

P R O C E E D I N G S
of the
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
2002 NATIONAL CONVENTION

August 9-14, 2002
Dallas, Texas

PROCEEDINGS—2002 NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

**2002 NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS
OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**

COMMUNICATION

FROM

**THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY,
THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**

TRANSMITTING

THE 2002 NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS OF THE DIS-
ABLED AMERICAN VETERANS, PURSUANT TO 36 U.S.C. 90i AND
44 U.S.C. 1332



JANUARY 7, 2003.—Referred to the Committee on Vet-
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NATIONAL ENCAMPMENTS OF VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS;
PROCEEDINGS PRINTED ANNUALLY FOR CONGRESS

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

[Approved October 2, 1968.]

LETTER OF SUBMITTAL

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS,
October 31, 2002

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: As business manager of Disabled American Veterans, and as secretary of its National Convention, I hereby certify as to the authenticity of the reports and the proceedings of our National Convention, held in Dallas, Texas, August 9–August 14, 2002, 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, 2001, 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 2002-2003
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

National Commander

Edward R. Heath, Sr., P.O. Box 115, Mechanic Falls, ME 04256

Senior Vice Commander

Alan W. Bowers, 21 Bolton Road, Royalston, MA 01368

First Junior Vice Commander

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

Second Junior Vice Commander

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

Third Junior Vice Commander

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

Fourth Junior Vice Commander

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

National Judge Advocate

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

National Chaplain

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

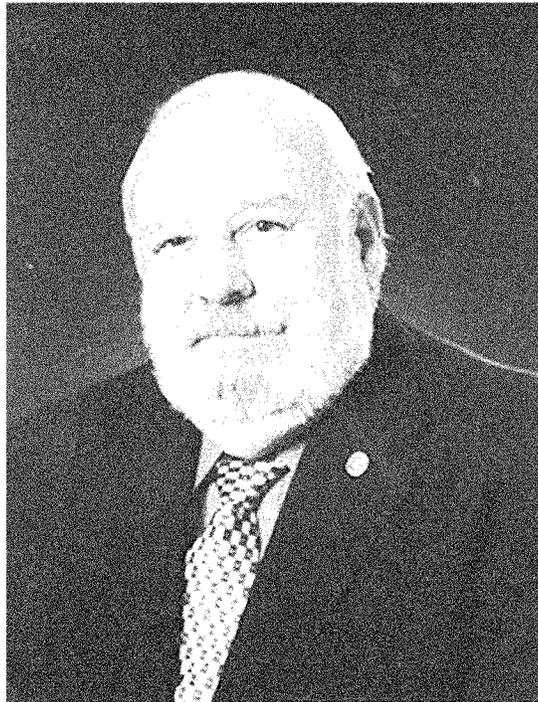
Past National Commander

George H. Steese, Jr., 4186 W. Terrace Avenue, Fresno, CA 93722

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NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

First district: Frank J. Drogo, 70 Marjorie Road, Braintree, MA 02184
Second district: Thomas F. Mazza, 94 Reinhardt Road, Middletown, NY 10940
Third district: Richard DeCoteau, P.O. Box 103, Bethel, VT 05032
Fourth district: Elwood A.D. Lechasseur, 128 Haystack Road, Manchester, CT 06040
Fifth district: James L. Brown, 919 Hilltop Road, Warminster, PA 18974
Sixth district: Jacob N. Stafford, P.O. Box 274, Oceana, WV 24870
Seventh district: Robert A. Melcher, 8280 61st Street, Pinellas Park, FL 33781
Eighth district: Wilbur L. Trahan, 1813 32nd Avenue, Gulfport, MS 39501
Ninth District: James O. Stewart, 1829 White Pines Drive, Hartsville, SC 29550
Tenth district: Richard A. Straub, 15435 Snauble, Cedar Springs, MI 49319
Eleventh district: William L. Moseley, P.O. Box 416, Greenville, OH 45331
Twelfth district: Richard L. Fear, 2035 Kentucky Street, Racine, WI 53405
Thirteenth district: Lee S. Ewing, 3505 Middle Road, Jeffersonville, IN 47130
Fourteenth district: Jerome Krejci, 5 Wylie Court N.W., East Grand Forks, MN 56721
Fifteenth district: Thomas D. Morrissey, 4510 South 49th Street, Lincoln, NE 68516
Sixteenth district: Astro Tortolano, 2358 Benton Street, Santa Clara, CA 95050
Seventeenth district: William B. Taylor, 21663 County Rd. P, Cortez, CO 81321
Eighteenth district: Joseph J. McDowell, 6713 W. Earll Drive, Phoenix, AZ 85033
Nineteenth district: Laurence J. Koger, 1873 Falcon Circle East, Pocatello, ID 83201
Twentieth district: Dennis R. Nixon, 401 Jo Drive, Robinson, TX 76706
Twenty-first district: Robert Cohoon, 6104 N. Allison Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73112



Edward R. Heath, Sr.
National Commander
2002-2003
Disabled American Veterans



George H. Steese, Jr.
National Commander
2001-2002
Disabled American Veterans

XII

NATIONAL OFFICERS 2001-2002
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

National Commander

George H. Steese, Jr., 4186 W. Terrace Avenue, Fresno, CA 93277

Senior Junior Vice Commander

Edward R. Heath, Sr., P.O. Box 115, Mechanic Falls, ME 04256

First Junior Vice Commander

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

Second Junior Vice Commander

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

Third Junior Vice Commander

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

Fourth Junior Vice Commander

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

National Judge Advocate

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

National Chaplain

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

Past National Commander

Armando C. Albarran, 10114 Ironside Drive, San Antonio, TX 78230

XIII

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

First district: Frank J. Drogo, 70 Marjorie Road, Braintree, MA 02184
Second district: Carmen A. Vitale, 828 West Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14213
Third district: Richard DeCoteau, P.O. Box 103, Bethel, VT 05032
Fourth district: Salvatore LoSauro, 128 Francisco Avenue, Rutherford, NJ 07070
Fifth district: James L. Brown, 919 Hilltop Road, Warminster, PA 18974
Sixth district: David L. Tannenbaum, 14830 Wood Home Road, Centreville, VA 20120
Seventh district: Robert A. Melcher, 8280 61st Street, Pinellas Park, FL 33781
Eighth district: Edward G. Roberson, P.O. Box 638, Pikeville, TN 37367
Ninth District: James O. Stewart, 1829 White Pines Drive, Hartsville, SC 29550
Tenth district: Joseph M. Connelly, 32148 Camborne Lane, Livonia, MI 48154
Eleventh district: William L. Moseley, P.O. Box 416, Greenville, OH 45331
Twelfth district: Raymond E. Dempsey, 933 E. Forest Avenue, Des Plaines, IL 60018
Thirteenth district: Lee S. Ewing, 3505 Middle Road, Jeffersonville, IN 47130
Fourteenth district: Henry H. Sadler, Route 1, Box 432, Madison Lake, MN 56063
Fifteenth district: Thomas D. Morrissey, 4510 South 49th Street, Lincoln, NE 68516
Sixteenth district: Larry A. Polzin, 13336 Aldergrove Street, Sylmar, CA 91342
Seventeenth district: William B. Taylor, 21663 County Road P, Cortez, CO 81321
Eighteenth district: Bob C. Freitas, 547 Kauhane Street, Honolulu, HI 96813
Nineteenth district: Laurence J. Koger, 1873 Falcon Circle East, Pocatello, ID 83204
Twentieth district: Mike Baker, Route 1, Box 129, Bonham, TX 75418
Twenty-first district: Robert Cohoon, 6104 N. Allison Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73112

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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. Moonney, 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 (deceased 1999)
1969-70: Raymond P. Neal, Daly City, California
1970-71: Cecil W. Stevenson, Jonesboro, Arkansas
1971-72: Edward T. Conroy, Bowie, Maryland (deceased 1982)
1972-73: Jack O. Hicks, Larue, Ohio
1973-74: John T. Soave, Detroit, Michigan (deceased 1984)
1974-75: Walter T. Greaney, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts (deceased 1994)
1975-76: Lyle C. Pearson, North Mankato, Minnesota
1976-77: Frank J. Randazzo, East Meadow, New York
1977-78: Oliver E. Meadows, Godley, Texas
1978-79: Billy O. Hightower, Grand Junction, Colorado
1979-80: Paul L. Thompson, Baltimore, Maryland (deceased 1993)
1980-81: Stan Pealer, Holts Summit, Missouri
1981-82: Sherman E. Roodzant, Santa Ana, California

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1982-83: Edward G. Galian, New York, New York (deceased 2002)
1983-84: Dennis A. Joyner, Apollo, Pennsylvania
1984-85: Chad Colley, Barling, Arkansas
1985-86: Albert H. Linden, Jr., Camp Springs, Maryland
1986-87: Kenneth G. Musselmann, Huntington Beach, California
1987-88: Gene A. Murphy, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
1988-89: Billy E. Kirby, Clifton, Texas
1989-90: Vernon V. Cardosi, Saugus, Massachusetts
1990-91: Joseph E. Andry, Westerville, Ohio
1991-92: Cleveland Jordan, Washington, D.C.
1992-93: Joseph C. Zengerle, Washington, D.C.
1993-94: Richard E. Marbes, Green Bay, Wisconsin
1994-95: Donald A. Sioss, Miller Place, New York
1995-96: Thomas A. McMasters, III, Sterling Hts., Michigan
1996-97: Gregory C. Reed, Indianapolis, Indiana
1997-98: Harry R. McDonald, Jr., Crestview, Florida
1998-99: Andrew A. Kistler, Franklin, Pennsylvania
1999-00: Michael E. Dobmeier, Grand Forks, North Dakota
2000-01: Armando C. Albarran, San Antonio, Texas
2001-02: George H. Steese, Jr., Fresno, California

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 81ST NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS HELD AT DALLAS, TEXAS

August 9-14, 2002

JOINT OPENING SESSION

August 10, 2002

The Joint Opening Session of the Disabled American Veterans and Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Lone Star Ballroom of the Adam's Mark Hotel and Resort, Dallas, Texas, Saturday afternoon, August 10, 2002, and was called to order at 1:00 o'clock p.m. by Commander George H. Steese, Jr.

COMMANDER GEORGE H. STEESE, JR.: I now call the 81st National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans to order. Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant, will read the call to the 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 the annual National Convention, composed of National Officers and representatives of the state departments and chapters.

In accordance with these directives, I, Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant of the Disabled American Veterans, declare the 81st National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans to be convened at Dallas, Texas, 1:00 p.m., Saturday, August 10, 2002.

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

COMMANDER STEESE: When in Texas, do as the Texans. (Laughter and Applause) Please rise. Present colors.

(Presentation of Colors)

COMMANDER STEESE: Ladies and gentlemen, our National Anthem.

(Singing of National Anthem)

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

(Pledge of Allegiance)

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

CHAPLAIN GERALD V. STUMP: Our Heavenly Father, being the gentle man that You are, You would never provoke Yourself on anyone.

But by invitation, we invite You to be a part of these proceedings. We invite Your presence into this room. We want to thank You for Your hand of blessings upon our organization, upon its leadership.

We want to thank You for Your hand of blessing upon our country -- God Bless America. We want to thank You for our President, for our Congress, for those precious men and women in harm's way.

Bless them. Lord, we do not trust in ourselves. We trust in You. We lean upon You for Your understanding, for Your hand of guidance and blessing.

So bless us now as we go through these proceedings. May everything that is said and done, may it honor You, may it honor our country. May it honor this great organization, and may the things that we do bless veterans everywhere. For God's glory we pray, Amen.

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

You may be seated. Ladies and gentlemen, look around you and you will see a successful convention underway. 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.

To successfully plan and operate 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 Eldon Armstrong. During his growing-up years, Eldon worked setting pins in the bowling alley at the Naval Air Station Dallas and knew early on that when he grew up, he wanted to be a sailor.

In April 1949, during his junior year at Grand Prairie High School, he joined the Grand Prairie Naval Reserves and went through basic training that summer, and after graduation in 1950 went on active duty.

Eldon served as an air traffic controller until 1964 when as Chief Petty Officer, he was selected to receive a commission as an ensign and was promptly sent to Saigon where he filled a Supply Officer's billet.

One year later, he was ordered back into the air traffic control field where he completed the remainder of his service. After serving 27 years on active duty, Eldon retired from the Navy in 1976 as a Lieutenant Commander and moved back to Grand Prairie where he now resides.

Eldon has been Commander of DAV Chapter 42 since 1997; passed through the chairs at the district level and is presently serving his second two-year term as District 2 Finance Officer.

Eldon's passion is flying, and he holds a single/multi-engine aircraft license with an instrument rating. At 65 he elected not to renew his instructor rating, but still manages to get airborne from time to time.

Fellow members and guests, please join me in welcoming your convention chairman, Eldon Armstrong. (Applause)

MR. ELDON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Commander. I am going to take a short, personal moment here. I think most of us identify our heroes in our young years. Less than a month after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, I celebrated my tenth birthday.

My heroes are the men and women who served in the Second World War, the wives and mothers who were left behind, and your ranks are diminishing much too quickly. Still, you are my heroes, and I salute you. (Applause)

Did all you all notice the size of the gavel the commander had? I believe he means business. (Laughter) On behalf of the more than 76,000 DAV members and the 112 Chapters of the Department of Texas, I welcome you to our great state for this 81st National Convention.

It's been 14 years since the state of Texas has hosted the convention, and a brief Texican lesson may be helpful to prevent some cultural shock.

Friendliness is the order of the day. "Howdy" or "Howdy, ma'am" is an appropriate greeting. If you happen to drive the country roads and you see an approaching pickup truck, the driver will probably raise his forefinger.

That's his way of saying "how do". It would be impolite for you not to raise your forefinger to say "howdy" back to him. Texas is one of only two states that was a Republic when we joined the Union.

I am not going to mention the other one. By Texas law, when flown on separate flag poles, the Texas flag must be flown at the same height as the U.S. flag. We even have our own pledge to the Texas flag.

As one of the characters that Walter Brennan used to play on TV, "no brag, just fact", I was reminded early on that this was to be a Dallas convention, not a Texas convention. But that's hard for a Texas boy to do.

Ours is such a large state with so many different regions and cultures, oil, cotton, fishing, fruit and vegetable farming of the valley, ranching just about everywhere, it was hard for me to think of just "Dallas".

Locally, though, for your entertainment and relaxation during your stay here, for the ladies there's that little fashion shop, Niemann Marcus just down the street; sports fans have their choice of almost any sport you would like to attend, while the museum and art folks can spend days here and not see it all.

Whatever your desires, just ask one of the fellows at the information booth out in the lobby, and they will direct you as best they can -- some of them may not be from Texas. (Laughter)

You should learn to understand and correctly use some Texican talk during your stay.

To get you started, I will tell you that "y'all" is singular; "all of y'all" is plural. (Laughter and Applause) I hope all of "y'all" enjoy your convention.

I would like to thank those who assisted me, but most of all, our thanks should go out to our National Membership Chairman, Mr. Mike Walsh, who really deserves your thanks.

One last item. As some of you may know, when Texas was in its infancy, whatever that means, the government needed a force to maintain law and order. The Texas Rangers were organized and continue to this day to be an arm of the law in these parts to be reckoned with.

Just after the end of the Civil War and the end of Martial Law, the Texas Rangers came back into being, and there was a riot in one of the Texas towns and these people needed some help.

So they said, "We need help", and the state responded. When the train pulled into town, a Texas ranger stepped off and the town folk said, "They only sent one ranger?", and he says, "You only got one riot, don't you?" (Laughter) That's where the term "One Riot - One Ranger" started.

Now the eyes of Texas have truly been upon Commander Steese. His leadership ability and ability to handle any situation has been recognized and is about to be rewarded. The Governor of the state of Texas told me that he would like to make Commander Steese an honorary Texas Ranger. (Applause) Wear it with pride, sir.

COMMANDER STEESE: But I need back up on those riots. (Laughter)

MR. ARMSTRONG: If there's more than one riot, we will find another ranger. (Laughter and Applause)

COMMANDER STEESE: Thank you, Eldon, for all of your hard work, and this convention has truly gotten off to a great start because of your work.

Ladies and gentlemen, here to welcome us to the great city of Dallas is Mayor Pro Tem, Donald Hill. (Applause)

MAYOR DONALD HILL: Well, good afternoon. It is, indeed, a great pleasure and honor for me, on behalf of the Mayor of the City of Dallas, Laura Miller, and our Dallas City Council, and the citizens of Dallas, to welcome you, the 81st Convention of Disabled American Veterans and Auxiliary.

We are, indeed, pleased and honored by your presence here. Some have suggested that there are three kinds of people in the world, thinkers, talkers and doers. Some might even say that politicians like myself are more the talking type.

My wife is a teacher so some may even suggest that she is more the thinking type. But we are here today in this convention and we are just here to honor some men and women that are doers, because many years ago we asked you to put yourselves on the line and to protect this country, and you did it.

My father was a World War II veteran, and it wasn't until I started reading some of the books about veterans and World War II veterans in particular, that they never would really say very much at all about this service and what they did.

They were the type of men and women that were, as the Nike expression would say, "They just did it". So we are very honored to have doers like yourself in our city. We hope that in some way what we have tried to build here in Dallas, a great city of economy and business, finance, recreation, art, culture -- we hope we have done something in a small way to be worthy of the sacrifice that many of you and all of you, in fact, have made.

That is one of the central moments in a very popular movie that came out a couple of years ago "Saving Private Ryan". The question to Private Ryan was -- what they were imploring him to do was to do something in his life that was worthy of the sacrifice that was being made.

We hope we, in this city, have done some things in building this city that are worthy, that you will enjoy, that will make your convention, or contribute in some small way to its success.

We love you very much. We thank you for being here, and if there's anything we can do to make your visit much, much more

enjoyable, please, we stand ready to do it. We ask that you would request that of us, and again, thank you very much for gracing our city. God Bless you. (Applause)

COMMANDER STEESE: Thank you, Mayor Hill, for that gracious welcome. Ladies and gentlemen, here to welcome us on behalf of Governor Rick Perry is the Honorable Jay Kimbrough, Deputy Chief of Staff. (Applause)

MR. JAY KIMBROUGH: Thank you, thank you very much. My fellow disabled veterans and distinguished guests and visitors to our state, greetings on behalf of Governor Rick Perry and welcome to Dallas, Texas.

It is our privilege and our honor to have you in Dallas for this very, very special convention. You know, Texas is home to many heroes and many legends, and this is a convention of heroes and legends, disabled American veterans who have given so much for so many, for so little, and we are proud to have you in our midst.

The governor is confident you will have a great convention, and he encourages you to take some time to enjoy the sights and the sounds of the metroplex area while you are here.

Yes, you will discuss some very important policy matters, but it's also time to visit and make new friends and see new sites and see this great state and remember -- remember those who did not return.

Governor Perry and I had many conversations on matters of state policy and government, all the way from public safety to homeland security, to public transportation to public health, and the list goes on.

We cover a wide range of issues and I will tell you that sometimes the pace is very, very fast. Yesterday was one of those days. But I can tell you that there is something special when our conversation turns to military service, and that happens quite often.

There is a reverence, a respect, an admiration of our veterans by the governor that is immediately obvious to anyone who knows him. He understands the service of veterans, and he understands the service of combat veterans in particular.

His father was a 17-year-old tailgunner in a B-17 over Europe in World War II. By the grace of God, he made it home safe. But so many of his fellow airmen did not return, and some returned home with serious physical or emotional scars, disabled from combat.

Governor Perry, himself, is an Air Force veteran, a pilot who flew tactical C-130 aircraft, and he was prepared to sacrifice for America just like his father and just like you.

The governor knows I am here today on his behalf, and that is only because he had previous commitments in other parts of the state. But he also knows this is a bit of a homecoming for me. He knows that I took the oath of enlistment in the United States Marine Corps here in Dallas at 1114 Commerce Avenue downtown just a few miles from here, January 5, 1966.

Like many of you here, it was that oath that led me to combat in Vietnam and it led me here today. Like many of you here, I am a product of the GI Bill in Vocational, Rehabilitation and those benefits provided by the Veterans Administration.

Like many of you here, I am a life member of this great organization, the Disabled American Veterans. And like many of you, I have benefited so much, personally, from my membership with this organization. (Applause)

Thank you. It is a privilege to be here with you today. It is a privilege to be a member of the DAV. It is my distinct privilege to welcome you to Dallas on behalf of the Governor of Texas. So on his behalf, God Bless you all, thank you for your service, thank you for your sacrifice, enjoy your visit to Texas and Semper Fi. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER STEESE: Thank you, Judge Kimbrough.

MR. THOMAS L. WILBORN: And now let's meet your DAV National Officers. At the Past National Commander Position, the pride of San Antonio, Texas, let's welcome back Armando Albarran.

From Kernersville, North Carolina, your National Chaplain, a heavenly welcome for the Reverend Gerald Stump.

Your National Fourth Junior Vice Commander, from Tualatin,

