Andrew A. Kistler for the office of national commander. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: The Nominating Committee has nominated Michael Dobmeier for the office of national senior vice-commander. I will now call for any further nominations for national senior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations for national senior vice-commander? Are there any further nominations for senior vice-commander? Are there any further nominations for senior vice-commander? I will now close the nominations and declare Michael Dobmeier elected as the national senior vice-commander. (Applause)

The National Nominating Committee has nominated Armando Albarran for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander. I will now call for any further nominations for national 1st junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations for national 1st junior vice-commander? Are there any further nominations for national 1st junior vice-commander? Any further nominations for national 1st junior vice-commander? Hearing none, I will close the nominations and declare Armando Albarran elected as the national 1st junior vice-commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated George Steese for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander. I will now call for further nominations for national 2nd junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations for national 2nd junior vice-commander? Are there any further nominations for national 2nd junior vice-commander? Hearing none, I will now close the nominations and declare George Steese elected as the national 2nd junior vice-commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Edward Heath for the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander. I will now call for any further nominations for the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations for national 3rd junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations for national 3rd junior vice-commander? Hearing none, the nominations are closed, and I declare Edward Heath elected national 3rd junior vice-commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Alan Bowers for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander. I will now call for

any further nominations for national 4th junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations for national 4th junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations for national 4th junior vice-commander? Hearing none, the nominations are closed, and I declare that Alan Bowers is elected national 4th junior vice-commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Edward Galian for the office of national judge advocate. I will now call for further nominations for national judge advocate. Are there any further nominations for national judge advocate? Are there any further nominations for national judge advocate? Hearing none, the nominations are closed, and I declare that Edward Galian is elected as national judge advocate. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated the Reverend Alfonso Todd for the office of national chaplain. I will now call for further nominations for national chaplain. Are there any further nominations for national chaplain? Are there any further nominations for national chaplain? Hearing none, the nominations are closed, and I declare that Reverend Alfonso Todd is elected as the national chaplain. (Applause)

I will now instruct the national adjutant to cast one unanimous ballot for these officers.

ADJUTANT WILSON: I, Arthur H. Wilson, national adjutant of the Disabled American Veterans cast one unanimous ballot: Michael Dobmeier for national senior vice-commander; Armando Albarran for national 1st junior vice-commander; George Steese for national 2nd junior vice-commander; Edward Heath for national 3rd junior vice-commander; Alan Bowers for national 4th junior vice-commander; Edward Galian for national judge advocate; and Reverend Alfonso Todd for national chaplain. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Would the newly elected officers please come to the stage, and would the families please come up also on the stage?

At this time, I would invite the newly elected national officers to come to the podium and make their comments, and I would especially invite our newly elected commander, Andrew Kistler. Andy has been truly a great DAV member and a friend, and I look forward to serving with him, and I know that he'll do a better job than I've done for this past year.

Let me introduce to you your newly elected national commander, Andrew Kistler. (Rising applause)

COMMANDER-ELECT ANDREW A. KISTLER: Good morning and thank you. It's rather ironic that this morning, as I was placing my credential badge on my suit, I glanced up at the label of the suit, and it said, "Made in Korea." (Laughter)

National Commander McDonald, National Adjutant Art Wilson, honored guests, friends and delegates to the 77th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans: I am truly honored by the opportunity to serve as your national commander. It is a privilege that fills my heart with gratitude and humility, an honor that inspires me to carry on with hope and courage the great legacy of this wonderful and unique organization we call the DAV, a legacy that strives daily to fulfill the dreams of all those who bear the scars of war.

I would like to briefly thank those most responsible for my being here: Our Pennsylvania Chapter Tri-County 67 for their unwavering support; the Department of Pennsylvania for their guidance and assistance over the years; the Campaign Committee: Dan Barry, John Hoden and Jim Wyatt; National Adjutant Art Wilson and his staff, whose expertise and leadership keep this organization on the cutting edge of veterans issues; to all you DAV members here present who continue to make the DAV the Number 1 veterans service organization.

Please permit me to introduce my family, whose love and support has enabled me to become national commander: My wife, Jean, of 46 years (applause); our son Michael and his wife, Bonnie. (Applause). Their sons, Joseph and Andrew, had to stay home and attend school. Our daughter Paula and her son, Matthew. (Applause) And their husband and father and daughter, Andria, had to stay home and attend school. Our son Stephen, his wife

Margaret, and their son John. (Applause) Thank you, and I love you.

Like my comrades throughout the DAV, I learned first-hand the critical role our organization plays and serves in the lives of all disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors.

I learned it first as a combat-disabled Korean War veteran, later as a working member of my community raising a family, and finally as an active member of the DAV working to build better lives for America's veterans and their families.

People have been gathering together in groups for the benefit of the individual for as long as -- well, for as long as there's been people. Because, as a group, you can accomplish more, exchange ideas, support one another, and change things for the better.

DAV members have been gathering, exchanging, supporting and changing things for the better for disabled American veterans and their families for 78 years, and nobody does it better. (Applause)

Disabled veterans and their families know all about adversity and about overcoming obstacles, sacrifice, and going beyond the call of duty.

Today our nation finds itself on the threshold of a new era. The long Cold War has come to an end, and America faces a new horizon. The DAV faces a new challenge as well. We all stand at the dawn of a new century. Never before has unity become so important.

The time when World War II veterans stood as the active cornerstone of our chapters is fading. Many of those veterans who championed our cause are no longer able to remain as active as they would like to, due to age and physical disabilities.

It is a time of rapid and sometimes very troubling change. And it is happening at a time when the current political climate in our nation's capital is becoming extremely hazardous to the health and welfare of disabled veterans and their families. (Applause)

Americans learned long ago that the blessings of freedom are not easy and never free. They must always be defended. (Applause)

Constant threats of reductions, curtailments, outright elimination of service-connected veterans' earned entitlements and beneficial Department of Veterans Affairs programs are fast approaching reality in a changing and emotionally charged political atmosphere.

Everyone understands that balancing the federal budget requires sacrifice. However, it must never be forgotten what veterans have already sacrificed when they answered their call to defend our precious freedom. (Applause) Today, with fewer veterans in Congress, we must ensure that our elected officials understand that veterans' benefits are a continuing cost of war and a debt never to be forgotten. (Applause)

In its efforts to balance the budget, Congress should not turn it back on those who have given so much and ask only to be treated fairly.

Every generation of Americans inherits the complex work of maintaining the greatest democracy the world has ever seen. Our World War II veterans and the families of those veterans should feel a sense of enormous accomplishment. (Applause) They went beyond the call of duty and maintained their watch with valor and dignity.

Because of what they achieved during World War II, historian Stephen Ambrose labeled the 20th the "American century". "That generation of Americans born between 1900 and 1930 made victory possible," he said. "They won the war, they planned for peace, and they led the country through the second half of the 20th century. They were children of the Depression, tempered by hardship but imbued with the ideals of service and sacrifice." (Applause)

They were successful because of what they learned in war: The value of teamwork, initiative, self-discipline, and national unity. Above all, they learned responsibility.

Now, that valiant generation of Americans is holding out the cherished torch of service and sacrifice to the Korean War veterans, Vietnam veterans and post-Vietnam era veterans as well. Their challenge must become our challenge. (Applause)

Their spirit must become ours as well. We who are the heirs of their legacy must also be the guardians of their dreams. Now is the time for each of you to accept that torch and to carry the flame brighter than ever before into the future. (Applause)

On a bitterly cold day in January of 1963, John Fitzgerald Kennedy became the 35th President of the United States. Amid the paralyzing cold, standing at a rostrum overlooking the east front of the U.S. Capitol, he delivered one of the great inaugural addresses. In many ways, the most remembered of all the words that he spoke that day are these: "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."

While many things have changed since the decade of the '60s, the words President Kennedy spoke that day have not lost their meaning or been diminished by the passage of time.

In our society, we face no greater danger than the danger of indifference, indifference to our democratic institutions, the institutions of government and politics. The evidence in our nation is overwhelming. Many Americans have become bored by politics, cynical about government, indifferent toward civic obligations.

While the economy is rising and unemployment falling, the dangers inherent in indifference may appear small to many people, even remote, but that is misleading. What is not misleading is this: In the 1996 presidential election, 96 million people voted, but 100 million eligible voters did not, despite the fact that the two major parties spent more than $650 million enticing the people to vote for their candidates.

Forty-nine percent of the eligible voting public and population cannot, by any reasonable standard, be thought satisfactory. To the contrary, it is shameful. (Applause)

I cannot accept the argument that your vote doesn't count, that elected officials ignore you, or that politics is corrupt. But I can tell you with certainty that if you don't vote, your vote won't count. (Applause) And elected officials thereby will ignore you with the impunity you deserve. (Applause)

Moreover, if you believe politics is corrupt, then you have a moral obligation to change it. (Applause)

I am fascinated by the Greek definition of the word "idiot." To the Greeks, an idiot was a person who did not participate in civic life. If you accept that definition and apply it to our last election, 51 percent of our citizens would have to be classified as idiots. (Applause) I presume that you, like me, do not want to spend your time with idiots.

Understand, I'm not naive. I have few illusions about our society. I suffer no misconceptions about the nature of man. But I know that without effort, there are no results except this: Graver consequences. I believe change is possible, but it won't happen by waiting for others to do it or to assume their responsibility. Change can occur, but only if you and I cause it to happen. Only if you and I, you and I, accept our obligations.

History is filled with important lessons. In the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," perhaps the greatest of all works of history, Gibbons, citing the Athenians, warned about the danger of indifference. This is what he wrote:

> In the end, more than they wanted freedom, they wanted security. They wanted a comfortable life and they lost it all, security, comfort and freedom.
>
> When the Athenians finally wanted not to give to society, but for society to give to them; when the freedom they wished for most was the freedom from responsibility, then Athens ceased to be free.

(Applause)

One of the greatest jurists in the history of American jurisprudence was Learned Hand. One night, there was a great dinner in the City of New York to honor Judge Hand. People came from far and near to pay tribute to this extraordinary man.

Archibald McLeish, poet, Pulitzer prize-winning playwright, Harvard professor, former Librarian of Congress, came to honor his friend. Professor McLeish wrote this poem of tribute:

We are neither weak nor few

As long as one person does what one can do.
As long as one person in the sun alone
Walks between the silence and the stone
And honors humanity in their flesh, their bone,
We are not too weak, nor yet too few.

Ultimately, all that any of us can do for the DAV is to do our part during our time. We cannot rewrite the past nor can we guarantee the future. But we can and we must be vigilant in the time given to us. (Applause)

We are not too weak. We are not too few. We need to remember what has often been said: "There is no 'I' in teamwork; neither is there 'me.'" (Applause)

In order to succeed, we must stand united in purpose and mighty in spirit as never before. Together, we can ensure that this great organization's future will be vibrant and strong.

Departments and chapters are constantly rejuvenating themselves, and that's a key ingredient in the future. A mix of older and younger members is healthiest, both for the national and for the chapter organizations.

We all need to fight to protect health care for older veterans. We need younger veterans to help energize the entire membership. New volunteers are needed to help carry the legislative fight as every successive Congress moves to tighten the budget screws.

Each of us must continue to remind Congress that we are still around, that we vote, that we know the issues at hand. We must emphasize that we are a vigorous, responsible, nationwide organization that intends to keep fighting at the polls and elsewhere for veterans' programs. (Applause)

Never again should we allow those in Washington to cast votes against the best interests of America's veterans. (Applause)

Our actions over the next few years will determine whether the DAV, as we know it today, will be alive, will thrive, or only be a memory.

In closing, let me share with you the wisdom of the great 17th century writer, Cervantes, whose novel "Don Quixote" is regarded as one of the masterpieces of world literature. Cervantes wrote, "There is a strange charm in the thoughts of a good legacy," and I will admit to you as being charmed by the thought of leaving the DAV better for my stay here.

So, my wish for all of you today is to have the vision to see what ought to be, the courage to make it a reality, and the generosity to leave more than footprints in the sand.

God bless America, God bless the DAV, and God bless those of you who love, guard and defend our precious freedom. Thank you. (Rising applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Andy, that was an outstanding speech, and I'm sure that every one of us here will support you in your pursuits this coming year. You are truly a dedicated member of the DAV.

At this time, I'd like to call on the newly elected senior vice-commander, Mike Dobmeier, for some remarks. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT MICHAEL E. DOBMEIER: The commander said "brief," and I'll take care of that. To my very loyal and dedicated friends from my home State of North Dakota, and the other departments in the energizer 14th District, which includes Minnesota, South Dakota and Montana, who have been behind my campaign since before I knew I even had one; to Past National Commanders Lyle Pearson, Gene Murphy and Dick Marbes, who have appeared with us before the Nominating Committee in support; to the Nominating Committee itself; to my wife Sandy, who's always been here, and you know her (applause); my sister, Susie Litzinger (applause); and my mother, Marian Wellwood, who's at her first convention (applause), and she's enjoying it a lot more than she did the beginning of this disabling experience; and to you, my comrades, thank you for the trust you've placed in me once again.

Rest assured that I'll be doing my level best to earn that trust and to support my friend, our commander, Andy Kistler. And I won't be indifferent, and I will do my part during my time. And I will, as long as possible, hold the steady course that this great

organization has begun under the leadership of National Adjutant Art Wilson. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: I'd now call on newly elected 1st Junior Vice-Commander Albarran for his remarks.

1ST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT ARMANDO C. ALBARRAN: National Commander Andrew Kistler, National Adjutant Art Wilson, families, friends, guests, and my fellow disabled veterans: I would like to express my sincere thanks to every member for your vote and your support. I promise that I will discharge and perform the duties of the office to which I have been elected to the best of my ability.

I further pledge all my energies to continue to make sure that every disabled veteran, his spouse and his dependents are all taken care of.

At this time, I would like to recognize the person that has given me unwavering support 365 days, my wife, Tillie. Tillie, will you please stand up and be recognized. (Applause) I love you, babe. And my son, my oldest son, who flew in yesterday afternoon to be here today, Adam. He's 28 years old. (Applause) And he brought his fiancee, Michele. (Applause) I have two other daughters. They have commitments to their husbands and to work. And another, the youngest daughter, who is still home. She's taking care of the house, the pets, the dogs, the cats. But if she could be here, she would be here.

I would be remiss if I would not recognize the people that made my campaign a successful one. At this time, I would like to recognize the campaign co-chairmen. Would you please stand up as I call your names: Dennis Nixon, Glynne Neal, Larry Geddie, Bill Morin, Bruce Burgess, Bill Bone, and our department adjutant, the first female veteran, Kathryn Henson. Please stand up. (Applause)

And the rest of my Campaign Committee: The Department of Texas, 20th District. Please stand up and be recognized. (Applause)

If I may say one final thing, Commander, we must, on election day, show Congress that disabled veterans do vote, and they will no longer be pushed around. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Armando.

At this time, I'd like to call on the newly elected 2nd junior vice-commander, George Steese, for his remarks. (Applause)

2ND JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT GEORGE H. STEESE: Thank you. I have a few supporters out there. First of all, I have to recognize the woman that's put up with me for 25 years and 17 days, my wife, June (applause), who makes sure that I'm color coordinated as I go out the door; and my daughter, who has just recently graduated from school and was able to be here this year, Ellie. (Applause)

You know, last year I came and I thanked the 16th District for their support, and again they have come in force to support me, and I really appreciate the 16th District and all their support. But in that district, I have to thank the man who got me started on this road, Mike Tempesta, from my chapter in Chapter 1; to Dave Phillips, who has stood beside me and constantly doing things for me and keeping me going; but to a gentleman who has now taken me under his wing and kind of guided me through, Past National Commander Musselmann, who is also a very good friend of mine. I thank them very much.

But as I look out in the audience now after a year serving you as 3rd junior vice-commander, I see many more people who I must thank who came here and showed their support for my going for higher office. And you know who you are, all the members here on the floor. And I thank you for your support.

And all I can say is that elected I serve you, I represent you, and I'll do the best job I can. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, George.

At this time, I'd like to call upon the newly elected 3rd national junior vice-commander, Ed Heath, for his remarks. And you'll notice I got 3rd junior vice-commander instead of judge advocate in there.

3RD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT EDWARD R. HEATH, SR.: You didn't call me Ed Galian, but that's okay, Commander McDonald,

because we're both lawyers. And I say that rather lightly because some days that's not much of an advantage. But with Ed Galian around, it sure is an advantage, and I'm proud to be one.

Commander McDonald, it has been an honor to represent you around the country this past year. And Commander Kistler, I'm going to be just as enthusiastic about representing you around the country this coming year. I'm looking forward to it. (Applause)

I need to say a few thank yous, and undoubtedly I'll leave somebody out. But I'm going to try to do it anyway, and if I do leave someone out, bear with me. I certainly don't mean to. I need to thank all the professional staffs in Washington, D.C. and in Cincinnati for the kind assistance they offered me throughout the year in helping me to perform my duties without getting into too much trouble.

I also need to thank the entire 3rd District, which consists of Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire and Rhode Island, for the support they've given me in pushing a little gently toward me running this time for higher office.

I especially need to thank the Department of Maine and Commander Newell and the assistance that we had from Tim Seavey and Paul Bisson in handing out our wonderful Heath bars. Now, those Heath bars came about because we had planned to have a plane-load of lobsters flown in from Maine, but the guy Gary Burns lined up to hijack the plane backed out at the last minute, and we didn't get them. So we had to substitute with Heath bars.

I need to thank the National Service Officers that were helping me along the way, too: Jeanette Genovese out of Rhode Island; Bruce Kaplan out of the State of Maine; and especially my friend, Gary Burns. Stand up, Gary. Stand up all you people that I've mentioned, please, and take a bow, and I give you a big hand. (Applause)

I also need to thank all of my good friends from Florida who have stuck with me last year and this year. And hey, who knows? We might do it again. And I thank all of you.

I also want to thank the people of the places that I visited last year for their warm and wonderful welcomes that they gave me at the 4th District, which consists of New Jersey, Delaware and Connecticut, when they brought me into Atlantic City, and I got out of there without losing all my money; the great States of Vermont, Oklahoma, North Carolina and Wisconsin. I owe a debt of gratitude to all of you for making me feel so good about being at your state conventions and your meetings.

To the people of Florida, I would ask you to do me a special favor when you go back, and take my best wishes for complete recoveries back to Past National Commander, and your current adjutant, Al Linden, who couldn't be with us here, and also to a National Service Officer that has given his all to helping veterans everywhere and recently had a shock, Bob Timmons. Please give them my best wishes when you get back there, for their recovery. (Applause)

Last, but far from least, I need to introduce to you my constant companion for the last 25 years, a person that's been my best friend and my severest critic when I've needed it -- I thought sometimes when I didn't need it, but that's beside the point -- my wife, Sylvia. (Applause)

And with that having been said, I'll just thank each and every one of you, and God bless you all. Thanks for giving me an opportunity to be here. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Ed.

It's now my privilege to ask the newly elected 4th national junior vice-commander, Alan Bowers, to come up for his remarks. Alan. (Applause)

4TH JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT ALAN W. BOWERS: Thank you, Commander McDonald. First to my wife for her loving and continuing support; to the members of Chapter 46 in Massachusetts and to the Massachusetts Department, especially Commander Russell Henderson, Adjutant Tom Daley, Past National Commander Vern Cardosi; and to all of the delegates for your continuing support. Thank you very much. And also to Dan Stack, our National Service Officer, and his professional staff. You guys make us look good. Thank you.

(Applause)

To the Nominating Committee, thank you for the opportunity to serve this great team, and it certainly is a great team.

And to Andy and to Adjutant Wilson, you have my commitment, my time, my talents, and be assured that I pledge my energies to the mission of service to disabled veterans.

Finally, to each of you, thank you. Thank you for all you do for disabled veterans. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Alan.

And now, it's my pleasure to introduce the newly elected judge advocate of the national organization, Mr. Ed Galian. (Applause)

JUDGE ADVOCATE GALIAN: Before I forget, I'll introduce my chairman of the board: Janet Galian, my lovely wife. (Applause)

I certainly have to thank my people from the State of New York. They've supported me throughout the years -- not the year, but the years. My National Amputation Chapter Number 76, one of the greatest chapters in the entire organization, I must thank them very, very much for their support throughout the years. And, of course, throughout the years I've made so many friends in so many districts and chapters and departments, I don't know how to thank all of you. I can't name you, but thank you all very, very much. (Applause)

Hardly a day goes by that I don't speak to somebody on the national staff. They've been fantastic. Any time I've got a question, pick up the phone, as one of these fine people a question, and I get an answer almost instantly, and if it's not instantly, it comes in by fax or e-mail. That's great. Thank you all very much.

In particular, I must thank Bob Gushee, national inspector general. He and I work fairly close together. And he's really a guy that every department should have. He keeps people straight, keeps them informed on their rights and duties as members of this organization. And really, we should be very proud to have a national inspector general like Bob Gushee. Thanks, Bob, very much. (Applause)

In conclusion, I just want to say that I practiced law for about 40 years, and whether or not I ever got the job right depends on which of my clients you ask. If I got them good verdicts, I did the job right. If I didn't, I didn't do the job right. For those who are serving time somewhere, I don't even think about that. (Laughter) But those who got the acquittals, they think I'm terrific.

The reason I say that, if you keep reelecting me as national judge advocate, maybe I'll get the job right some day. I'm doing my best, and I'll keep on doing my best. Thank you very much and thank you for your great support.

Good luck to Andy Kistler and the entire staff. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Ed.

And now we'll hear the remarks of our second-term chaplain, Alfonso Todd. (Applause)

CHAPLAIN TODD: Again, we thank God for the opportunity to serve this great organization; my lovely wife, Jerlean (applause), who was my campaign manager; and to District 10, the men and women from Michigan, will you stand, please? (Applause) The national staff and commander.

I would like to say that yesterday was a tremendous day. We had over 62 people to attend our chaplains' seminar. The men and women that represented the chapters and the departments of our great organization not only gave me an opportunity to feel the very essence of God's Spirit, but they let it be known that they were men and women of faith, for it's our responsibilities as chaplains throughout this great nation who represent our organization to DAV and DAVA to be the spiritual link between heaven and earth.

And it's our responsibility to be that vital, stimulating power that we'll pray constantly for our nation, our men and women who are in danger day in and day out on foreign soil, and for our leadership of this great organization. Our hope and our prayer is that this year will be another great year that we will express that vital force from a spiritual perspective in our communities, in the nation's capital, and in our own organizations.

My hope and prayer is that we will see you next year, and this year again will be a vital force for all of us in doing those things that we need to do for our organization.

God bless you and God bless America. (Applause)

COMMANDER McDONALD: You know, when the chaplain passed by, he whispered in my ear, he said, "Pray for me." I don't get many people asking me to pray for them, but when the chaplain does it, he might be in trouble. (Laughter)

We will continue with the unfinished business of the convention. At this time, the Chair will entertain a motion to discharge the Credentials Committee. Mike 2.

MR. VLECK: Carl Vleck, District 15, Chapter 2, Nebraska, makes the motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. Mike 3.

MR. LAWRENCE WALKER: Lawrence Walker, Chapter 2, Minnesota, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you. We have a motion and a second to discharge the Credentials Committee. All those in favor, signify by Aye; opposed. Carried. Thank you.

Adjutant Wilson, would you please read the list of the newly elected Executive Committee.

ADJUTANT WILSON: The following members have been elected to the National Executive Committee for the two-year term 1998-2000: William Novak, Jr. from District 2; alternate, Carmen A. Vitale. Albert E. Church, District 4; alternate, Salvatore LoSauro. Thomas C. Johns, District 6; alternate, David L. Tannenbaum. Lloyd E. Helms, District 8; alternate, G. Eddie Figueron. Ben Benzing, District 10; alternate, David E. Smith. Clyde Dartey, District 12; alternate, Dorothy R. Schilling. Dale Hafer, District 14; alternate, W. John Wengrzynek. Glen Halsey, District 16; alternate, Larry A. Polzin. Floyd Buell, District 18; alternate, William D. Brzezinski. And Leonard Humes, District 20; alternate, Donald M. Sampson.

COMMANDER McDONALD: At this time, I'd like to ask Chaplain Todd to lead us in a closing prayer.

CHAPLAIN TODD: Dear Lord, as we come to the close of this opportunity of sharing, this opportunity of embracing the realities of democracy and freedom, we come knowing that You are a God that has blessed our nation and our people. Help us, Lord, as DAV and DAVA members to realize and recognize Your awesome powers, not only in our lives but in the lives of others. And Lord, as we go forth to serve this coming year, strengthen our chapters, the leaders of our chapters, the leaders of this national organization.

And then finally, Lord, give us that spiritual motivation to say to those in politics and in government, who feel that as veterans, we're less than full citizens of this great nation, the unction, the wherewithal, the spiritual strength to let them know that we will not be pushed around any longer.

And Lord God, we pray now, as we press toward the mark of our high calling, that You will not only touch us with Your finger of mercy, but give us the victory. In His Holy Name we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER McDONALD: Thank you, Chaplain.

Take your seats, please.

Will Alhambra Chapter Number 22 please retire the Colors.

(Retirement of Colors.)

COMMANDER McDONALD: Ladies and gentlemen, the 77th National convention of the Disabled American Veterans is adjourned. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 10:45 o'clock a.m., August 27, 1998.)

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY

OPENING BUSINESS SESSION

August 24, 1998

The Opening Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary 76th National Convention convened in Pavilion Rooms 9-10-11 of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, Monday morning, August 24, 1998, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by Adjutant Maria M. Tedrow.

ADJUTANT MARIA M. TEDROW: Good morning. And it is a good morning. You know why? Because you were all able to get up this morning and say, "Thank You, God, for another day."

At this time, we will call the convention to order. National Sergeant-at-Arms, will you please present National Commander Evelynne Dunn to the platform.

And now for the national officers escorted to the platform: Chaplain Gertrude Tidwell; National Judge Advocate Shelia Allred; 4th Junior Vice Renee Jones; 3rd Junior Vice Jacki Fossiano; 2nd Junior Vice Carol Gray; 1st Junior Vice Paula Raymond; Senior Vice-Commander Evelyn Dorsey.

And now will the national sergeant-at-arms please present the National Convention chairman, Helen Parcelle to the platform.

Will the national sergeant-at-arms now have the past national commanders escorted to the chairs in front of the room and the immediate past national commander to the platform. Lucille McCarthy, past national commander from Florida; Pauline Wright, past national commander from Colorado; Nelda Wilson, past national commander from Illinois; Dorothy Van Hoy, past national commander from Missouri; Marjorie Vincent, past national commander from California; Florence Valgardson, past national commander from Utah; Maurine Pederson, past national commander from Missouri; Betty Hall, past national commander from Texas; Sally Wilton, past national commander from Arizona; Loneita Shoemaker, past national commander from Arkansas; Katherine Pearson from Minnesota; Rose Marie Schilpp from Missouri; Myrtice Vinson, past national commander from Georgia; Claudia Roy, past national commander from Vermont; Jane Troutman, past national commander from North Carolina; Barbara Hicks, past national commander from Ohio, now from Arizona; and the lovely lady that says, "You betcha," Immediate Past National Commander Margaret Hass from North Dakota.

National Sergeant-at-Arms will you now present the state commanders or those delegates who are casting the state department vote to the front of the room?

From the host State of Nevada we have Rosie McDuffie; from Alabama, Linda Ricks; from Arizona, Ruthann Tucker; from Arkansas, Cynthia Parker; from California, Immediate Past Commander Marlis Jackson; from Colorado, Carol Ann Chapman; from Delaware, Merrilee Hickman; from the District of Columbia, Louise Terrell; from Florida, Nina Beverly; from Georgia, Barbara Williams; from Idaho, Gloria Coltrin; from Illinois, Jo Ann Burns; from Indiana, Melba Earles; from Iowa, Vickie Way; from Kansas, Linda Buster; from Kentucky, Daphna Atnip; from Louisiana, Betty Carter; from Maine; Debra Newell; from Maryland, Barbara Forbes and also our Outstanding Member of the Year; from Massachusetts, Fran Costa; from Michigan, Bernice Sebring; from Minnesota, Darlena Broady; from Mississippi, Helen Ream; from Missouri, Carolyn Sullivan; from Montana, Jackie Cochran; from Nebraska, Edna Sorenson; from New Hampshire, Wanda Furbish; from New Jersey, Linda Trulio; from New Mexico, Karen Roybal; from New York, Irene Boron; from North Carolina, Elizabeth Overcash; from North Dakota, Kathy Vandrovec; from Ohio, Judy Lucas; from Oklahoma, Virgie Reeves; from Oregon, Karen Haltiner; from Pennsylvania, Kathy Watkins; from Puerto Rico, Gladys Seda; from Rhode Island, Donna Folcarelli; from South Carolina, Ruby Nelson; from South Dakota, Cherry Knispel; from Tennessee, P.J. Perry; from Texas, Earlene Cole; from Utah, Afton Ficarra; from Vermont, Mary Bessette; from Virginia, Ruth Holt; from Washington, Kathryn Wiley; from West Virginia, Norma Thompson; from Wisconsin, Marj Reinders; and from Wyoming, Myrtle Hamilton.

At this time, will the national sergeant-at-arms present the flags from the host State of Nevada.

(Presentation of Colors.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Will the national sergeant-at-arms now present the national colors?

(Presentation of Colors.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Will the national sergeant-at-arms post the Colors?

(Posting of Colors.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: And now will the national sergeant-at-arms please dismiss the Color bearers.

(Dismissal of Color bearers.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: And now we will hear from our national chaplain.

CHAPLAIN GERTRUDE TIDWELL: Good morning, ladies. Before I start, we have a couple of illnesses I would like you all to remember in prayer this morning. Our Department of Colorado commander, her husband is in the hospital. And there is another lady here, I understand, and her sister had a heart attack since they've been here at the convention.

Shall we pray? Thank You, Lord, for bringing us together safely once again. We pray, Lord, for a successful convention and ask You to continue to guide and bless our officers, committee chairmen and members as they conduct the business of this convention.

Let us accept with pride those whose accomplishments make up our organization. Let us also accept the disappointments with pride, knowing that we all have worked toward a common goal, the veterans and their families, striving to make their lives better and to make our organization grow.

Lord, we ask You to bless each and every one present today, to heal our sick, console our bereaved, and to touch our hearts with love. Amen.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Thank you, Chaplain Gertrude Tidwell.

And now we will have the Pledge of Allegiance led by our Americanism chairman, Jacki Fossiano.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Thank you, Jacki.

You know, I will never say a Pledge again as long as I live that I do not remember the flag being presented yesterday. That had to be the most stirring moment that I have had in a long, long time. That was utterly beautiful.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, would you dismiss the pages, please?

(Dismissal of pages.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: The Constitution and Bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary state that the supreme powers of this organization shall be vested in the Annual National Convention, composed of the national officers and representatives of the state departments and units.

In accordance with these directives, I, Maria M. Tedrow, National Auxiliary Adjutant, declare the 76th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary be convened at Las Vegas, Nevada. Consideration and disposition of business brought before this convention shall be conducted in accordance with the National Constitution and Bylaws and the Ritual of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary as most recently amended.

To all present: Take due notice thereof and govern yourselves accordingly.

This is probably the highlight of my spot at the convention, because I get to introduce a lady that I get very close to during the year, and that's the national commander. And I can't say enough about the national commanders that I've served with. And I want to say that last year when you selected a lady to lead this organization, your choice was very, very good.

We have a lady that is soft-spoken like me (laughter), who is truly compassionate, who believes exactly in what she says, and is admired not only by the Auxiliary but by the parent organization, too. She has led us with pride and dignity, and I am happy that I was able to serve along her side.

At this time, I would like to welcome to the podium National Commander Evelynne Dunn. (Applause)

COMMANDER EVELYNNE DUNN: Thank you, ladies. This is truly a very warm, very warm welcome from all of you. I welcome you all to the 76th National Convention. As you well know, I told you all that I was a Las Vegas lady, and I know that this is a very warm spot in the country, and I hope that you've taken a lot of protection against the heat, because we need to drink a lot of water when we come here because of the heat, the dry heat.

But I would like to say that the State of Nevada is so very proud to be able to be a part of this National Convention.

Another thing I would like to say in welcoming you, that this morning's parade of national commanders or whoever it was that cast the vote was such a wonderful idea, and it was so beautiful from up here, sitting and watching those ladies come down. Don't you think it was a great idea? (Applause)

It was Maria's idea, and I think it was a wonderful one, and I'm sure that as the years go by and we do this same thing -- the reason for this is because of the flags getting heavier as we get older. I know that, and you know that. Maybe the younger ones don't know it, but I know they're getting heavier as the years go by. So having this parade of the states in this manner is certainly a plus for our organization.

And those lovely, lovely past national commanders, I can't say enough how beautiful you looked when you came down the aisle. I'm so pleased to see all of you here.

At this time, I would like to introduce a very special lady. She is my very dear friend. We have traveled the road of the Auxiliary together, and she is the National Convention chairman for this year. I know she has been every time the convention has been in Las Vegas. At least the last four times, she has been the convention chair, and she has done such a wonderful job. And I certainly hope that you give her a grand welcome. Helen Parcelle from Las Vegas. (Applause)

MRS. HELEN PARCELLE: Good morning, everyone. Commander Evelynne, national officers, past national commanders, delegates, members and guests of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary: It is my honor to serve as National Convention chairman of this convention, and on behalf of the State Department of Nevada, I'd like to welcome all of you to this fast-growing city of the United States, the entertainment capital of the world, Las Vegas, Nevada.

I invite you to enjoy the many amenities this city has to offer. This year, the Las Vegas Hilton has its attraction up and running, the Star Trek. The experience will wow your senses when you beam aboard the USS ENTERPRISE.

The Las Vegas strip is lined with luxurious resorts and hotels and casinos. There are two or three new wondrous openings since you were here last year. Wander through Caesar's Palace and gaze at their marble masterpieces worthy of ancient Rome. The Mirage Hotel provides a lush indoor garden by day and a lava-spewing volcano with elaborate outdoor fountains by night.

For those who prefer the outdoors, we also have a spectacular national scenic area only 20 minutes from the Las Vegas strip. Travel to the western part of the valley and enjoy Red Rock Canyon, which is only five miles from the Spring Mountain State Park. This ranch offers picnic areas, walking tours and a visitors' center. In the summer evenings, they have theater performances of Broadway plays.

We have over 550 miles of shoreline at Lake Mead. This was created by the famous Hoover Dam and is the largest manmade lake in the western hemisphere. Laughlan, Nevada, growing larger every year, is an approximately one and a half hours' drive from here. That area, too, has hotels, casinos and boating on the Colorado River to be enjoyed by all.

We have the University of Las Vegas, Nevada, a community college, museums of art and natural history for your culture pleasure.

We may be desert, but we have so much to offer, things to do and sights to see.

Monday night is our Nevada fun night, beginning at 8:00 to

11:00 p.m. A professional group will provide us with wonderful entertainment. I hope to see you all there, and I'm sure you'll leave with laughter in your hearts.

Wednesday afternoon is our Powwow Luncheon in honor of our National Commander Evelynne's Native American heritage. Please be sure and come.

I would like to take a moment and introduce my committee. These ladies have worked all year with me. Would you please stand as I call your names? Dorothy Otts, Rosie McDuffie, Rose Thomas, Flo Delozier, Marilyn Reddington, Iris Brzezinski, Carolyn Murray, Jan Bennett, Erin Murray, Paula Murray, and also, but not least, our national commander, Evelynne Dunn. When she had time from her busy schedule, she drove me all over town making sure I had everything I needed for this convention.

Commander, these ladies listened to your message and have risen to the challenge to make this convention special for all of you. Thank you, ladies. (Applause)

And in closing, I would like to thank a most wonderful lady, National Adjutant Maria Tedrow, for the confidence she's placed in me by appointing me national chairman. It is indeed an honor, and I have had the opportunity to serve in this capacity at four different conventions, and I'm looking forward to the next convention in Orlando, Florida.

Maria, I'd like to present you a little token.

And Commander Evelynne, I hope you will have a successful and a very productive convention. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, Helen, for those words. She is such a gracious lady. She and I travel the road together, like I say. People think we're joined at the hip; where you see one, you see the other. She doesn't drive, so I take her where she has to go, and it's my pleasure to do it.

At this time, I would also like to make the introduction of some very special ladies in the audience, past national commanders of our organization. They have led us in the past, and they continue to lead us at this time, because I know whenever there's a problem, there's someone there that can give me the answer, and I can call on them and they're more than willing to do whatever they can, not only for the organization, but for the individual.

And I would like to introduce them at this time. Lucille McCarthy, would you please stand? Hold your applause, please. Pauline Wright, would you please stand? Nelda Wilson; Dorothy Van Hoy; Marjorie Vincent; Florence Valgardson; Maurine Pederson; Maria Tedrow; Betty Hall; Sally Wilton; Loneita Shoemaker; Katherine Pearson; Rose Marie Schilpp; Shelia Allred; Myrtice Vinson; Claudia Roy; Jane Troutman; Barbara Hicks; and Margaret Hass.

Let's show them our appreciation for their leadership. (Applause) Thank you very much, ladies.

I would like to call on Maria Tedrow to bring greetings from our past national commanders.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: It's always an honor for the past national commanders to be here, and it's always an honor to bring greetings to the national commander, and, of course, this year it's a double honor, because I've served with her as the adjutant, and I want to say how great that's been.

But Evelynne, I can't tell you how much this year has meant to me, and how proud I am of you, and I know that the past national commanders feel the same way. We couldn't have been led any better.

And this is a small token on behalf of the past national commanders that you can have. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: How very lovely! Thank you, ladies. How very wonderful of you to think of me in this way. I'm really speechless at this time, and I'm not supposed to be speechless, but there you have it.

I'd like to ask the Credentials chairman to come forward and give a report, if she will, please. And that is Iris Brzezinski from Nevada.

MRS. IRIS BRZEZINSKI: Thank you, Evelynne. National Commander, national officers, past national commanders -- morning, ladies! The Credentials report is as follows: Total units

registered, 311; total departments registered, 47, for a total of 358. Total delegates registered, 644; alternates registered, 53; guests, 57, for a total of 754. Total unit votes, 1,992; total department votes are 47; national officers, seven; past national commanders, 15; grand total of votes, 2,061. And I didn't transpose one number.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, Iris. Do I hear a motion that the preliminary report of the Credentials Committee be accepted as read? A motion please. Florence Valgardson moves. I need a second.

MRS. P. J. PERRY: P. J. Perry, Department of Tennessee, second.

COMMANDER DUNN: Discussion? None. All those in favor; any opposed. The motion carried.

The first order of business is the adoption of the National Convention Rules. Printed copies of the Convention Rules have been furnished to all registered delegates. The Chair will now entertain a motion for the adoption of these Rules. Everyone should have a copy. They should have been handed to you as you walked in.

MRS. MIRIAM DALEY: Miriam Daley, Unit 27, Massachusetts. I move that they be adopted.

COMMANDER DUNN: Do I hear a second?

MRS. NORMA THOMPSON: Norma Thompson, West Virginia seconds.

COMMANDER DUNN: Any discussion on this? All those in favor; opposed. Motion carried.

At this time, I'd like to ask the national senior vice-commander to take over the chair for the purpose of the national commander reading her report.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER EVELYN B. DORSEY: Good morning, ladies. It is so great to see all of you here this morning and so bright-eyed and bushy-tailed.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure at this time to present to you our national commander for the purpose of presenting her report, her annual report. Let us receive National Commander Evelynne Dunn. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much. National officers, National Executive Committee, past national commanders, national chairmen, delegates, members and guests of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary: On August 21st, 1997 right here in this room, I was honored beyond measure to be elected to the office of national commander of the most prestigious service organization in the world, the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary. As I stood on the podium that day, my message to all members of the Auxiliary was, "Let us rise to every challenge" with compassion, priority and resolution, CPR in short.

Wherever I have traveled this year, I have spoken to Auxiliary members who have met challenges head on, challenges of budget cuts, hospital care for loved ones, standing in line for prescriptions, writing letters to legislators as part of the Benefits Protection Team, just to name a few. Yes, ladies, you have risen to the many challenges, and you did it triumphantly with CPR, compassion, priority and resolution.

Membership is and always will be the hub of the wheel of the Auxiliary. Our quota this was year 204,403 new members. As of June 30th, 1998, we had 197,906 members. I thank everyone for their perseverance in signing up new members, and special thanks to the State Departments of Georgia, Indiana, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, South Carolina and Wyoming for reaching their quotas. I would also like to thank the staff at National Headquarters for all the letters sent out to potential members.

I'm going to repeat something I said when I was National Membership chair: "When it comes to membership, the progress and growth of our organization are the results of each person taking responsibility for their share of the tasks necessary for the Auxiliary to go forward." Let us all think progressive, and growth will follow.

In September, my first assignment was in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to take part in the "Sharing and Caring" program held there annually. Indeed this was a marvelous experience. Patients and their care-givers from area VA facilities were taken on an all-

day boat ride up the Ohio River. There was fun, games and even wheelchair dancing that day. I had the opportunity to dance with somebody in a wheelchair, and that's a lot of fun. There were smiles on every face coming off that boat, including mine.

And on the 19th, I attended the POW-MIA ceremonies held at Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas. On the 25th, I traveled to the Drawbridge Estates in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky for the Auxiliary's Fall Conference. It was fun as well as a learning experience that weekend for all who attended. My deepest gratitude to all the chairmen and national staff for the informative programs presented. Yes, we did get stranded on the bus, but you can be sure we turned that into a positive experience, too.

October found me in St. Paul, Minnesota for their State Fall Conference, followed by Albuquerque, New Mexico for their National VAVS Seminars, and lastly in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania for the 5th District Conference.

In November, I was the guest of Birmingham, Alabama during their Veterans Day celebrations, a very lovely memorial service, banquets and a wonderful, wonderful parade. A truly impressive occasion, and rightly so, in honor of our veterans.

In December, while visiting relatives in New York City, I was gifted with the opportunity to visit a VA hospital, courtesy of the New York State Auxiliary adjutant. And the red carpet was rolled out with a welcoming sign for the national commander in lights on this great big sign in front of the facility, and it was truly a surprise. And I can add that it was a delightful surprise, because I was completely unaware that they were going to do this.

In January, I went to Orlando, Florida for a commander's visitation, and then on to the 9th District Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina.

In March, I went to Boston, Massachusetts and toured several VA medical facilities in addition to several of the historical sites in the area. I attended the Disabled American Veterans Midwinter Conference in Washington, D.C. and was invited to address the delegation. I had the privilege of being seated next to Disabled American Veterans National Commander Harry McDonald as he made his presentation on Capitol Hill.

While I was in Washington, D.C., the Auxiliary members of Maryland hosted a lovely dinner for me. And how special they made me feel that evening. The following weekend in Las Vegas, I was honored with a testimonial dinner. For me this was a special night to remember. And my heartfelt gratitude goes out to all those who attended.

I spent six days in Crested Butte, Colorado for the Winter Sports Clinic. I was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm shown by those veterans as they performed their miracles on the mountainside. They all truly rose to the challenge, snow notwithstanding.

And then it was back to Orlando, Florida for the testimonial of Disabled American Veterans National Commander Harry McDonald. Harry is a very special person with an aptitude for strong and effective leadership. So I was pleased to be one of the many who honored him that night.

In April, I admired the spring beauty of Little Rock, Arkansas. Then on to Salt Lake City, Utah and their many historic sites as part of the commander's visitations. My first state convention was in Anchorage, Alaska.

Immediately following was the National Finance Committee in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky. Many hours were spent setting up a budget for the 1998-1999 year by this hard-working committee. The pluses and minuses and details of the national budget is truly an eye-opening experience. I commend the Finance Committee for their dedication.

The next convention was in my own state, Nevada. It was welcome home that weekend, and then back to Fort Mitchell, Kentucky for the Educational Loan Fund Committee. Helping young people reach their educational goals will always be a source of pride for the Auxiliary, and this year the Auxiliary was pleased to be able to fund loans to 37 students.

Then it was on state conventions in Montana, Washington, Oklahoma, Texas and Virginia.

I was invited by our parent organization, the Disabled American Veterans, to take part in the van drive-away in Washington, D.C. The sight of 147 DAV vans lined up in front of the Capitol Building, their windows decorated with colorful signs of their designated states, each flying American flags was truly awe-inspiring. And to be part of the parade when we were going to the VA Building, to be part of the parade of vans down Pennsylvania Avenue, escorted by motorcycle police officers with the sirens blasting and the lights flashing all around, I felt like the Queen of England going down the street. And it was the thrill of a lifetime.

The next state conventions were Massachusetts, Puerto Rico and New York.

This year I visited patients in VA facilities, helped with bingo games. I toured historic sites. I listened to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir sing on Easter Sunday. I washed food trays and helped veterans get their meals at the Winter Sports Clinic. I conducted workshops. And because laughter lightens the soul, we laughed a lot together with joy and the camaraderie of the Auxiliary.

Each state I visited was unique unto themselves. The outstanding hospitality, the gifts and the love that you all shared with me has left an indelible memory imprinted within me that I will cherish for a lifetime.

To all the national officers, National Executive Committeewomen and chair people, I thank you for your dedication in making this year an exceptional and successful one. And to the staff at National Headquarters, you all have my gratitude for your amiable readiness to help in any situation, like sending that bus at Fall Conference. Thank you, ladies.

And Maria. What can you say about a lady who paves the way so that your year will be as smooth as it can be, who has the answer to every question day or night, and who makes you look good in spite of yourself? She is truly the backbone of this organization, and thank goodness for it.

Thank you, Maria. And that doesn't seem to be enough.

She and I have forged a strong and lasting bond of friendship this year, and one that I hope will last as long as the rivers may flow.

I thank the Auxiliary membership for their confidence in allowing me the honor of leading this great organization this past year. It has undeniably been the most outstanding year of my life.

Last, but not least, I thank my two special angels, my late husband Fred and my late son Monte, for my eligibility in this organization. I have always said that aside from my children, the two things that I am proudest of in my lifetime is the fact that I am Native American and that I belong to the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary, the greatest organization in the world.

Thank you. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER DORSEY: You have heard that outstanding report of activities from our national commander this past year. Do I hear a motion to accept?

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Maria Tedrow, past national commander. I would like to make a motion that we accept the national commander's report.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER DORSEY: Is there a second?

MRS. CLARA LEWIS: Clara Lewis, Texas. I second.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER DORSEY: It has been motioned and seconded that we accept our national commander's report. No one here will object. (Laughter and applause) The report stands as presented.

COMMANDER DUNN: That's my girl.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Madam Commander, at this time, we have a guest in the room, and it is Reverend Marvin Gant from the Chapel of the Four Chaplains, who would like to have permission to come to the podium to make a presentation. (Applause)

REVEREND MARVIN R. GANT: Ladies, it's a great privilege to be here this morning at your Annual Convention, representing the Chapel of Four Chaplains, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. I'm the Nevada State chaplain of that organization, and we welcome many of

you to Nevada, to Las Vegas. Yes, we do have churches in Las Vegas. (Laughter) And we need a lot of them.

But you make this a wonderful place by virtue of your presence here today and your honorable organization.

I have a presentation to make today, the Legion of Honor. Before I do that, let me take just a moment to give you some of the tradition behind the Chapel of Four Chaplains, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania and the honor and the one we give it to today.

No tradition in American society is more precious to, or characteristic of our culture than that of voluntarily reaching out to neighbors in need. Such selfless service is part of both our civic and religious heritage.

The Chapel of Four Chaplains, a national nonprofit organization, is founded upon one shining manifestation of our great heritage, that of the four Army chaplains who, after giving their life jackets to soldiers who had none, linked arms with one another and went down with the USAT DORCHESTER after it was torpedoed February the 3rd, 1943.

This historical event began at Torpedo Junction, the U-boat infested, icy water of the North Atlantic during World War II. On January the 23rd, 1943, the USAT DORCHESTER, an old coastal steamer quickly pressed into military service, left New York Harbor bound for Greenland. The DORCHESTER was escorted by three Coast Guard cutters. Two patrolled the flanks; the third, the TAMPA, was 300 yards in front.

Most of the men were seasick and green with nausea. The weather was bitterly cold with gale-force winds. Ice began building up on the decks, slowing the DORCHESTER to ten knots.

Moving among them were four Army chaplains: George L. Fox, Alexander D. Goode, Clark V. Poling and John P. Washington. The chaplains talked with and listened to the men, soothing apprehensions, offering encouragement, sharing jokes by their concern and camaraderie with the men and with one another.

On February the 2nd, 1943, the TAMPA's sonar detected the presence of a submarine. She dropped back and swept the periphery of the convoy but failed to find the submarine's position. That evening, the TAMPA returned to the patrol area up front, and the other ships followed.

The captain ordered the men to sleep in their clothing with life jackets close at hand. They were only 150 miles from Greenland. With daylight, there would be air cover from the American base.

It was just after midnight, February the 3rd, 1943 that an enemy submarine fired a torpedo toward the DORCHESTER's flank. The missile exploded in the boiler room, destroying the electric supply and releasing suffocating clouds of steam and ammonia gas. Many on board died instantly. Some were trapped below deck. Others, jolted from their bunks, groped and stumbled their way to the decks of the stricken vessel. Taking on water rapidly, the ship began listing starboard.

Overcrowded lifeboats capsized, rafts drifted away before anyone could reach them. Men clung to rails, frozen with fear, unable to let go and plunge into the dark, churning water below.

The testimony of the survivors tells us that the sole order and the only fragment of hope in this chaos came from the four chaplains, who calmly guided men to their boat stations. They opened the storage locker and distributed life jackets. Then they coaxed men frozen with fear over the side. Soon the supply of life jackets was exhausted. Several survivors report watching in awe as the four chaplains either gave away or forced upon young men their own life jackets.

These four men of God had given away their only means of saving themselves in order to save others. The chaplains gathered together and led the men around them in a prayer and a hymn. They linked their arms together as the slant of the deck became severe. And just that way, with their arms linked in brotherhood and their heads bowed in prayer, they sank beneath the waves.

It was a heroic act. It was not the only heroic act aboard the DORCHESTER, but it was especially significant because of the identity of these four young men, Army chaplains: Two Protestants,

one Catholic, one of the Jewish faith.

Today, as it has these many years, the Chapel of Four Chaplains serves the memory of these brave men and carries their message of interfaith cooperation and selfless service to every part of our country.

We are there to recognize and encourage acts of volunteerism, brotherhood and sisterhood and sacrifice among all Americans of every age and every station of life. The Chapel has established the Legion of Honor Program. The Bronze Medallion is given by the Chapel in recognition of exceptional selfless service on the part of an individual who contributes to the well-being of others at the national and world level in the spirit of interfaith cooperation.

Today it is my privilege -- and I wanted to take just a bit of time to let you know what esteem goes with this award, and how that person -- what they recognize and what they show to all of us. It is with great esteem and privilege that we present this Bronze Legion of Honor Medallion from the Chapel of Four Chaplains, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, to Ms. Evelynne Dunn, national commander of the DAVA. Ms. Dunn. (Applause)

I want to also give you this plaque from the Chapel of Four Chaplains for you, and this says:

> The Chapel of Four Chaplains is pleased to present the Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion to Evelynne Dunn on August the 24th, 1998, in recognition of your service to all people regardless of race or faith. This award symbolizes for all Americans and for all time the unity of this nation founded upon the Fatherhood of One God.

Congratulations again. You deserve it richly.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much.

This is indeed an honor, and I thank you very, very much for this great, great privilege to join with others who have received this. And to me, this is an exceptional honor. Thank you very much. (Applause)

At this time, we will now have Membership Awards. Paula Raymond, Membership.

1ST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER PAULA K. RAYMOND: Good morning. Do you feel like you're at the Academy Awards? Just think, you're all glitzy and glittery, and this is the night, the big night. We don't have envelopes, but we have a list.

In Group I, 10 to 50 members, Elkhorn City Number 140, Kentucky, a 16-member increase. (Applause)

In Group II, 51 to 100, Woodrow Wilson Number 11, Georgia, 26-member increase. (Applause) Are they in the room?

Is someone from Elkhorn City in Kentucky in the room?

In Group III, 101 to 200, Dr. C. E. Burke Number 7. Is there someone in the room? Massachusetts.

In Group IV, 201 and over, Lieutenant Alfred Lucia Number 118, New York, a 60-member increase. (Applause) Is there someone in the room?

Group V, new unit with the most new members, James McNamee Number 5, Connecticut, with 34 members. (Applause) Is there someone in the room to pick up this award? We'll mail it.

Group VI, the department with the largest percentage increase, the State Department of Georgia. (Applause)

MEMBER: I would like to say from the State of Georgia -- I'd like everybody from Georgia -- we have done it. We have done it! And ladies, there are members out there. They are at national-at-large. All you have to do is call National, and they will help you in any way possible.

And all I can say is I want to thank the national staff, Maria Tedrow, Pat, and everybody else up there, because without them, I tell you what: I was lost. But thank you. (Applause)

1ST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER RAYMOND: Group VII, the department with the largest numerical increase, the State Department of Georgia. (Applause)

The Special Membership Award goes to Brenda Godfrey of Arizona, Unit 1, with 40 new senior members. (Applause) Is she in the room? Sally will pick it up. (Applause)

MRS. SALLY WILTON: Ladies, Brenda Godfrey was the commander of our unit this past year, and she would have been here, but her

husband is severely ill, otherwise she would have been here. And I'm very proud of her. She does so much for the DAV Auxiliary. You just never will know. But thank you very much. (Applause)

1ST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER RAYMOND: The second Special Membership Award goes to Jan Walters, Unit 19, Indiana, with 30 new senior members. (Applause) Jan, are you here? Here she is.

While she is coming up, I would like to thank each and every one of you for the work that you did on membership this year. And while we did not meet our national membership quota, I know that we all tried very hard. And yes, members are out there, but sometimes they're just a little hard to find.

I'm very proud of what we did accomplish, and I think you all deserve a big hand for the effort that you put forth. (Applause)

MRS. JAN WALTERS: Thank you very much to everyone. I just want to say I work this hard because I only had one brother, and I lost him in Vietnam. He'd only been there 29 days. So I do my work for him. (Applause)

1ST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER RAYMOND: Thank you all.

COMMANDER DUNN: I would like to at this time, before I go any further -- are there any ladies in here who are here for the first time to a National Convention? Would you please rise? Let's give them a round of applause. (Applause) Wonderful, wonderful. I hope you enjoy this convention and take back the word that we are a dedicated service organization, and we'd like to see you at conventions.

At this time, I'd ask Gwen McCracken to come forward, with the National Finance Committee report.

NEC 10TH DISTRICT GWEN A. McCRACKEN: Good morning ladies. National Commander Evelynne, national officers, past national commanders, distinguished Auxiliary members, guests and friends: As the chairman of the National Finance Committee, I'm happy to report to you that our national organization is sound.

Okay. We had a wonderful Finance Committee this year. I want you ladies to know how diligently this committee worked. We met in Kentucky at the Drawbridge Inn, where I opened our session on April the 20th, 1998. In attendance were all committee members, as well as guests with no vote. We got down to the business immediately at hand.

I want you to know that every item was thoroughly discussed and decided upon. This is a responsibility that this committee does not take lightly. We are here to protect the finances of this organization. We did have a wonderful time, I will admit to that. But that was prior. During our meeting, it was work. The pencils were just a-wiggling, weren't they, Commander?

And at this time, I would like the members of our committee to please rise: Commander Evelynne Dunn; Joan Fletcher; Bonita Mitchell and Sara Douglass. These were the voting members of our committee, and I think that we owe these ladies a great debt of appreciation. (Applause) I thank you, girls. It was wonderful working with all of you. I will treasure our times together.

The members that were at our committee meeting that were our nonvoting members were: Of course, our senior vice Evelyn Dorsey; and our national adjutant and secretary of our committee, Maria Tedrow; our assistant national adjutant, Judy Hezlep; and Sandy Smith, our national comptroller.

So I would like to thank all that were in attendance there. You all contributed highly to this committee. And I thank you.

It has been a great honor and a privilege to have served you in this capacity and under your administration, Commander.

And I would be remiss if I neglected to thank -- and I know we'll probably hear this throughout the convention, but I do sincerely have to thank Maria Tedrow, our national adjutant; our assistant national adjutant, Judy Hezlep; and all of their staff.

At this time, as the National Executive Committeewoman chairman, I would like to entertain a motion that the budget that has been passed out to you as you entered the room be accepted.

NEC 18TH DISTRICT JOAN F. FLETCHER: Joan Fletcher, NEC, District 18. I make a motion that we accept the budget as printed.

MRS. MARJORIE L. REINDERS: Marj Reinders, Wisconsin. I second the motion.

COMMANDER DUNN: Is there any discussion? All those in favor, Aye; opposed. Motion is carried

NEC McCRACKEN: Thank you, ladies. Indeed, it's been my pleasure. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: We have a special lady in the room today who is very, very knowledgeable about what we do with our Ed. Loan money, and I'd ask her to come forward, please, to give our Education Loan report. Phyllis Greaney, would you come forward, please? (Applause)

She's such a special lady. She's got the figures right there when we have this meeting. She's got all the figures on all the different colleges, what they're charging. It's amazing that you can talk about any particular university or college, and she will tell you right down practically to the penny what they're charging for the tuition and so forth and so on.

So I'm in awe of this lady, and it's my privilege to introduce her at this time. Phyllis Greaney. (Applause)

MRS. PHYLLIS GREANEY: Thank you, Evelynne. It's a privilege to be here. There is a report in your packet, so I'm not going into some of the details of the Ed. Loan, but I would like to say thank you to the delegates who have contributed over the years to the Education Loan Fund.

The Ed. Loan started, as all of you may or may not know, in the early '30s. So since that time, we have been helping students to attain their educational goals. I don't have the exact number since 1930, but maybe Maria might like to look it up some time. (Laughter) It's a very worthwhile program, and I'm very pleased to be the director.

And Evelynne, thank you for appointing me again this year, and to the NECs for approving her selection.

I'm sure you realize the importance of this program, and I am very pleased to be the director. On behalf of the students, the committee, myself, I say thank you. Please continue to still remember us and to contribute, because we do need it.

This year we gave loans to 37 students. I'd really like to see it increase. You know, the cost for education has escalated. One college that was reported on our TV program in the last 14 years, that college has increased their tuition by 90 percent. It's been said in some of these programs that they're looking to all of the colleges to cut down the costs of their administration so that the students can afford to go to college, because it's out of hand right now, I know, even with state colleges, which are less expensive.

However, we had a student who applied to a state college in Massachusetts, and I called that college because on his application he had an amount for the tuition, but the program also had the fact that the other expenses were even higher than the tuition. So I said, well, if I get to the Ed. Loan meeting, they're going to question this. And I did call them, and it was true. The other fees that they charge was more than the tuition.

So again, I say thank you, Evelynne, and to the committee, and to all of you who have contributed, and please continue to do so. And when you go home, share some of the information about all of these programs with the DAV. Maybe they'd like to give something. Quite a few of them do, and state departments do. But we need your help to continue. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, Phyllis.

If there are any presentations to be made, would you please come forward, for the Ed. Loan? Phyllis says she'll welcome you all.

MRS. MARGARET HASS: I'm Margaret Hass, and members of my unit back in North Dakota, Minot Number 4, gave me the honor of presenting to you, Phyllis, for the Education Loan a check and also for our Service Support Program, Maria Tedrow, to show their support for these two wonderful programs.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, North Dakota. Thank you, Margaret.

3RD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER JACQUELINE M. FOSSIANO: Hi! I'm Jacki Fossiano, 3rd national junior vice, and I would like to present from myself to Phyllis and to Maria something for both of

their wonderful programs.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, Jacki. We appreciate it.

MRS. ROSIE McDUFFIE: Rosie McDuffie, commander of the State of Nevada. On behalf of Nevada, we'd like to present you with this check.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, Rosie McDuffie, commander of the State Department of Nevada.

MRS. RUTHANN TUCKER: Ruthann Tucker. On behalf of the Department of Arizona, I would like to present this check for the Education Loan.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, Arizona. We really appreciate it.

MRS. IRENE J. BORON: Irene Boron. On behalf of the State of New York, we're happy to present a check for the Educational Loan Fund, and may I present this now, too, Commander, for the National Service Fund. It's our pleasure.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, New York. We really appreciate it.

MRS. JUNE BECKER: June Becker, Unit 49 from New Jersey. My unit would like to donate a hundred dollars for the Scholarship Fund and also a hundred dollars for the Service Fund.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much.

MRS. MYRTICE R. VINSON: National Commander and our Educational Loan Fund chairman, I know that they'll get it anyway from the Vinsons, so I brought it up first.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, Ms. Vinson, past national commander.

4TH JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER RENEE JONES: Phyllis, being a recent college graduate, I certainly understand the expense of an education and a good education, so on behalf of Unit 18 in North Carolina, I'm proud to present a donation to the Ed. Loan Fund and also a donation to Freedom's Foundation.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, Unit 18 of North Carolina.

MEMBER: National Commander and the National Educational Loan Fund chairman, from the great State of Georgia, we'd like to give $125 for the National Educational Loan Fund and a hundred dollars for the National Department Service Fund, and I know it will be used for good things.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, from the great State of Georgia.

MRS. CINDY PARKER: Hi! I'm Cindy Parker from Arkansas, and we have a check here for the Educational Loan and also a check for the Service Support Program.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, the State of Arkansas. We really appreciate it.

MRS. KATHY VANDROVEC: Kathy Vandrovec from the Department of North Dakota, Margie Hass's state, and we'd like to donate a hundred dollars to the National Service Fund and the National Education Fund.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, North Dakota. We really appreciate that.

MRS. CARMEN DOBBS: I'm Carmen Dobbs. On behalf of Unit 21 from Denver, Colorado, I would like to present $50 for the Educational Fund, $50 for the Freedom Foundation, and $75 for the Service Program.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, Unit 21, Colorado.

MRS. SUE HOLLINGSWORTH: Sue Hollingsworth, Unit 60, Oklahoma. I have a personal donation of a hundred dollars for the Education Loan Fund in honor of my daughter Anna, and my nieces Joy and Tamara, who are here serving as junior pages. And I also have a personal check for a hundred dollars for the Service Fund in honor of my mother, National Chaplain Gertrude Tidwell.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much. We appreciate it.

MEMBER: Commander Evelynne, Director Phyllis, on behalf of the Department of Vermont, I'd like to present you with this check for the Educational Loan Fund. Our state commander is with us. However, she's unable to get here to the podium, and she gave me the honor of giving you this check. Having sat on that committee, I know how important it is, and I also have a young lady who's

always been very close to my heart who was a recipient of some of this. So it means a lot to the Department of Vermont. Thank you.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, the Department of Vermont.

MRS. CAROLYN HOLBROOK: Carolyn Holbrook, Northern Kentucky 19. I have a check for a hundred dollars for the Ed. Loan Fund and a check for a hundred dollars for the Service Foundation.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, Unit 19, Kentucky.

MRS. SANDY DOBMEIER: Sandy Dobmeier, Unit 2, Grand Forks, North Dakota. I have a hundred dollar check to present to the Service Fund, and also a hundred dollars for the Education Loan Fund.

COMMANDER DUNN: Unit 2, North Dakota, thank you very much.

MRS. MERRILEE HICKMAN: Merrilee Hickman, Department of Delaware. I have a check here for the Education Loan Fund, except it's not a check; it's an IOU. We left our check book at home.

COMMANDER DUNN: Department of Delaware, we thank you in advance. I know you're going to come through for us.

MRS. WANDA FURBISH: Wanda Furbish. I'd like to present a check in behalf of the State Department of New Hampshire for the Educational Fund.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, Department of New Hampshire.

MRS. VICKIE WAY: Vickie Way, Department of Iowa. I'd like to present a check for $50 for the Educational Loan Fund, a hundred dollars for the Hospital Writing Program, $50 for the Freedom Foundation, and a hundred dollars for the National Service.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, Department of Iowa.

MEMBER: Commander Dunn, on behalf of the Department of Massachusetts, I have a check for $175.79 for the Service Fund, collected at our state convention, and to Chairman Phyllis, a $500 check for the National Education Loan Fund.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much to the Department of Massachusetts.

MRS. BERNICE V. SEBRING: Bernice Sebring, the Department of Michigan. And it gives me a great deal of pleasure to give you a check for $200 for the Education and Loan and $200 for Service and Support.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, the Department of Michigan.

MRS. JUNA B. RIDENHOUR: Juna Ridenhour, Unit 2, Kansas City, would like to present a check for $300 to the Educational Loan Fund.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, Unit 2, Missouri.

MEMBER: This is for Betty Boyd from Unit 1.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much. This is a donation from Betty Boyd, Arizona, Unit 1 in Arizona.

MRS. P. J. PERRY: P. J. Perry, for the Department of Tennessee, a hundred dollars for the National Service Fund and $200 for the DAVA Educational Loan.

COMMANDER DUNN: I'd like to thank the Department of Tennessee for that generous donation. Thank you.

MRS. DONNA L. PIERSEE: I'm Donna Piersee from Kansas, and I have a check for $50 for the Auxiliary Service Fund and $25 for the Freedom Foundation.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, Department of Kansas.

MRS. GLORIA COLTRIN: Gloria Coltrin, Idaho, and on behalf of the Department of Idaho, I have a check here for a hundred dollars for the Education Fund and a hundred dollars for the Support Fund.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, the Department of Idaho. We appreciate it. Thank you.

MRS. NINA L. BEVERLY: Nina Beverly, State Department of Florida. It gives me great pleasure to present this check to the National Service Support Fund for $1,000.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, the Department of Florida.

MEMBER: Unit 96, Pennsylvania. We mailed the National Fund check in, and this is a hundred dollars for the Service Fund.

MRS. HAZEL MEYERS: Hazel Meyers, Maryland. On behalf of my two granddaughters who are serving as junior pages, Rachel and

Rebecca, and myself we give this in memory of our late daughter and their mother to the Service Fund.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, Hazel Meyers from Maryland.

MRS. NANCY COLBY: Nancy Colby, Quad City 53, Illinois, $500 for the Freedom Foundation.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you.

MEMBER: On behalf of Melba Earles, Department of Indiana commander, we'd like to give $100 to the Education Loan.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much for that generous donation.

MRS. RUTH S. HOLT: Good morning. I'm Ruth Holt from the Department of Virginia. The reason I'm last is I've walked a country mile trying to find these, find the person who had them. I would like to present $100 to the Educational Loan Fund, $100 to Freedom's Foundation, and $100 to the Service Fund.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, the Department of Virginia.

MRS. GREANEY: This has been wonderful, and I want to thank all of you for your donations to the Ed. Loan, and I'm sure Maria is pleased with the donations to the Service.

Please read the report which is short, it's in your packet, because it gives you the dates to have people send in for an application and also the date that it has to be completed, as well as information on eligibility.

And when you go home, share this with the men. Maybe they don't know, and they may have some family member who would like to apply. Also, they may want to give some money to us. Thank you again.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you. (Applause)

Thank you, Phyllis.

Maria has a few words that she would like to say at this time.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Thank you, Commander. The only thing I want to comment about, on behalf of the Service Support Program, I want to thank all of you who have been generous enough to give us donations. And if you wonder is the money helping, I'm going to say a resounding Yes. It saved one lady from being evicted until her DIC check came in. It's paid pharmaceutical bills for another lady when the druggist said he would not sell any more until she could come up with some more money. It has paid for a hospital bill for one lady.

So that's just a few of them. There was one who was in need as soon as possible. Well, we faxed and called, and I verified and everything so that I could get a check turned around to keep the lady from being evicted by the deadline. I called to the landlord, and he was very understanding and was willing to wait a couple of days.

You know, we get these calls in, and we try to get to them as soon as possible. We get a lot of people that just write in and say -- especially when we have our dues notices or our renewal notices go out -- that write in and say, "I am sorry. I cannot pay for my dues this year because I'm just financially not able to." And that's a signal for our office that when they say they are not financially able to pay dues, they may also be in financial need some place else.

It is a fund that I truly believe in, that I cannot begin to tell you how good it feels when a lady writes in and thanks me. And I know when she's thanking me it's because I'm the one who's dealt with her, but she actually means thanking the organization. It is truly a rewarding thing, and I thank you and bless you for any monies that you donate. And like I said, I hope that we get enough money in there that eventually it can become an extended type of program, not only to widows, but for any person that is in need.

Your money is out there, and it is working. Well, I just want you to know that, and I thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, Maria. We have committee assignments next.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Tthe first committee that I am going to read off will be the Committee on Americanism. Jacqueline Fossiano will

be the advisor to this committee, and if Jacki would stand up so that the members would know who she is. It will be held in Conference Room 8, and if you forget that, you have a little program in your packet that shows you what room it is.

And so now we'll proceed with those who will be serving on the Americanism Committee. And as I read your name, stand up. District 1, Donna Tanner; District 2, Holly B. Darfler; District 3, Wanda Lee Furbish; District 4, Mary M. Murphy; District 6, Ruth S. Holt; District 7, Catherine Neuburg; District 8, P. J. Perry; District 9, Monica Stroud; District 10, Cornealia Jansen; District 11, Judy Uetterling; District 12, Nellie Smithee; District 13, Ella Tyler; District 14, Darlena Broady; District 15, Wanda Lenz; District 16, Joan Christensen; District 17, Carol Ann Chapman; District 18, Dee Jascur; District 19, Janine Henson; District 20, Ada Couch; and District 21, Sue Hollingsworth.

And again, your advisor is Jacqueline Fossiano. The chairman to this committee will be Cornealia Jansen. And that will be in Conference Room 8.

The next committee is Community Service, and I would ask that Renee Jones stand at this time. Renee will be the advisor to the committee. The committee will meet in Conference Room 7. And I will ask the members of that committee to stand.

District 1, Veronica Greenwood; District 2, Kazue Luciani; District 3, Donna Folcarelli; District 4, Delle Tezze; District 5, Catherine Clinton; District 6, Ellen Griggs; District 7, Bunney Brenneman; District 8, Brenda Morris; District 9, Doris Hoffman; District 10, Almarie Veitenheimer; District 11, Eloise A. Cupp; District 12, Marjorie Reinders; District 13, Mildred Vier; District 14, Sandy Dobmeier; District 15, Mary Brabant; District 16, Eva Mae Perakis; District 17, Afton O. Ficarra; District 18, Margaret Smith; District 19, Betty Caldwell; District 20, Grace A. Louis; and District 21, Peggy Nye.

Again, the advisor will be Renee Jones. You will be meeting in Conference Room 7. And the chairman will be Sandy Dobmeier.

Let's go to State Department History Book. Will the advisor to the State Department History Book, Ann Jones, stand. There she is right there. And it will be held in Conference Room 12.

From District 1, we have Emily C. Uriot; from District 2, Lucita Christian; from District 3, Mary Jane Bessette; from District 4, Rose Henn; from District 6, Carol Lee Simmons; from District 7, Catherine Douckas; from District 8, Billie Schultz; from District 9, Johnnie Coley; from District 10, Barbara A. McComb; from District 11, M. Virginia Kerley; from District 12, Diane Meyer; from District 13, Melba Earles; from District 14, Kathy Vandrovec; from District 15, Mary B. Potter; from District 16, Mary E. Parker; from District 17, Lucy Quintana; from District 18, Barbara L. Hicks; from District 19, Annie Rose Cameron; from District 20, Joyce Humes; and from District 21, Sharon Eddy.

Again, your advisor is Ann Jones, and your chairman will be Lucita Christian.

Hospital. The advisor to Hospital is Karlette Rizzi. Would she please stand. And you will be in Conference Room 9.

From District 1, we have Sandra Fincel; from District 2, Helen Gasper; from District 3, C. Hendrickson; from District 4, Jennie Bizon; from District 5, Jeanne Zwick; from District 6, Frances Borum; from District 7, Liselotte M. Brown; from District 8, Gertie Richard; from District 9, Mayola C. Winston; from District 10, Shirley Page; from District 11, Judith Lenhart; District 12, Jo Ann Burns; District 13, Juanita Meece; District 14, Gwen Skillings; District 15, Martha Meeks; District 16, Maureen Hicks; District 17, Myrtle Hamilton; District 18, Janelle Faulkner; District 19, Karen Haltiner; District 20, Earlene Cole; and District 21, Gertrude Tidwell.

And the chairman will be Earlene Cole. That's Hospital.

Let's go to Junior Activities. Will the Junior Activities chairman please stand. Linda Trulio will be the advisor. You will be meeting in Conference Room 13.

And the members of that committee will be: District 1, Ellen Drogo; District 2, Jeanne Kay Le Porte; District 3, Marie Clancy; District 4, Merrilee Hickman; District 5, Sadie Turner; District 6,

Estelle Baker; District 7, B. M. Sorrentino; District 8, Cornelia Cobb; District 9, Shirley Mathis; District 10, Joann Slotman; District 11, Judy K. Lucas; District 12, Nancy Colby; District 13, Patricia A. Thurman; District 14, Jackie Cochran; District 15, Mary E. Heslin; District 16, Elsa McCoy; District 17, Karen Roybal; District 18, Nicki Henninger; District 19, Carolyn Minor; District 20, Clara A. Lewis; and District 21, Cynthia Parker.

And the chairman of that committee will be Judy Lucas.

And now we're going to go to Constitution and Bylaws Committee. Will the advisor, Shelia Allred, please stand. And that will be in Pavilion 4.

District 1, Fran Costa; District 2, Irene Boron; District 3, Ann Young; District 4, Doris Martelli; District 5, Rhea Lynn; District 6, Hazel Meyers; District 7, Lucille McCarthy; District 8, Susan Marie Henry; District 9, Barbara Williams; District 10, Addie White; District 11, Jane Wood; District 12, Barbara Przybylski; District 13, Joanne Laws; District 14, Frances Benkovics; District 15, Rose Marie Schilpp; District 16, Donna Stinnett; District 17, Terry Tapia; District 18, Rose Thomas; District 19, Esther Westlake; District 20, Betty Hall; District 21, Loneita Shoemaker.

And they will elect their own chairman.

All right. We're now going to Legislation, and would the Legislative chairman stand, Carol Gray. And you will be meeting in Conference Room 14.

District 1, Susan Stulsky; District 2, Betty Nelson; District 3, Debra Newell; District 4, June Becker; District 6, Roberta L. McKinney; District 7, Millie Douglas; District 8, Linda Ricks; District 9, Barbara Wingo; District 10, Betty Benzing; District 11, Judie List Sweeney; District 12, Elva Johnson; District 13, Mildred Brown; District 14, Elaine Fagerstrom; District 15, Vickie Way; District 16, Florence Swisher; District 17, Diane H. Richardson; District 18, Suzanne Bartholomew; District 19, Thelma E. Becker; District 20, Patsy Mitchell; and District 21, Pat Frazier.

And the chairman of the Legislative Committee will be Pat Frazier.

Now we go to Mae Holmes, and will the advisor to Mae Holmes please stand, Senior Vice-Commander Evelyn Dorsey. You will be meeting in Conference Room 10.

And from District 1, we have Mary Bixby; from District 2, we have Barbara Yenzer; from District 3, Ann Kelley; from District 4, Florence Kehne; from District 6, Etta Woodson; from District 7, Christine Cervizzi; from District 8, Elaine Majors; from District 9, Margaret Snelling; from District 10, Deborah Emery; from District 11, Ramona Leach; from District 12, Nola Pahl; from District 13, Jan Walters; from District 14, Carla McLaughlin; District 15, Judy McLaskey; District 16, Gina Demmer; District 17, June Schow; District 18, Ellie Williams; District 19, Mary Brooks; District 20, Beverly A. Barron; and District 21, Virgie Reeves.

And your chairman will be Ann Kelley.

I do want to say something. We have -- you know, our national commander of the DAV spoke yesterday, and we have his wife. Of course, she's a delegate from Florida. But I'd like her to stand. Merrallyn.

VAVS. The advisor to VAVS is Vickie Grier. There she is over there. And it will be in Conference Room 11.

From District 1, we have Maureen Fluet; from District 2, Jane Willett; from District 3, Harriet Anderson; from District 4, Idella Hosier; from District 5, Jimi Hayes; from District 6, Betty Farrand; from District 7, Nina Beverly; from District 8, Beatrice Martin; from District 9, Ruby Nelson; from District 10, Ruth Hindes; from District 11, Bonnie Roberts; from District 12, Elaine C. Morris; from District 13, Daphna Atnip; from District 14, Miriam Kiser; from District 15, Donna Piersee; from District 16, we have Marlis Jackson; from District 17, Ramona Ganong; from District 18, Patricia Heun; from District 19, Sandra Knittel; from District 20, Marie Elmore; and from District 21, Mamie Lee Painter.

And that's VAVS, and your chairman will be Nina Beverly.

And now we come down to the last one, Nominating Committee. The advisor to the Nominating Committee will be Immediate Past National Commander Margaret Hass. And you will be meeting and

meeting and meeting and meeting in the Boardroom. The Boardroom is where they met last year. Some of you were on the committee last year, so you know where the Boardroom is.

Okay. District 1, Phyllis Greaney; District 2, Dolores Robidoux; District 3, Claudia Roy; District 4, Dorothea Campanelli; District 5, Kathy Watkins; District 6, Mary C. Parrish; District 7, Dolores Roussey; District 8, Dorothy Pearce; District 9, Jane Troutman; District 10, Gloria Boozer; District 11, Ann Offutt; District 12, Nelda Wilson; District 13, Edith Jackson; District 14, Kathryn Kern; District 15, Dorothy M. Van Hoy; District 16, Joan Turbeville; District 17, Florence Valgardson; District 18, Sally Wilton; District 19, Deborah Mazza; District 20, Louise Rapisand; and District 21, Sara Douglass.

And they, of course, will elect their own chairman.

And Madam Commander, that completes the committees. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: To all of you who were elected or volunteer their services for these committees, I commend you all. This is a very important time to recognize all the work that Auxiliary members all across the country have contributed to this organization, and I know that you will do very well by them all.

Maria, are there any announcements at this time?

(Announcements)

COMMANDER DUNN: There being no other business at this time, I would like to recess the meeting until tomorrow at 9:00 o'clock a.m. promptly.

We want a closing prayer by our national chaplain, Gertrude Tidwell, and then we shall recess.

CHAPLAIN TIDWELL: Shall we pray. Father, as we leave this meeting, go with us to each and every one of our committee meetings, and be with us through the afternoon and through the night, and bring us back in the morning all bright-eyed and willing to share our love and knowledge with one another. Amen.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, Gertrude.

(The meeting recessed at 11:30 o'clock a.m., August 24, 1998.)

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION

August 25, 1998

The Second Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary 76th National Convention convened in Pavilion Rooms 9-10-11 of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, Tuesday morning, August 25, 1998, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by Commander Evelynne Dunn.

COMMANDER EVELYNNE DUNN: I'd like to call this meeting to order.

We will begin with a prayer by our national chaplain, Gertrude Tidwell. Will you please rise.

CHAPLAIN TIDWELL: Good morning. Before we pray, I would like to say that I've been notified that John Dewey, a van driver from Chapter 38 in New Mexico was covering for the HFC and he had a massive heart attack. She was one of our delegation here, and she was notified this morning.

Mrs. Chapman's husband, the department commander for Colorado, may get to come home today. I think that's wonderful news.

Gwen McCracken's husband was rushed to the hospital, too.

Let's all remember those as we pray, please.

Precious Lord, thank You for another day to share with our Auxiliary family. All too often, we accept without praise or thanks the blessings You send to us each day in many ways. Many things we take for granted, unexpected courtesies, a thoughtful kind deed, a hand that reached out in our time of need. O God, make us aware of the little daily graces.

Be with our sick and our afflicted. Bless each of us here and our families. In Your Holy Name I pray. Amen.

COMMANDER DUNN: Please remain standing. I ask the National Americanism chairperson, Jacqueline Fossiano, to give us the Pledge.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, ladies. Please be seated.

We will now have the Credentials report by Iris Brzezinski from my unit, Unit 13, here in Nevada.

MRS. BRZEZINSKI: National Commander, National Adjutant, Auxiliary members: The Credentials report is as follows. Total units registered is 321; total departments registered, 48, for a total of 369. Delegates registered, 666; alternates registered, 55; guests, 60, for a total of 781. Total unit votes, 2,047; total department votes, 48; national officers, eight; past national commanders, 16; grand total of votes, 2,119.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, Iris.

All of you have your proposed Bylaw amendments. I ask you to bring them out and have them for your attention. Past National Commander Lucille McCarthy, who is the chairman of our Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I ask her to come forward to have the first reading of the proposed Bylaw amendments.

Ladies, there will be no discussion on this first reading.

MRS. LUCILLE McCARTHY: Good morning. I think all of you have received the copy of the proposed Bylaw amendments that the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for this convention has reviewed as of yesterday. So this will be the first reading, and there will be no comments or discussion.

The first proposed Bylaw amendment is on Page N-5, Article I, National Convention, Section 5, Official Rules of the National Convention. Insert new Rule 2, which will read:

> Voting shall be viva voce, except when a roll call is demanded by the Chair, or by at least five (5) state department delegates from five (5) separate national districts.

If adopted, old Rule 2 through Rule 11 would be renumbered. Old Rule 2 would become Rule 3, Rule 3 would become Rule 4, etcetera.

Page N-5, Article I, National Convention, Section 5, Official Rules of the National Convention. The following Convention Rules, Rule 13 through Rule 16 would read as follows:

> Rule 13. Nominations of national officers shall be made by the Committee on Nominations of National Officers and from the floor of the convention. Should a seconding speech be given for a candidate, it shall not exceed three minutes.
>
> Rule 14. The election of national officers shall be by viva voce when there is no contest. In the event a roll call is required, it shall be in alphabetical order by state, followed by units in numerical order within the state.
>
> Rule 15. In the event two or more candidates are nominated for any one office, roll call(s) shall continue until completed. The candidate receiving a majority of the roll call votes shall be elected.
>
> Rule 16. In the event of a roll call vote, the tellers appointed by the national commander will report the result of the vote to the national commander. She will then announce the result of the roll call to the convention.

The rationale is: Rearrangement of Convention Rules for the purpose of clarification. The second sentence in Rule 13 was also amended to read as follows: "Should a seconding speech be given for a candidate, it shall not exceed three minutes." A second is never required for any nomination; however, a seconding speech may be given to indicate endorsement of a candidate.

Page N-17, Article V, National Committees, Section 1, National Executive Committee. Add a new Paragraph 3 which will read:

> A National Executive Committeewoman and Alternate National Executive Committeewoman shall serve her two (2) year term to which she has been elected or until her removal, death, resignation, or inability to discharge the duties of her office.

The rationale for this is to support the term of office for a National Executive Committeewoman and alternate as indicated in Section 1, Paragraph 2.

If adopted, old Paragraph 3 will become Paragraph 4, etcetera.

Page S-9, Article VI, State Committees, Section 2, State

Finance Committee, Paragraph 1.

The State Finance Committee shall consist of at least three (3) and no more than seven (7) members elected from various units in the state. VAVS representatives and associate representatives shall not serve on the committee if their records are subject to review and verification by the Finance Committee. The number of members serving on the committee shall be provided in the State Standing Rules and Supplement to State Bylaws. Not more than one member from the same unit shall be elected to serve on the committee. Vacancies shall be filled with an appointment made by the state commander and approved by the State Executive Committee. The rationale is conflict of interest.

Page U-25, Installation of Officers. Delete last paragraph at the bottom of Page U-25 which reads:

For installation of national officers, the same form may be used immediately after the election of officers at National Convention.

The rationale for this: This is a duplication of the last sentence found in Section 3, last sentence in Article XIV, Installing Officers, Page N-37.

You will also find a resolution that is attached to these proposed amendments. This resolution is going to be read at the present time. It does not require a second reading, and we are going to vote on this after the reading of this resolution at this time. The resolution reads:

WHEREAS, the parent organization, hereafter referred to as the DAV, is installing a new membership processing system for only partial and fully paid life memberships;

WHEREAS, the Auxiliary to the DAV has junior and annual memberships in addition to partial and fully paid life memberships; and

WHEREAS, the Auxiliary's total membership processing is dependent on the DAV's mainframe and programmers; and

WHEREAS, annual and junior memberships would require a special customized program which could mean additional cost to the Auxiliary; and

WHEREAS, the Auxiliary has been advised by the DAV that it would be preferable to go with only partial and fully paid life memberships;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Auxiliary national adjutant have the authority to research and select the most feasible membership program for the Auxiliary; and

THAT the Auxiliary national adjutant makes such other technical requirements to conform with the DAV membership systems.

Madam Commander, I move that this resolution be accepted.

COMMANDER DUNN: Is there a second to this resolution?

MRS. JOANNE D. LAWS: Madam Commander, Joanne Laws, Unit 19, Kentucky. I second.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you. Is there any discussion on this? Does everyone understand this resolution?

MRS. ESTHER WESTLAKE: Madam Commander, Esther Westlake, Unit 45, Washington. I think that probably a lot of people here are concerned about the fact that if we do away with the annual memberships and our junior membership, we're going to have a real problem maintaining our quota, for one thing. But the other thing is that I think our junior membership is extremely important, and I think that we need to address that issue.

I have a question for Maria. When it talks about the expense of a new program, how much expense are we talking about? Do we know?

ADJUTANT TEDROW: That's what this resolution is for, Esther. First of all, I like the idea that we have annual members, and I like the idea that we have junior members. And this is a new program coming in, and hopefully it's going to improve what we already have. But I have been told that because we are a little bit different and because of distributions and because of setting dues and changing dues, and because our units have the right to set their own membership fees, that there could be customization, and

it could be costly.

But what I really want to know here is how the membership feels. Do you still want annual and junior members? That's what I want to know.

(Response of "Yes.")

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Show your hands. Okay.

What this resolution does is make it possible to still customize our program to accept annual and junior memberships.

And this is giving me the right to do that. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Yes, ma'am.

MRS. JEANNE KAY LE PORTE: Madam Commander, Jeanne Le Porte from Unit 30, New York State. I was only questioning the word "conform" in the very last statement. If it says that we're going to conform with the DAV membership program, does that limit what we can do with annuals and juniors?

ADJUTANT TEDROW: No. It refers to other technical requirements. The first notice goes out in March, and if we don't get your change of dues till March, we can't change it on the system. So that is one thing that we would probably have to make a policy that any dues change must come in before the 1st of February.

MRS. ROSEMARY GALLAGHER: Maria, can I ask you a question? Rosemary Gallagher, Department of Nebraska. I agree with you thoroughly on what you're saying. But why can't we as an organization still retain our own individuality but have one annual dues in all units?

ADJUTANT TEDROW: You mean send out one annual, you mean put it in --

MRS. GALLAGHER: Every unit will pay a certain amount.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: You're talking about a Bylaw change.

MRS. GALLAGHER: Yes. Why can't we do that?

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Well, the only thing is, Rosemary, that a lot of units depend on that per capita for their funds.

MRS. GALLAGHER: I'm not taking that away from them. I'm saying we will have one annual dues. It'll be $15 a year, $12 a year, 13, whatever you decide on. And that's what I'm saying. Everybody pays the same in every unit. This would bring you extra income in, and it would still give you your individuality. But every unit in the State of Nebraska would say, if I have an annual member, I know they're going to pay X number of dollars. One's not going to pay 10, one's not going to pay 11, one's not going to pay 17 or what, just one dues for annual members.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Well, I would think that the state might be able to decide that.

MRS. GALLAGHER: Oh, I think we will. But I think that we should do it on a national level and we're all doing the same. I think it would be easier all the way around to pay one annual dues every unit within the state or overseas, or wherever they're at. And it would be easier for you, and it certainly would be easier for the state department. Because some units -- I'll talk Nebraska, no place else -- you can't get them to raise the dues, and they don't have enough coming back even to operate.

I just think it's something we ought to think about, that every unit within our organization all have the same annual dues, because I'm for annual dues for this reason: We have quite a few senior citizens who will not have the money to go life. I've got to be very honest with you. And I thought if we just paid -- I don't care if it's 13, I don't care if it's 15; it can't be under ten, though, I'll tell you right now -- but we all pay the same, I think it would be a lot easier. Thank you.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Well taken.

MRS. DEBRA NEWELL: Madam Commander, Debra Newell, Unit 1, Maine. I think that National should be kept separate from state and let the state, each state figure out their own dues and keep it that way.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Each state could put it in their Standing Rules how much each unit would be charged. But we take away from the thing in here that says in our Bylaws every unit has the right to set its own fees. So that would have to be a change in the Bylaws before we could install a uniform type of dues.

MRS. EVA MAE PERAKIS: Madam Commander, Eva Mae Perakis from Oakland Unit 7. I just want to add my two bits. I've worked with juniors for quite a while years ago in our Auxiliary, and the remarks that I've heard from these young ladies who are now mothers of being a member in our Junior Auxiliary have been very wonderful to me, because they've all been so patriotic. And they're still wanting to serve our country. And the things they've done for youth in their lives have really impressed me.

And my feeling on this is, if there's a young family -- DAV, most DAV members don't have much money, and say the family has three little girls. If they had to go into life membership or be excluded, I think this would be a real shame to our organization.

I feel, too, that there are many ladies who can only pay annual dues that they just can't do any more.

We are for disabled American veterans, and I would feel very, very bad if we discontinued juniors and also annual memberships. I think we should think of this really hard. I would go for the resolution if we were guaranteed that they would have junior and annual members, because to me, in smaller organizations, they're our -- well, they're such an important part. And so many would not be able to be members then.

And I feel for the good of our organization, we need to keep that.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Could I say something? I fully believe in a member having their choice. All this resolution does is gives the national adjutant and National Headquarters the right to go either way. What I wanted from you was do you still want what you've got?

(Response of, "Yes.")

ADJUTANT TEDROW: All right. That's all I want to know.

MRS. ELLIE WILLIAMS: Maria, Ellie Williams, Unit 11, Yuma, Arizona. One of the ladies was saying something about the juniors and not being able to pay for the juniors. Our unit, we are going to pay for the juniors to keep the juniors, even though we don't have a charter, because most of them are grandchildren, and they're spread all over the country, so we don't have a charter.

But the unit itself is paying for the juniors, and that's one way to keep your juniors.

MS. SUZANNE CZYZOWSKY: Madam Commander, I'm Suzanne Chicalani Czyzowsky from San Jose, California Unit 11. My husband and I both work through the paperwork when he gets the information from National for DAV. And my understanding is they have not eliminated annual memberships. What they've done is reclassed them as partial payments towards life membership.

COMMANDER DUNN: That is correct.

MRS. CZYZOWSKY: And I want to make sure the ladies understand. That doesn't mean that someone who can only afford to pay a small amount each year would be eliminated from membership but merely reclassified as a partial payment towards their life membership.

Is that what they're asking us to do?

ADJUTANT TEDROW: What they do is they pay an annual membership, and they immediately become part-life, and then three months after that, they start getting billed over a period of three years. And that's it, you know. They either pay it, or they become inactive, and they become delinquent. That's it.

MRS. CZYZOWSKY: The paperwork we've received requires a minimum payment of $20 per year. It doesn't indicate it has to be paid within three years.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: That's not the total life membership. The DAV itself sets the dues in their Bylaws. Every chapter must pay $20. That's what's in their Bylaws.

But when a member pays that $20, even if he thinks it's an annual membership, it is not. He pays the $20. It then goes on an installment type of part life, and he is billed every three months. And if there's not enough money in there to distribute, they hold him on there for another year, and then he's dropped.

MRS. MERRILEE HICKMAN: Merrilee Hickman, Delaware, Madam Chairman. Basically what she was saying is what I was thinking. I'm concerned about our women annual members, and I was wondering

if -- for instance, we have a lot of women, for whatever reason, for 25 years have been paying annual membership where they could have put that money for a life membership.

They've been paying for 25 years, maybe we ought to say they automatically have a life membership.

COMMANDER DUNN: No, it doesn't work that way.

MRS. HICKMAN: Well, how would you work that? I'm concerned.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: No, we don't say they're automatically a life member. We will still have an annual membership, and they pay once a year, they're still going to get a notice just like they do now for the next year and the next year and the next year. It would not hurt people in the units.

Let's talk about units for a second. I don't want to get lengthy on this. But you know, we talk about members that can't pay their dues. They're financially unable to pay their dues. Where are these unit funds going? You know? I mean, you get fund-raisers and everything. Why can't you look out there and look at your delinquents and wonder why they're not paying.

It might be some lady that's been a member -- check how long they've been a member. It might be somebody that's been a member for 15 or 20 years, and all of a sudden she's been delinquent. Don't you think maybe there might be a reason?

But what I'm saying is that it's not set up that way where if they continue to pay for 20 years, they automatically get a life membership. But people in the units should be telling them, "Hey, you know, you're paying this every year. Why don't you buy a life membership?"

All I'm asking -- and we've gotten way beyond this -- all I wanted to really know with this resolution is, do I have the backing from this Auxiliary and this governing body. That's all I want to know. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: The last question please.

MRS. PATRICIA EGEL: Madam Commander, Pat Egel, Arizona 8. I would like to move the adoption of the resolution as presented and call for a vote.

COMMANDER DUNN: It has been moved, and it has been seconded, and I'm calling for a vote. All those in favor of this resolution, signify by saying Aye; opposed. Motion is carried. (Applause)

Before we go into the awards, I would like to take a moment to recognize the unit commanders in this room. Would you please rise if you are a unit commander? Unit commander. (Applause) Thank you, ladies. And I'd like to raise my hand, too, because I'm my unit commander. I'm the unit commander of my unit. Let me put it that way. So they call me, "Commander Commander Evelynne."

We're going to go into the reports and awards, and we'll start with Americanism. Jacki Fossiano, would you come forward, please?

3RD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER FOSSIANO: Good morning, everyone. I'm going to ask my chairperson, Cornealia Jansen, to please come up, from Minnesota, and she is going to give you all the information you'd like to hear. Michigan. Oh, I'm sorry. She's from Michigan. Please forgive me.

MRS. CORNEALIA JANSEN: National Commander Evelynne, National Adjutant Maria, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests of the 76th National Auxiliary Convention: The National Americanism Convention Committee met in Conference Room 8 at 2:00 p.m. on August 24, 1998. Our advisor was Jacqueline Fossiano. Our secretary was Donna Tanner.

Our committee submitted the following recommendations. Please clarify the point system to the report. We had a difficulty with the numbers. And we ask that you do not mix your programs. We found a lot of community service programs mixed in with the Americanism. And a clarification on the literature, such as the number of each kind of literature that you passed out.

Our committee consisted of District 1, Donna Tanner; Number 2, Holly B. Darfler; Number 3, Wanda Lee Furbish; Number 4, Mary Murphy; Number 6, Ruth Holt; Number 7, Catherine Neuburg; Number 8, Patricia Perry; Number 9, Monica Stroud; myself; Number 11, Judy Uetterling; Number 12, Nellie Smithee; Number 13, Ella Tyler; Number 14, Darlena Broady; Number 15, Wanda Lenz; Number 16, Joan Christensen; Number 17, Carol Ann Chapman; Number 18, Dee Jascur;

Number 19, Janine Henson; Number 20, Ada Couch; and Number 21, Sue Hollingsworth.

Could the committee please stand up, so we can recognize you. (Applause)

The following units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Americanism Award: Group I, 10 to 50 members, was Unit Number 5, Michael J. Thomas, Sanford, North Carolina. (Applause)

Group II was 51 to 100 members. Unit Number 20, Virginia Beach, Virginia. (Applause)

Group III, 101 to 200 members, was Unit 24, Clarence Tom Limley, I believe, Valley City, North Dakota. (Applause)

Group IV, 201 members or over was Unit 88, Lieutenant Vibert O. Fryer, Schenectady, New York. (Applause)

The Special Americanism Award was Unit Number 20, Virginia Beach, Virginia. (Applause)

These were marvelous reports, all of them, and it was very difficult to make one winner, but keep up the good work and thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, ladies. Americanism in this country is so special. I have a deep and abiding love for this country, as you all well know, as well as you do, I'm sure. I know that for a fact because of all the great works you're doing in Americanism. I just feel that Americanism, of all the programs in our organization, has always been my special love, and I feel that when we give out these awards, it is because of the feeling we have for our country, and so I congratulate all those winners for all the work you have done toward making our country better.

We have Community Service next, our 4th Junior Vice.

4TH JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER JONES: Good morning. I would like to ask our Community Service Convention Committee chairman, Sandy Dobmeier, to please come forward. And while we're waiting, I would like to say to each and every one of you who are here, and for those of our members who are not here, thank you, thank you, thank you for the outstanding community service that you provided to veterans and nonveterans during the last year. You have indeed made a difference in the lives of many. Thank you.

MRS. SANDY DOBMEIER: National Commander, National Adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests of the 76th National Auxiliary Convention: The National Community Service Convention Committee met in Conference Room 7 at 2:00 p.m. on August 24th, 1998. Our advisor was Renee Jones, and Bunney Brenneman was appointed secretary.

The committee would like to make the following recommendations. The person completing the report should read the instructions carefully and refer to the yellow handbook. Make sure it really is Community Service. There was a great deal of Hospital, VAVS, Americanism. All of these were on the Community Service report. They each have their own report.

Be specific as to where you donated specific items to. It was hard to tell. Many items that were put down for donations looked as if they were for a hospital, but it didn't say that, so it gets a little tough to judge.

Decide whether service to family members is or is not Community Service.

And Number 5, put the entire report into sections: family-related, veteran-related or nonveteran-related community service.

At this time, I'll go through the winners. The following units were judged to be the best in their category for National Community Service Awards. There were several great reports in all categories, so I'd like to thank all of you for all of your work.

Group Number I, Category 10 to 50 members. The winner is Illinois Unit Number 3, Elton. Would you please come forward. (Applause)

Group Number II, 51 to 100 members, Tennessee Unit Number 6, Robert Loveday Memorial. Please come forward. (Applause)

Group Number III, 101 to 200 members, New York Unit Number 120, Roll of Honor. Please come forward. (Applause)

And the winner in Category Number IV, 201 members and over, Arizona Unit Number 1, Phoenix. Please come forward. (Applause)

While she comes forward for her award, I'd like to thank all of the committee members who served on this committee, so would all committee members from every district please stand and be recognized. (Applause)

I'd also like to make a special thank you to our advisor, Renee Jones, for her interest in the committee and also all of her help with all of our questions. Thank you very much, Renee. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, Renee. Thank you, ladies. Service is the main business of our organization. We are an organization that provides service not only to veterans and their families, but to the community, therefore Community Service. And when the Auxiliary members go out into the areas closest to you and provide that service, you are showing your neighbors, your friends that the DAV Auxiliary is there for them, not only to veterans, but for everyone.

And again, I would like to thank all those who served on the committee. Did a wonderful job. And all of the committee service work that has been done across the country.

Our next individual to come up is History chairman, Ann Jones.

MRS. ANN JONES: It's been a pleasure being your National History chairman this year, and I would ask Lucita Christian, who was the chairman of our committee, to please come up. Ladies, we only had two books to judge this year, two. We had one from Texas and one from Colorado. And Lucita will talk to you.

MRS. LUCITA E. CHRISTIAN: Good morning, National Commander Evelynne, past national commanders, delegates and guests: On August the 24th at 2:00 p.m. in Conference Room 12, I had the privilege of observing, examining and inspecting the state department history books. My committee of ladies, which consisted of 21 ladies from the districts, I would ask them to all stand up, please, and be recognized. (Applause)

We came up with some suggestions for future history books: That the pictures be centered, that pictures must all go in the same direction on the page. Be careful with the glue, because some of the glue would go over to the other side. Labels are important, because we had pictures where we didn't have dates on occasion, so we really didn't know. And it was another suggestion that the history books be kept for the commanders but not be used for judging in the future.

The most outstanding book goes to Colorado, the State of Colorado. (Applause)

And I'd like to give a special thanks to our advisor, Ann Jones, for all her assistance.

MEMBER: I just want to address the delegation for one minute. The lady that was our History chairman this past year, she's been under such stress. Her husband had cancer surgery. She almost lost her knee because she doesn't have a knee any more. She's been very ill, but she put her heart and soul into this and worked diligently. And this was her baby, and she really wanted to do it. And she is going to be just so excited to find out that she won this. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MRS. JONES: Ladies, I want to make sure that everyone understood the recommendation of my committee. We are recommending that the states, departments, continue to do your history books, but that they not be judged at National. Because with only two books at National, truthfully, it's obvious that many of you are doing scrapbooks or preparing your books in some other way, and not bringing them for judging.

So that is our recommendation that we don't discontinue, I want you to understand, because history books are extremely important. It's a record of what you've done for the entire year. But we are suggesting or recommending that they not be judged at National. Thank you.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much. Are those books going to be on display so that we could see them at any time? May I ask that question?

(Inaudible response)

COMMANDER DUNN: Okay. They're going to bring the book down tomorrow so that anyone who's interested can see the winning book.

And I feel that it's something worthwhile to see.

Our next report is Hospital, Karlette Rizzi.

I would like to make a comment before she takes the microphone over about the history books. I do know that when I was state commander, a history book was made for me, and it is one of the cherished pieces of history and memorabilia that I keep in my home, because it contains all the things I did when I was state commander.

And I feel like every state commander should have some part of her history recorded in a book, a special book just for her. And this is my opinion. Thank you.

And now we have Karlette Rizzi.

MRS. KARLETTE RIZZI: Good morning. Ladies of the Auxiliary, it is my deep pleasure to introduce to you the lady that served as our convention chairman, Earlene Cole from District 20. (Applause)

MRS. EARLENE COLE: Good morning. National Commander, National Adjutant, past national commanders, national officers and delegates to this convention: Twenty ladies met in Conference Room 9 at 2:00 p.m., August the 24th. Our advisor was Karlette Rizzi, and our secretary was Gertrude Tidwell.

I'd like to introduce these ladies at this time and ask that they all stand, because this was really a tough thing to do. We thought for a while we were going to have supper brought in, because we wanted to be fair, and it's real tough. We'd like to have given everyone an award, but they wouldn't let us.

From District 1, Sandra Fincel. Will you ladies please stand when I call your name? District 2, Helen Gasper; 3, C. Hendrickson; 4, Jennie Bizon; 5, Jeanne Zwick; Frances Borum; Liselotte Brown from 7; Number 8, Gertie Richard; 9, Mayola Winston; 10, Shirley Page; 11, Judith Lenhart; 12, Jo Ann Burns; 13, Juanita Meece; 14, Gwen Skillings; 16, Maureen Hicks; 17, Myrtle Hamilton; 18, M. Janelle Faulkner; 19, Karen Haltiner; 20, myself, Earlene Cole; and 21, Gertrude Tidwell.

Let's give these ladies all a hand, please. (Applause)

And our decisions were: Group I, 10 to 50, Mountaintop Number 29, Oakland, Maryland. (Applause)

Group Number II, 51 to 100 members, Myers Morehead Glover Number 18, Shelby, North Carolina. (Applause)

Number III, 101 to 200, Oakland Number 7, Oakland, California. (Applause)

And Group Number IV, 201 and over, Nob Hill Number 26, Colorado Springs, Colorado. (Applause)

There were a lot of others that were nice, and there was a lot of work put in, and we do appreciate all the work.

We did have one suggestion. In some of them, the states had written on the sheets as they scored them for the state, and that was a little confusing to some of the ladies, and we'd like to ask the state departments to not write on the face of these reports.

Thank you very much. I'd like to thank Karlette for being our advisor.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much Karlette and your committee. We appreciate all the work that you've done.

We have Junior Activities, Linda Trulio from New Jersey.

MRS. LINDA TRULIO: Good morning, everyone. I'd like to first say that this year has been, besides an honor to serve, but a very fun year for me. I get to deal with all the little girls, one of the most wonderful parts of our organization.

Madam Commander Evelynne, national officers, Adjutant Maria Tedrow, Assistant Judy, past national commanders, delegates and friends of the Auxiliary: I cannot stress enough how important our young little girls are to our organization. As Evelynne has stated -- she mentioned CPR, which I hope all of you out there are familiar with. CPR is the breath of life, and our juniors are the breath of life of this organization.

I encourage you to utilize them in all that you do, give them a chance, turn the reins over. Sometimes it's a little difficult to let go. But we must let them move forward to make our organization grow and bring us into the millennium. (Applause)

I read all of the Junior reports, and was very impressed with some of the things that were in there, little girls helping

veterans. I want to just note that there was a young lady who made a headstone, carved it herself, because a veteran could not afford a headstone for their wife. And there's, like, so many very unique things that were in the folders, and it would be most difficult to bring every instance to you.

Therefore, the convention booth. The pictures are up there. The pictures are worth more than a thousand words or any statistics that I could give you here today. The books that some of the units and departments have brought are also there. I encourage you to stop, visit and look.

Evelynne, I want to thank you sincerely for giving me this opportunity to serve the Auxiliary, and I want to just hope and pray that we just move forward with our juniors. I'm honored and proud to see them here, especially some of our teenage girls who have shown up. That's a section where, you know, it's hard to get some of those young ladies to work.

Our chairman for the Auxiliary meeting was Judy Lucas. Our secretary was Cindy Parker from Arkansas. And at this particular time now, I would like to turn the microphone over to Judy.

MRS. JUDY LUCAS: National Commander Evelynne, national line officers, delegates and guests: The Junior Activities met in the Committee Conference Room 13 at 2:00 p.m., August 24th. And I would like all my districts that helped me with the judging stand up. (Applause)]

I was very impressed when we were going over these reports. For Group I for 1 to 25 members, the award goes to Sergeant Juan F. Connelly, Unit 26, Irvington, New Jersey. (Applause)

There was also an honorable mention. We can't give anything, but we wanted to note that this was another outstanding unit that should have qualified, too, but came in very close competition. It was Port Lucie Unit 113, Port Lucie, Florida. (Applause)

In Group II, 26 to 50, members, Goshen Memorial Unit 15, Millcreek, Indiana. (Applause)

And the honorable mention was for Fort Barbee Unit 119, St. Marys, Ohio. (Applause)

For Group III, 51 to 100 members, the winner was Clarence Tom Lemley Unit 24, Valley City, North Dakota. (Applause)

We also had an honorable mention for that one. That was Milwaukee Unit 1, Hancock, Wisconsin. (Applause)

The next one was the Junior Activities Book. Goshen Memorial Unit 115, Goshen, Indiana received that award for the Junior Book. (Applause)

National Junior Miss Teen, Sonia Manocha, Pittsburgh Unit 76, Pennsylvania. (Applause)

For National Junior Miss, Rebecca Joy Witt, Mountaintop Unit 29, Alexandria, Virginia. Rebecca, I guess you're here. Will you please come up? (Applause)

An honorable mention was also made for Carla Shoemaker, Seneca, New York, Unit 88.

The recommendations were to be specific on age of the girls doing the hours. Junior Activities reports were to include girls under seven just for the purpose of calculating the hours. That was our recommendations.

Thank you very much for helping and thank you. Keep the girls active. We need them. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Yes, ladies, there's our future, right there. And let's give her another round of applause. (Applause) This gracious young lady. Stand up there. (Applause) What a beautiful young lady!

We're going into Legislation now, and that is Carol Gray. Would she please come forward? Thank you.

2ND JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER CAROL A. GRAY: Good morning. I'd like to ask our convention committee chairman, Pat Frazier from Arkansas, to come forward. And ladies, when we judge these reports here at the convention, there are no losers, because in order to qualify to be here, you've already been winners in your own state. It just makes our job that much harder, because you've all been the winner.

And you've all done a lot of beautiful work this year. Legislation is a really difficult job to do, but so many of you

have contacted so many legislators. Even though they no longer sometimes choose to contact us or listen to us, keep up the work.

MRS. PAT FRAZIER: Commander Evelynne, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests: The Legislative Committee met in Conference Room 14 on Monday, August the 24th at 2:00 p.m. The advisor was Carol Gray, and the secretary was Susan Stulsky. Attendance was taken, and there were 20 districts represented.

The legislative reports were reviewed and judged for each of the four membership categories using the point system. The reports that start with a hundred points were again reviewed, and a winner was chosen in each category. We appreciate all the work that went into these reports. We had some great reports. However, some of them did not have all the questions answered. Questions not answered cannot receive points. Please take the time to fill the reports in completely.

Our committee -- would you mind standing as I call your name please? District 1, Susan Stulsky; 2, Betty Nelson; 3, Debra Newell; 4, June Becker; 6, Roberta L. McKinney; 7, Millie Douglas; 8, Linda Ricks; 9, Barbara Wingo; 10, Betty Benzing; 11, Judie List Sweeney; 12, Elva Johnson; 13, Mildred Brown; 14, Elaine Fagerstrom; 15, Vickie A. Way; 16, Florence Swisher; 17, Diane H. Richardson; 18, Suzanne Bartholomew; 19, Thelma Becker; 20, Patsy Mitchell; and 21, myself, Pat Frazier.

The committee submitted the following recommendations.

And we want to thank all of you ladies. Do you want to give them a round of applause? (Applause)

Our recommendations were: Number 1, units need to refer to and follow the guidelines in the National Auxiliary Manual, the yellow book. 2. That units be allowed to use e-mail for contacts and thank yous. 3. Please allow space to note if any unit member is on the Benefits Protection Team.

Our winners are: 10 to 50 members, Pikeville, Kentucky Unit Number 134. (Applause)

51 to 100 members, North Hudson, New Jersey Unit Number 9. (Applause)

100 to 200 members, Macon, Georgia, Raymond Williams Unit Number 50. (Applause)

200 and more, Redford Township, Michigan Unit Number 113. (Applause)

I would like to thank everyone who helped serve on this committee, and a special thanks goes to Carol Gray for guiding us. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much, ladies. In traveling across this country and in speaking to veterans and their families, I have found that the two most important things that concern veterans is their health care and legislation to help retain what benefits they have. So legislation is one of the most important aspects of our organization as we go into the millennium. So I would like to ask you to continue your good works in that area.

We're going to go into VAVS, Vicky Grier.

MRS. VICKY L. GRIER: Good morning, ladies. I had the pleasure of working with the best group of ladies I've ever worked with before, and we had the best secretary, and we had the greatest chairman you ever want to meet. She knew what to do. And I want to present to some and introduce to others Mrs. Nina Beverly from Florida. (Applause)

MRS. NINA BEVERLY: Thank you, Vicky. And good morning, everyone. I concur with Vicky. We had a great group yesterday, and they worked beautifully today, and I know that they made logical decisions, fair decisions, and that's what's important when it comes down to this level of this judging.

I would like all the members who worked on that committee to please stand so that we can properly thank you. We had 21 members on that committee. (Applause) Thank you all. You did a wonderful job.

National Commander, National Adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests of this 76th National Auxiliary Convention: The National VAVS Convention Committee met in Conference Room 11 at 2:00 p.m., August 24th, 1998. Our advisor

was Vicky Grier. Our secretary was Elaine C. Morris.

We did have some recommendations submitted. First of all, they would like that when you put the state on your report, that you do spell out the state in its whole entire word, because some of these abbreviations that are submitted by the Post Office are a little confusing, and we feel if you just take the little extra time and write the full name of your state, it would be less confusing.

Number 2. Have another group for over 500 members. Number 3. Please leave more space on Number 5, the Question Number 5 on that sheet, for mileage to the VA hospital. Also put the VAMC hospital mileage. Some of these units go to more than one hospital, and we need a little bit of clarification as to just how far it is to each hospital.

And now for the important part. The following units were judged to be the best in their category for the National VAVS Awards. Group I, 10 to 50 members, Mountaintop Unit 29, Oakland, Maryland. (Applause)

Group II, 51 to 100 members, Westover Unit 11, Westover, Massachusetts. (Applause)

Group III, 101 to 200 members, Cape Cod Unit 96, Hyannis, Massachusetts. (Applause)

Group IV, 201 members and over, Phoenix Unit 1, Phoenix, Arizona. (Applause)

And now for the Thelma Feighner Award to the unit that's too far away from the hospital to volunteer there. That award goes to H.J. Leik Unit 1, Casper, Wyoming. (Applause)

And Vickie, it certainly was a pleasure working with you and with all the committee. It was truly a joy to serve in this capacity and thank you all. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: That was a lady with a lot of enthusiasm for her job, wasn't it? (Applause)

Mae Holmes is next on my agenda. Evelyn Dorsey, who is the advisor to that committee, I'd ask her to come forward, please.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER DORSEY: Good morning, ladies. I'm going to ask Ann Kelley, the chairman of the Mae Holmes Award Committee, to come forward. And while she's coming, I want you to really be enthusiastic about these winners that we're going to announce because, as you know, the Mae Holmes Award is really the mother of all of the other reports. They're all important, but the Mae Holmes captures all of the hard work that you do.

First of all, it captures the units that made their quota by April the 1st, and then it goes on to capture all of those essential services you rendered in the other categories, such as Americanism, Community Service, Hospital, VAVS and Juniors. So it is the mother of all the reports. And as these winners come up, let's give them a big hand and a cheer. Make them feel good for the hard work they did. Thank you. (Applause)

MRS. ANN KELLEY: Good afternoon, ladies. I know it's still morning, but I'm sure everybody's tired of hearing "Good morning," and I am a horse of a different color.

First of all, I'd like to thank Evelynne. It was an honor and a pleasure for me to serve as chairman of the National Mae Holmes Award Committee. National Commander Evelynne, National Adjutant Maria, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests: The National Mae Holmes Committee met in Conference Room 10 at 2:00 p.m. on August 24th. Our advisor was National Senior Vice-Commander Evelyn Dorsey. Our secretary was Ramona Leach.

I'd like to introduce the ladies who served on this committee. They were a hard-working, dedicated group of ladies, and their job was not an easy one. I'd like to apologize to these ladies in advance if I don't pronounce your name correctly.

From District Number 1, Mary Bixby; from District Number 2, Barbara Yenzer; District Number 3, myself; District Number 4, Florence Kehne; District Number 5, Rebecca Anderson; District Number 6, Cecilia B. Woodson; District Number 7, Christine Cervizzi; District Number 8, Elaine Majors; District Number 9, Margaret Snelling; District Number 10, Deborah Emery; District Number 11, Ramona Leach; District Number 12, Nola Pahl; District Number 13, Jan Walters; District Number 14, Carla McLaughlin;

District Number 15, Judith A. McLaskey; District Number 16, June Adema; District Number 17, June Schow; District Number 18, Ellie Williams; District Number 19, Mary Brooks; District Number 20, Beverly Barron; and District Number 21, Virgie Reeves.

Ladies, please give these ladies a round of applause. (Applause)

The committee would like to submit the following recommendations: Number 1. Please submit only one report from each state in each category. There were several instances, ladies, where we had several reports from one state in the same category.

Also, ladies, when you transfer your figures, would you please make sure that you transfer your figures into the correct category. We had some instances where figures were transposed or the same figures were used twice in different categories. We had the same dollar amount a few times in two different categories.

Also, if the report calls for an itemized list, can you please make sure that these lists are broken down and attached to the back of the report forms.

And the last recommendation that the committee had was to try to set up the conference rooms with smaller tables so that the individuals can work in smaller groups as opposed to working at one large table.

The winners of the Mae Holmes Awards are: Group I, 10 to 15 members, Corporal George H. Keller Unit Number 14, Clark, New Jersey. (Applause)

Group Number II, 51 to 100 members, Jack E. Daniel Unit Number 54, South Carolina. (Applause)

Group Number III, 101 to 200 members, Jackson County Unit Number 8, Oregon. (Applause)

Group Number IV, 200 members and over, Greater Daytona Unit Number 84, Florida. (Applause)

Once again, I'd like to thank National Senior Vice-Commander Evelyn Dorsey for all of her patience and all of her guidance and advice in this committee. Thank you, Evelyn. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: We had a national musician who was unable to attend this convention because of illness, and we had a lady step in at the last moment, and I'd like to recognize her. Her name is Nancy Coulombe, is that correct? I hope that's close. (Applause) She has done a wonderful job, and I just wanted her to know how much we appreciate all her great efforts.

I'd also like to ask you to go back there and see what our juniors are doing. They have a very nice display. Remember that the juniors are our future. I know you've heard that before, but the future is looking you right in the face back there against that back wall.

At this time, I'll turn this over to Shelia Allred.

JUDGE ADVOCATE SHELIA C. ALLRED: Madam Commander, have we addressed all the business for this session?

COMMANDER DUNN: Yes.

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: Do I have your permission to address the assembly?

COMMANDER DUNN: Yes.

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: Thank you, Madam Commander. We're ahead of schedule. Would you like to continue with this progress?

(Response of, "Yes.")

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: This would continue our business in accordance with the Convention Rules and enable us to get out early for the remainder of the day. Would you like that? (Applause)

Madam Commander, the business of this session having been accomplished, I move to recess for the districts to caucus with their representative that served on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for ten minutes; and further, to reconvene into the next session for the second reading of the Constitution and Bylaws.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Madam Commander, Past National Commander Maria Tedrow. I second that motion.

COMMANDER DUNN: Is there any discussion? All those in favor; opposed. Motion carried.

We will recess for ten minutes, and we will caucus, district caucuses, please.

(Whereupon, a short recess was taken.)

COMMANDER DUNN: This meeting is called to order at this time.

We will have the second reading of the Constitution and Bylaws by the chairman, Past National Commander Lucille McCarthy.

MEMBER: Madam Commander, may I ask a question?

COMMANDER DUNN: Does it concern the Constitution and Bylaws?

MEMBER: Yes.

MRS. McCARTHY: Does it concern the amendments at this time?

MEMBER: The actual amendments listed? No.

COMMANDER DUNN: You have to do this under debate. It's not in order at this time.

MRS. McCARTHY: Madam Commander, national officers, past national commanders and delegates assembled: The National Constitution and Bylaw Committee was called to order by our advisor, National Judge Advocate Shelia Allred, on Monday, August 24th, 1998. Lucille McCarthy was elected chairman and Loneita Shoemaker as secretary.

The committee reviewed all proposed Bylaw amendments and the one resolution submitted to the committee. Our thanks to National Adjutant Maria Tedrow for a copy of the proposed amendments which were available to all the delegates prior to the first reading.

I wish to thank and recognize the ladies serving on the committee, and as your name is called, will you please stand, before applauding them.

District 1 is Fran Costa; District 2, Irene Boron; District 3, Ann Young; District 4, Doris Martelli; District 5, Rhea Lynn; District 6, Hazel Meyers; District 8, Susan Henry; District 9, Barbara Williams; District 10, Addie White; District 11, Jane Wood; District 12, Barbara Shabilsky; District 13, Joanne Laws; District 14, Frances Benkovics; District 15, Rose Schilpp; District 16, Donna Stinnett; District 17, Terry Tapia; District 18, Rose Thomas; District 19, Esther Westlake; District 20, Betty Hall; District 21, Loneita Shoemaker, the lady who was the secretary and kept me straight; and District 7, Lucille McCarthy. (Applause)

My special thanks also to Advisor Shelia Allred.

So at this time, I would like to present the second reading of the Bylaw amendments, proposed Bylaw amendments.

Page N-5, Article I, National Convention, Section 5, Official Rules of the National Convention. Insert new Rule 2, which will read:

> Voting shall be by viva voce, except when a roll call is demanded by the Chair, or by at least five (5) state department delegates from five (5) separate national districts.

If adopted, old Rule 2 through Rule 11 would be renumbered.

Madam Commander, I move that this amendment be adopted.

COMMANDER DUNN: Is there a second?

MRS. ESTHER WESTLAKE: Madam Commander, Esther Westlake, Spokane Unit Number 45. I second that motion.

COMMANDER DUNN: There's been a motion and a second. Is there any discussion?

MRS. MIRIAM KISER: Madam Commander, Miriam Kiser, Minnesota Number 1. I notice that this new Rule 2 is part of old Rule 12, and I'm wondering if you are not going to delete old Rule 12 -- you're not? You're going to repeat --

MRS. McCARTHY: Rule 12 you will find will be included in many other sections. What we're doing, we are not actually changing anything from 12 through 16 other than that one sentence, which is called to your attention. We're just rearranging.

MRS. KISER: Okay. But --

MRS. McCARTHY: But you don't delete it.

MRS. KISER: You don't delete it then.

MRS. McCARTHY: We are rearranging.

MRS. KISER: Well, then, there's a lot of rearranging that has been done; 12 has been incorporated, like you say. And if there are other numbers -- I just wanted to make sure that they realize that, because in Number 15 then, it could be deleted because you're using three minutes instead of five.

MRS. McCARTHY: Yes.

MRS. KISER: And it has also been put in something else.

MRS. McCARTHY: You'll find that that is considered an

amendment, and it's so noted as such.

MRS. KISER: Right. But then shouldn't you delete Rule 15 where it says, "One seconding speech for each candidate shall be limited to five minutes"?

MRS. McCARTHY: I think that was in your rationale.

MRS. KISER: Well, I remember when I was on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, we deleted and inserted and, you know, made new rules and renumbering, and so I just thought that if you're doing it, you should make it consistent. Thank you.

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: There's several recommendations on the way to do this. One is strike out and reinsert. They chose to reposition because this was, like, in the Convention Rules. And I think it's self-explanatory as you go down. But your preference is to strike out and insert, isn't it?

MRS. KISER: I just thought it made it clearer to everybody what was being done at this time. I mean, I don't care how you do it if they understand that that's no longer going to be in there when you reprint it. I mean, you won't put Number 15 in there again, will you?

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: No.

MRS. KISER: Okay. Well, I just wanted to make it clear to me that that was the way it's going to be done.

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: Okay. Yes. The renumbering will take care of that when she goes down through.

MRS. McCARTHY: I also think, since these are Convention Rules, too, that these are not a part of the actual Bylaws.

COMMANDER DUNN: Is there any other discussion on this? All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. That motion is carried.

MRS. McCARTHY: Page N-5, Article I, National Convention, Section 5, Official Rules of the National Convention. The following Convention Rules, Rule 13 through 16 would read as follows:

> Rule 13. Nominations of national officers shall be made by the Committee on Nominations of National Officers and from the floor of the convention. Should a seconding speech be given for a candidate, it shall not exceed three minutes.
>
> Rule 14. The election of national officers shall be by viva voce when there is no contest. In the event a roll call is required, it shall be in alphabetical order by state, followed by units in numerical order within the state.
>
> Rule 15. In the event two or more candidates are nominated for any one office, roll call(s) shall continue until completed. The candidate receiving a majority of the roll call votes shall be elected.
>
> Rule 16. In the event of a roll call vote, the tellers appointed by the national commander will report the result of the vote to the national commander. She will then announce the result of the roll call vote to the convention.

Madam Commander, I move that the rearrangement of the Convention Rules 13 through 16 be adopted.

COMMANDER DUNN: Is there a second to that motion?

MRS. HALL: Madam Commander, Betty Hall, PNC. I second the motion.

COMMANDER DUNN: There has been a motion made and a second. Is there any discussion?

MRS. BEATRICE VIERA: Madam Commander, Beatrice Viera from the State of California 77. The only thing I'd like to say, to be fair to everybody -- heck, we're at the top of the list of alphabetical order -- why not one year start from A to Z and the next year go from Z to A? Because it would give some of our other states at the end of the alphabet a chance to vote, because sometimes they don't even get a chance because the majority's already voted, and the opposing candidate can't -- you know, they haven't had a chance to vote.

If the majority of the votes from A, B, C down -- say we get to the letter N, and there's no way that the other candidate can get any votes because she already has the majority votes. It would give the people at the end of the alphabet a chance for them to vote and not be excluded like a lot of times they have been.

COMMANDER DUNN: Well, we need to complete the roll call vote, where it is complete from A to Z.

MRS. VIERA: Even if you know that one has a majority, you can still go down?

COMMANDER DUNN: You still have to complete.

MRS. VIERA: Thank you.

COMMANDER DUNN: Is there any other discussion on this? Call for the question here. All those in favor; opposed. Motion carried.

MRS. McCARTHY: Page N-17, Article V, National Committees, Section 1, National Executive Committee. Add a new Paragraph 3 which will read:

> A National Executive Committeewoman and Alternate National Executive Committeewoman shall serve her two (2) year term to which she has been elected or until her removal, death, resignation, or inability to discharge the duties of her office.

Madam Commander, I move that this amendment be adopted.

COMMANDER DUNN: There's a motion on the floor. Is there a second?

MRS. ADDIE WHITE: Madam Commander, Addie White from District 10 supports the motion.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you. Any discussion on this motion? Hearing none, I'll call for the vote. Those in favor; opposed. The motion has carried.

MRS. McCARTHY: Page S-9, Article VI, State Committees, Section 2, State Finance Committee, Paragraph 1.

> The State Finance Committee shall consist of at least three (3) and no more than seven (7) members elected from various units in the state. VAVS representatives and associate representatives shall not serve on the committee if their records are subject to review and verification by the Finance Committee. The number of members serving on the committee shall be provided in the State Standing Rules and Supplement to State Bylaws. Not more than one member from the same unit shall be elected to serve on the committee. Vacancies shall be filled with an appointment made by the state commander and approved by the State Executive Committee.

Madam Commander, I move that this amendment be adopted.

COMMANDER DUNN: There's a motion on the floor. Is there a second?

MRS. ELLEN GRIGGS: Ellen Griggs, Unit 6, West Virginia. I second the motion.

COMMANDER DUNN: There's a motion and a second. Is there any discussion on this motion? Hearing none, I'll call for the question. All those in favor, say Aye; opposed. Motion carried.

MRS. McCARTHY: Page U-25, Installation of Officers. Delete last paragraph at the bottom of Page U-25 which reads:

> For installation of national officers, the same form may be used immediately after the election of officers at National Convention.

Madam Commander, I move that this amendment be adopted.

COMMANDER DUNN: There's a motion on the floor. Do I hear a second?

MRS. MINNIE BOGGS: Madam Commander, Minnie Boggs, Unit 128, District 20. I second.

COMMANDER DUNN: There's a motion and a second. Is there any discussion on this motion? Hearing none, I call for the question. All those in favor, say Aye; opposed. The motion has carried.

Thank you, Lucille. Thank you, all the ladies who served on this committee. And let's give them a round of applause. (Applause)

I'd like to recognize someone who's very special who has been serving as a page. She is a junior page, and she has served as Miss Mini-Miss for this past year 1997-1998, Miss Sarah Ann Corsey from Arizona. Would you come forward and be recognized, Miss Mini-Miss? (Applause)

MISS SARAH ANN CORSEY: I love working with the veterans. And that's all I have to say. (Laughter and applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, dear. Thank you very much.

I'll ask the Department of Alabama if they'll stay after this meeting. We want to have a very brief meeting with you, those from Alabama, right here in this room.

And South Carolina commander at 2:00 o'clock at the Headquarters Office. Got that?

I will ask the chaplain to come forward and offer a prayer. Oh, we have announcements.

(Lost and found announcements.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: The other announcement is that because we are going to have our reception at 2:00 o'clock on Thursday for the newly elected officers, that the meeting on Thursday will be held at 8:30 on Thursday, 8:30.

And all pages -- is Dorothy Otts back there? All pages will be in this room at 8:30 for the purpose of introduction, because instead of introducing you at the end of the session, you will be introduced at the beginning of the session. So if you want to be introduced, you'd better be in here. Okay?

That's all I have, Commander.

COMMANDER DUNN: Okay, Gertrude, it's your time. Our national chaplain will offer a prayer.

CHAPLAIN TIDWELL: Again, I would like to recognize the State Department of Missouri. Her husband has taken ill, and she had to leave. We'd like to remember her in our prayer.

Father, as we leave this meeting, go with us and watch over us. We pray for the sick and the bereaved, if it be Your will to heal and relieve their pain. This we pray for. Guide our feet that we may walk in the right direction and our hearts that we'll feel only love, and our voices that we may speak only good and be worthy of Your love.

Bring us back safely tomorrow to meet again. In Your Name we pray. Amen.

(Drawing, following which the meeting recessed at 11:25 o'clock, August 25, 1998.)

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION

August 27, 1998

The Third Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary 76th National Convention convened in Pavilion Rooms 9-10-11 of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, Thursday morning, August 27, 1998, and was called to order at 8:30 o'clock a.m. by Commander Evelynne Dunn.

COMMANDER EVELYNNE DUNN: Good morning, everyone. I see a lot of bright smiling faces. Hopefully, this will be the last session of this convention, and I think everything has gone very, very well, don't you? (Applause) Thank you.

I'd like to ask the national chaplain, Gertrude Tidwell, to come forward to offer a prayer.

CHAPLAIN TIDWELL: Good morning, ladies. I would like for you to remember the States of North Carolina and New Jersey this morning, because they're having problems with a hurricane.

Today, Our Lord, we give thanks to be able to live in a free country, to pray together and speak our minds without fear of retribution. Teach us, O Lord, to be kind, patient, joyful and to put right before interest, others before self, to be blinder to the faults of others, to realize we have those faults, too.

Help us to cheer the weary, to comfort the sick, and Lord, to help those that need us to lean on, because they have broken lives, shattered dreams or bereavements in their homes. Give to us, Lord, the understanding that with You all things are possible. Amen.

COMMANDER DUNN: I'll ask National 3rd Junior Vice-Commander Fossiano, our Americanism chairperson, to come forward for the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, ladies, Please be seated.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, would you care to come to the podium for the purpose of introducing the National Executive Committeewomen and those members who have served as pages.

MRS. OTTS: Good morning. My name is Dorothy Otts. I have

had the pleasure of serving as your national sergeant-at-arms. So to Commander Evelynne, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests: At this time, I will present to you the ladies who helped make my job easier.

From District 1, Miriam Daley; District 2, Dolores Robidoux; District 3, Ann Kelley; District 4, Beatrice Albanese; District 5, Rebecca Anderson; District 6, Mildred Velazquez; District 7 alternate, Sunny Barzelogna; District 8, Elaine Majors; District 9, Betty Bryant; District 10, Gwen McCracken; District 11, Florence McGovern; District 12, Beraldine Errett; District 13, Edith Jackson; District 14, Sharon Kramer; District 15, Bonita Mitchell; District 16, Alma Fowlkes; District 17, Jean Jackson; District 18, Joan Fletcher; District 19, Nora Parker; District 20, June Bradford; District 21, Sara Douglass. (Applause)

Personal page for Commander Dunn, Jan Bennett, Ruthann Tucker; personal page for Senior Vice-Commander Evelyn Dorsey, her granddaughter, Regina Coates; personal page for Paula Raymond, Carol Ellis; personal page for Carol Gray is Gloria Boozer; personal page for Jacki Fossiano, Susie Stulsky; personal page for Renee Jones, Margaret Snelling; personal page for Shelia Allred, Johnnie Coley; personal page for Gertrude Tidwell, Joi Kern. (Applause)

These little people behind me have served graciously. They didn't give me any problems. And now your leaders of tomorrow: Junior pages Sarah Ann Corsey; Joi Kern; Rachel Witt; Ariana Peleman; Caroline Garrett; Tamara Kern; Rebecca Witt. (Applause) And this tiny little one is Anna Hollingsworth. (Applause)

Thank you very much.

NEC BONITA MITCHELL: Madam Commander, may I have permission to talk to the audience? National Commander Evelynne Dunn, National Adjutant Maria Tedrow, national officers and staff and delegates: On behalf of the NECs, we'd like to present a small gift to Dorothy Otts, the national sergeant-at-arms.

Now, Dorothy has had an awful lot of meek NECs, and we have been very nice to her. And you know, yesterday she was giving us a dance, and you know her costume really wasn't appropriate to what she said she was.

So Dorothy, if you'll come forward. First of all, here's a card with all of our names on it.

MRS. OTTS: This is nice. (Laughter)

NEC MITCHELL: And honey, we could not quite do the whole costume, because we had to buy pins. (Laughter and applause)

MRS. OTTS: I think at this moment I'm supposed to say, "Thanks to all the NECs for their generous gift," (laughter) and the pages, and for everyone who had a hand in this gorgeous pair of underwear. (Laughter) However, my new in-law will not permit me to model it. That's how I'm getting out of this. (Laughter and applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Now, ladies, weren't they a great group of special ladies? (Applause) Thank you, Madam Sergeant-at-Arms. Look at her over there. She's looking to see if it's her size. (Laughter) It'll fit you. Maybe your in-laws won't allow you to model it, but I'm sure your husband will appreciate it. (Laughter and applause)

I would like to acknowledge at this time our National Color bearers and the ladies who presented our state flags: Rosie McDuffie, Peggy Baker, Iris Brzezinski -- would you please rise -- Rose Thomas. These are the ladies who presented our Colors at our opening ceremonies. (Applause)

And again, I would like to acknowledge our lovely piano player, our musician. She's done a wonderful, wonderful job at these sessions. Nancy. (Applause) Thank you, Madam Musician.

And here's the moment we've all been waiting for, the Nominating Committee report.

We are going to turn this around. We are going to have the final Credentials report at this time.

MRS. BRZEZINSKI: Good morning. National Commander, National Adjutant, past national commanders, Auxiliary members and guests. The Credentials report is as follows. Total units registered, 323; total departments registered 48; total, 371. Delegates registered,

671; alternates registered, 55; guests, 61; total 787. Total unit votes, 2,057; total department votes, 48; national officers registered, 8; PNCs, 16. Grand total of votes, 2,129.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, Iris, for that report.

I'd like to correct myself. Flo Delozier was one of the Color bearers, and I gave the wrong name. I apologize, Flo. Where are you? Are you there? Thank you. It was Flo Delozier who was carrying the flag.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Madam Commander, Past National Commander Maria Tedrow. I move for the adoption of the Credentials report.

COMMANDER DUNN: Is there a second to it? State your name, please?

(Inaudible comment)

COMMANDER DUNN: She didn't get it. Would you go to the mike and repeat?

MRS. BARBARA McVICKERS (Away from microphone): Barbara McVickers, Unit 2, Kansas City, Missouri.

COMMANDER DUNN: If you have any comments, I would like you to go to the microphone. There's one right here.

Any discussion on this? All those in favor to accept the Credentials report; opposed. Motion carried.

Our Nominating Committee at this time, please come forward.

MRS. JANE TROUTMAN: National Commander Evelynne, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests: The Nominating Committee convened on Monday, August the 24th, 1998 in the Boardroom. The Nominating Committee would like for me to tell the delegates that we had a lot of candidates to interview, and we had a lot of good candidates.

Before I get into the report, I would like to introduce the members of the committee, if they'll please stand.

District 1, Phyllis Greaney; District 2, Dolores Robidoux; District 3, Claudia Roy; District 4, Dorothea Campanelli; District 5, Kathy Watkins; District 6, Mary C. Parrish; District 7, Dolores Roussey; District 8, Dorothy Pearce; District 9, Jane Troutman; District 10, Gloria Boozer; District 11, Ann J. Offutt; District 12, Nelda Wilson; District 13, Edith Jackson; District 14, Kathryn Kern; District 15, Dorothy Van Hoy; District 16, Joan Turbeville; District 17, Florence Valgardson; District 18, Sally Wilton; District 19, Deborah Mazza; District 20, Louise Rapisand; and District 21, Sara Douglass.

And I would like to thank this committee and also to the secretary, Claudia Roy. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee is pleased to submit the following slate of officers for your consideration to be elected as officers 1998-1999: Commander, Evelyn Dorsey; senior vice-commander, Paula K. Raymond; 1st junior vice-commander, Carol A. Gray; 2nd junior vice-commander, R. Renee Jones; 3rd junior vice-commander, Linda A. Trulio; 4th junior vice-commander, Janet Bennett; chaplain, Gertrude E. Tidwell; judge advocate, Shelia C. Allred.

Thank you.

Thank you, Judge Advocate. I failed to introduce our advisor to the Nominating Committee, our Past National Commander Margaret Hass, if she would please stand. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: We are going to go into the election of these officers, and I'd ask that Sandy Smith and Patricia Kemper come forward as tellers.

I wish to thank the members of the Nominating Committee for their efforts and their time. I would like at this time to discharge the Nominating Committee and all other convention committees.

At this time, would all the officers please leave the podium and go back to their respective districts for the purpose of nomination and tellers.

All right. Ladies, we are going to go into the election of these officers. You have heard the report of the Committee on Nominations. Evelyn Dorsey has been nominated by the committee for the office of national commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national commander.

MS. REGINA COATES: Madam Commander, Regina Coates, Federal

Unit 1. May I please approach the podium?

COMMANDER DUNN: Yes, you may.

MS. COATES: Madam Commander, national officers and delegates: I would like to second the nomination for Evelyn Dorsey to be national commander of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary. This is about the third time I've done this, and I have a resume, and I think you know all the things that she's done, and this is, like, moot.

The person that you don't know is the person I'm going to tell you about. She's been everything as far as state, unit, national, whatever you could be. She's qualified. That's all you need to know. (Laughter) And, "If you don't start nothing, you won't be nothing." That's what we say where I come from.

But the person that I know, that I've known for 28 years, is a wonderful woman. She's phenomenal. I think I said before about her being my hero, and there's no one on this earth that could take her place, Hillary Clinton, anybody (laughter), Oprah Winfrey, none of the great women of America. Evelyn Dorsey is my hero.

But there's something else I want to tell you about her. There's a famous African American poet, Maya Angelou -- and I tried to write stuff down and, you see, they're blank. I couldn't do it, write it. But she has a poem, "Still I Rise," and it fits my grandmother's life.

As a child, I always thought she was kind of old-fashioned. She'd iron my grandfather's boxer shorts, put creases in them. (Laughter) And I was like, "Not I!" But as he got sick -- everybody that knows him knew that he became very sick -- and she retired, she took care of him. And this woman that I didn't know, she started to bloom. And I was, like, "Who is this woman?"

When he got sick, I was, like, "Oh, God! She's not going to make it. She's just not going to do it." The grandmother I knew was this very soft, quiet, you know, didn't start no stuff. But as he got sicker, this lady, she just got stronger and stronger.

Then he died, I was, like, "We're not going to do it." We had a little family powwow, as Evelynne was saying. African Americans have powwows, too. And my aunt and my uncle and my father got together, and I moved in with her. I don't think she thought it was a planned thing, but it was, because we were that worried about her.

Then I started coming to these things, and I saw this other woman that I didn't know about, this lady who was dedicated. I know that whatever she gets into she's dedicated to, and she really loves this Auxiliary, even though it takes her away from us, and her children say that they're going to go back into the fetal position this year because they're not going to have their mother. (Laughter) But us strong grandchildren will take care of them while she's gone. (Laughter)

And then this year we got a blow. My grandmother loves her family. She really loves this family. And I was, like, you know, nothing else can happen. You know, granddaddy's gone; we've had additions, so they've kind of taken his place. My aunt got diagnosed with lung cancer this year, somebody that we really love. She's like my sister. We're only, like, 11 or 12 years apart. And she's my best friend. And she's also my grandmother's best friend.

And I was, like, "Lord, we're not going to make it through this one." She was saying she wasn't going to be able to go on to be commander and, you know, she wasn't going to be able to finish the year out. And we told her, you know, "We're going to do it. I'm here. I can take care of Fran, if needed." But God has blessed us, and we haven't had any hospital visits, you know, anything that was very devastating.

And she has risen to the occasion. And here we are today. My Aunt Fran is here, and my dad is on the way here.

And I don't know what else I can say, but you have the best lady for the job. Nothing against Evelynne (laughter) -- she did a great job -- or anybody else here, but in my opinion, you have the best. And she's from the East Coast, and her name is Evelyn Dorsey. She's my grandmother, and I love her. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Now, here's a lady who has risen to the challenge this year. All those in favor of Evelyn Dorsey for the

office of national commander, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it, and Evelyn Dorsey has been elected to the office of national commander. (Applause)

Paula Raymond 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 for the office of national senior vice-commander closed.

MRS. NELLIE M. SMITHEE: Madam Commander, Nellie Smithee from Alton Number 3, the State of Illinois. May I approach your podium, please?

COMMANDER DUNN: Yes, you may. Please come forward.

MRS. SMITHEE: Good morning. National Commander Evelynne, National Adjutant Maria Tedrow, national officers, past national commanders, delegates, alternates, distinguished guests and friends: On behalf of the delegates and members of the State of Illinois, it is indeed with much pleasure and pride that I give the seconding speech for Paula K. Raymond for the office of national senior vice-commander.

I feel her qualifications and her dedication make her an excellent candidate for the office and our great organization. Throughout the years, we have informed you of her qualifications, her eligibility, her family history and etcetera, as well as her unit and state level. She still remains very active in all.

From the national standpoint, I think some of you probably know her better than I do. I almost have to make an appointment to get my two cents in.

She still holds down a full-time job as office manager at VNA Home Care, and is the manager of their private duty program in all four of their Southern Illinois officers. Her family status remains the same. There are no additions and no corrections.

She seems to possess the ability to be in the right place at the right time and truly enjoys her visits to all the states that she has visited. She has always taken her national office seriously and will continue to fulfill all obligations with dignity and dedication.

As you all know, I am her mother. (Laughter) And if we ever get her through this, I will still be her best friend. And, oh, yes, I'm a good listener, too.

She also has the full support of her family, her friends and her coworkers.

It is my honor and privilege to second the nomination of Paula K. Raymond for the office of national senior vice-commander. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much. That was a lovely speech.

And now for the election. All those in favor of Paula Raymond for the office of national senior vice-commander, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it, and Paula Raymond has been elected to the office of national senior vice-commander.

Carol Gray has been nominated by the committee for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander.

MRS. BERNICE V. SEBRING: Madam Chairman, Bernice Sebring, Unit 11, Michigan. May I approach the podium?

COMMANDER DUNN: Yes, you may.

MRS. SEBRING: Good morning, ladies. Madam Chairman, National Adjutant Maria, past national commanders, delegates and guests: It is indeed a privilege for me to second the nomination for Carol Gray. We've been friends for a long time. She's a member of my unit, and I can definitely say that she is a hard worker.

Carol is a life member of Unit 11, and her eligibility, of course, is through her grandfather, Andrew Biddle. She began her association with the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary as a junior member back in 1941. During her years of commitment to this Auxiliary, she has held all of the unit offices, all state offices, with the exception of judge advocate. She has served as deputy rep for two years.

On the national level, she has been your History chairman for two years. She's been the national chaplain for two years. And,

of course, she's been the 2nd junior vice for the past year and Legislative chairman.

She's been married since 1960. She has three grown children, two sons and a daughter, five grandsons. She has two granddaughters, and they're junior members. And if the fates are kind, her daughter, Jill, who is a life member, come November she may present us with another junior member. Carol and her husband Ken have a franchise for a Seven-Eleven store, and they operate this in Comstock, Michigan.

She's been an active member and proud to be associated with this great organization. Her enthusiasm and her dedication is reflected in everything she does.

And it is a great privilege and, as I said, an honor for me to second the nomination for Carol Gray for the office of 1st junior vice. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much for those very warm remarks in honor of your candidate.

All those in favor of Carol Gray for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it, and Carol Gray has been elected to the office of national 1st junior vice-commander. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Renee Jones has been nominated by the committee for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander.

MRS. MARGARET M. SNELLING: Madam Commander, Margaret Snelling, North Carolina Unit 1. May I approach the podium?

COMMANDER DUNN: Yes, you may.

MRS. SNELLING: Good morning. You know how you watch these beautiful ladies up here, and you always say, "I wish I could go up there with all those ladies"? Well, I'm here, but I don't think my legs are going to hold me, because I'm very shaky.

Commander Dunn, national officers, past national commanders, delegates, alternates and guests: On behalf of the State Department of North Carolina, I am pleased to stand before you to give the seconding speech for Renee Jones for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander.

Renee is a life member of the National Mae Holmes winning unit, Byers-Moorhead Glover Unit 18 in Shelby, North Carolina. She is eligible for membership through her grandmother, the late Ruby Warlick. Renee has been actively involved since she became a member in 1983. Within a few years of joining the Auxiliary, Renee was elected to serve as unit commander. She has served as treasurer and nine years as unit adjutant.

On the state department level, Renee has served as treasurer, 2nd junior vice, 1st junior vice, senior vice, and state commander. She has served as state adjutant and held numerous committee and chairman positions.

Renee has attended the last nine National Conventions. At each convention, she has served on a national convention committee. These committees include Membership, Junior Activities, Community Service, Mae Holmes, History, Constitution and Bylaws and Legislation. She served as chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws and Legislation Convention Committees and as advisor to the History Committee. At this convention, she served as advisor to the Community Service Committee.

She served as national banner bearer, a personal page, a National History chairman, and currently Renee is serving as national 4th junior vice-commander and National Community Service chairman.

She has attended the last nine National Fall Conferences, taken an active part in the Auxiliary by learning and sharing that knowledge with the members of the organization.

In addition to her work with the DAV, Renee finds time to serve on the Cleveland County Youth Assistance Program, a program like the Big Brothers and Big Sisters. Currently she is involved with the Clover Chamber of Commerce School-to-Work Committee. This committee assists youth with guidance on selecting a career path.

Renee is employed as the office manager of Performance

Friction Corporation. This is an automotive brakes supplier that's located in South Carolina.

She earned her bachelor's degree in business administration from Gardner-Webb University, and is a member of Loray Baptist Church.

My husband and I have adopted Renee, and she is a very young person. And like your ex-senior vice, Evelyn Dorsey, says, "We need young people now."

North Carolina is proud to have Renee as a member of the Tarheel state. We are pleased that she has made the decision to serve the Auxiliary. We hope, along with us, that you will see our neat treat, Renee Jones, as your national 2nd junior vice-commander. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you very much. And now, all those in favor of Renee Jones for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it, and Renee Jones has been elected to the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander. (Applause)

Linda Trulio has been nominated by the committee for the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander.

MRS. DOROTHEA CAMPANELLI: Dorothea Campanelli, state commander, Department of New Jersey. Madam Commander, may I approach the Chair?

COMMANDER DUNN: You surely may.

MRS. CAMPANELLI: Commander Dunn, National Adjutant Maria Tedrow, national officers, delegates and members: Linda Trulio is a charter member of North Hudson Unit 9 in Weehawken, New Jersey for over 20 years and as an active member of the Auxiliary for more than ten years. She is eligible for the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary through her dad, a Navy veteran of World War II and life member of the DAV for over 50 years, and her own G.I. Joe, her husband who served during the Vietnam Conflict.

She has gone through the chairs in her unit, serving as commander for two years. She is presently the unit chaplain and Legislative chairman.

On the state level, she has also gone through all the chairs and served many chairmanships and appointed officers. She is the immediate past state commander of New Jersey and present state adjutant.

On the national level, she has attended all Fall Conferences and National Conventions since becoming active. She was appointed chairman for the Americanism and Hospital Committees at convention for National. She was also honored with the appointment of National Junior Activities chair in 1997, and is presently the National Junior Activities chair.

In her community, she is a regular volunteer at the Paramus Nursing Home and entertains on a regular basis in the nursing homes and VA hospitals and medical centers. She is a member of Our Lady of Queen Peace Church, and is presently serving a three-year term on the Maywood Board of Health, appointed by the mayor and council.

She was one of the first women in her town asked to join Rotary International and is the recipient of the Bronze Medallion for her dedication and service to children in the Gift of Life Program.

She is the recipient of many awards and citations, one of which she treasures the most, her citation from the State of New Jersey Disabled American Veterans for saving the lives of two veterans in our state.

She is a life member of the Maywood First Aid and Emergency Squad, member of Girls Scouts for over 30 years and past leader, and past PTA president. She is an officer in the Women's Club and past CPR and first aid instructor of the Red Cross. She is presently a registered pediatric nurse who works part time in caring for critically ill children.

She is the mother of three grown daughters, all life members, two grandsons and a junior granddaughter.

On behalf of the State of New Jersey, I am pleased and honored to second the nomination of Linda A. Trulio. Thank you. Thank

you, Madam Commander. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: At this time, all those in favor of Linda Trulio for the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it, and Linda Trulio has been elected to the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander. (Applause)

Jan Bennett has been nominated by the committee for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander.

MRS. PARCELLE: Madam Commander, Helen Parcelle, past department commander of Nevada. May I approach the podium?

COMMANDER DUNN: Yes, you may.

MRS. PARCELLE: National Commander Evelynne, National Adjutant Maria Tedrow, national officers, past national commanders, members and guests of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary: I am proud to second the nomination of Janet Bennett for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander for the year 1998-99.

Janet is a life member of the Carson City Unit 7 in Carson City, Nevada. Janet's eligibility in our organization is through her husband, James, a retired Air Force officer and a retired National Service Officer. Janet and James have four children, all life members of the DAV and the DAVA, and a granddaughter who is a junior member of the DAVA.

Janet was a therapist for a 64-bed unit for substance abuse. She retired in March 1996. She still holds a current state license in Nevada. Janet regularly attended education classes at UNR and UNOV during her year, the Northern Area Substance Abuse Council in Reno, Nevada,

Janet has held all offices on the unit level, and is currently serving as the state Executive Committeewoman for her unit.

On the state level, Jan has held all elected offices and appointed offices. She was state commander in 1988 and '89.

On the national level, Jan served as National Convention chairman in 1986 in Reno, Nevada. She served as National Convention Committeewoman for the 18th District 1994-96. Janet was elected to the National Finance Committee for 1994 and 1996 and served as chairwoman during her second year on the committee. Janet served on the following National Convention committees: Nominating, VAVS, History, Americanism, Community Service, Hospital, and the Mae Holmes Award.

Janet will represent this organization with dignity and respect.

As a past state commander, and on behalf of the delegation and members of the Silver State of Nevada, and on the 18th District, I am proud to second the nomination of Janet Bennett for the office of national 4th junior vice for 1998-99. Thank you.
(Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, Helen.

All those in favor of Janet Bennett for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it, and Janet Bennett has been elected to the office of national 4th junior vice-commander. (Applause)

Gertrude Tidwell has been nominated by the committee for the office of national chaplain. Are there any other nominations?

MRS. SUE HOLLINGSWORTH: Madam Commander, Sue Hollingsworth, Unit 60, Oklahoma. May I approach the podium, please?

COMMANDER DUNN: You surely may.

At this time, hearing no other nominations, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national chaplain.

MRS. HOLLINGSWORTH: Commander Evelynne, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests: I'm honored and proud to second the nomination of Gertrude Tidwell as Auxiliary national chaplain.

Gertrude is eligible for membership through her late husband, Claude, a Korean War veteran, and her brother, a Vietnam veteran. She is the mother of Sue and Yolanda, both life members of the Auxiliary, and three granddaughters, all junior members, of whom she's very proud.

Gertrude is a life member of Unit 60, Atoka, Oklahoma, and

currently serves as unit commander. She has served her unit in all line offices. And on the state level, she has served all line offices, including two terms as commander, and has also served as judge advocate.

Gertrude has served an alternate 21st District NEC and two separate teams as NEC of the 21st District. She currently serves as National Auxiliary chaplain elected last year in Las Vegas.

She is active in her community, promoting awareness of veterans issues, volunteers as a driver in the DAV Van Program and volunteers at the Talihina Veterans Center, where she participates in the Adopt a Veteran Program. She is a member of her Chapter Unit Honor Guard, playing taps at military funerals.

She assists with fund-raisers for her local volunteer firemen and for her local cemeteries. She is also involved in hospice care and in the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Program. She is a member of other service organizations, including the National Order of Alleycats, VFW Auxiliary and the National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution.

Many of you may already know these things about Gertrude, but let me tell you some things you don't know. She manages her farm and ranch alone. She can ride a three-wheeler, she can ride a horse, she can tie down a calf, and she can fix a well pump. (Laughter) She creates beautiful quilts. She loves to read and camp and hunt and fish.

She believes her greatest achievements are those that benefit others. She's short, she's sweet, and she's my Mama. (Laughter) And I'm proud and privileged to second the nomination of Gertrude Tidwell for National Auxiliary chaplain. (Applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: That was very, very sweet.

All those in favor of Gertrude Tidwell for the office of national chaplain, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it, and Gertrude Tidwell has been elected to the office of national chaplain. (Applause)

Shelia Allred has been nominated by the committee for the office of national judge advocate. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national judge advocate.

MRS. TROUTMAN: Madam Commander, Jane Troutman, past national commander. May I approach the podium?

COMMANDER DUNN: You surely may.

MRS. TROUTMAN: National Commander Dunn, national officers, past national commanders, delegates, alternates and guests: The Revised Convention Rules state that should a seconding speech -- and I underline "should" -- be given for a candidate, it shall not exceed three minutes. Why do we have seconding speeches when a nomination does not need a second?

Keeping this in mind, I'm going to give you some brief qualifications for our candidate for national judge advocate, Shelia C. Allred. Shelia has made me promise to be short and sweet. She has held every office on the unit level and state level, some of them several times.

Except for adjutant and chaplain, she has held all offices on the national level. She was your national commander in 1989-1990, and has served on the national level for 15 years, six of those being national judge advocate.

She has guided some of you through some rough times with knowledge, concern, caring and friendship.

Once again, we seek your support for Shelia as your judge advocate. Now, she has told me to practice the three B's: Be sweet, be short and be seated. Thank you. (Laughter and applause)

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, Jane. You were sweet, you were short, and here you are, you're going to be seated. Thank you very much.

All those in favor of Shelia Allred for the office of national judge advocate, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it, and Shelia Allred has been elected to the office of national judge advocate. (Applause)

At this time -- I was remiss in not asking the newly elected candidate to rise, and so at this time, will all those who were just elected rise and be recognized. (Applause)

I ask the tellers -- thank you very much. You were there if we needed you, and thankfully we didn't. So you are excused at this time.

The election having been completed, will all the officers return to their former stations on the podium?

The national judge advocate will now call the roll of the newly elected National Executive Committeewomen and alternates. As your name is called, please come forward for the purpose of installation.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: And before I call your name, remember that at National we will only call those that were newly elected this year because you are elected for a two-year term. Also, I'm asking that any chairmen that may have been approached by our newly elected commander, Evelyn Dorsey, remain in this room. We will go into an immediate National Executive Committee Meeting, and if you want to know who your new chairmen will be, it would be helpful if you stayed.

All right. The newly elected National Executive Committeewoman from District 2, Jeanne Le Porte, would you please come down; and Lucita Christian, her alternate. From District 4, Florence Kehne and Jennie Bizon; from District 6, Hazel Meyers and Neva Langston; from District 8, Carolyn Johnson and Joe Ellen Henry. Joe Ellen Henry, I believe, is not present and will have to be installed at the Fall Conference.

From District 10, Betty Benzing and Gloria Boozer; from District 12, Elaine Morris and Diane Meyer; from District 14, Elaine Fagerstrom and Sandy Dobmeier; from District 16, Dolores Wingett and Joan Christensen; from District 18, the gal that gave us such a great convention, Helen Parcelle and Marilyn Reddington; and from District 20, Joyce Humes and Earlene Cole. (Applause)

Elaine Morris is not here, and she will have to be installed at the Fall Conference.

Madam Commander, there are the newly elected NECs and alternates.

COMMANDER DUNN: Thank you, Maria.

You are requested to remain silent during the ceremony of installation.

As newly elected National Executive Committeewomen and alternates, are you willing to assume the oath of your office?

(Response of, "Yes.")

COMMANDER DUNN: Members, please stand. Ladies, place your right hand over your heart, pronounce your name, and repeat after me the oath of your office, I, Evelynne Dunn, having been selected as a National Executive Committeewoman or alternate of this Auxiliary, do most solemnly pledge myself to faithfully and impartially perform in letter and spirit all duties of the office I am about to enter. I promise to obey the lawful orders of my superior officers and exact the obedience of others thereto to the best of my ability and means.

When my successor has been duly selected and installed, I promise to surrender to her all the property of the organization in my possession, all of which I now affirm.

Ladies, you may lower your hands. Please be seated.

Delegates, members and guests, I now present to you the National Executive Committeewoman and alternates of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary. (Applause) I trust you will aid them in the performance of their duties and, with your help, their term of office will be highly successful.

Ladies, please turn around, about face. (Applause) Would the newly installed National Executive Committeewomen and alternates please return to their seats. Thank you, ladies.

Ladies, is there any other business to come before this convention? I would like to say a word before we close this convention. This has been a wonderful moment for me, and I appreciate each and every one of you. Thank you so much for your support over this past year. And I hope you will give that continued support to our new commander.

At this time, I will ask the national chaplain to give the closing prayer, at which time the convention will be adjourned, and we will go immediately into the National Executive Committee

Meeting and the installation of newly elected national officers.

CHAPLAIN TIDWELL: Shall we pray. O Lord, we pray as we leave this gathering of friends that we leave with renewed spirit, with restored loving kindness and forgiveness for our transgressions. May we have understanding and grace in Your Presence. Guide our footsteps and guard our thoughts. Watch over us on our journey home and keep us safe until we meet once again as a warm Auxiliary family. Amen.

COMMANDER DUNN: At this time, I now declare the 76th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary be adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 o'clock a.m., August 27, 1998.)